THE DAILY LETTER:
REDEFINING, RECONCEPTUALIZING AND RECONDITIONING GENRE
IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

by

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B. A., Simon Fraser University, 2002

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The Daily Letter: Redefining, Reconceptualizing and Reconditioning Genre in the Elementary Classroom

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The purpose of this study is to examine the “goodness of fit” between recent research insights into the teaching and learning of genre and the design and practice of the Daily Letter (DL) to foster connections with genre in an elementary classroom.

The DL is an instructional tool I created to engage a class in the daily systematic learning of genre, about genre and through genre. This tool is called the DL because each school day a student is invited to share a piece text (8½" x 11" letter size page) with the whole class that he has created and copied for each student. I invented the DL out of my growing understanding of how meaningful literacy learning arises from students’ engagement in situated, social and active learning; and in response to the complexity of literacy teaching and learning in my multi-age classroom and a lack of appropriate materials to support this.

I designed the DL as a tool for situated, social and active learning with each writer sharing a page of text of his own choice and interest, something of importance in his life or in his shared community life. I structured the sharing of more than 190 DLs over one school year to build a community of engaged learners, foster connections with genre, and deepen and enrich early literacy learning.

Research since the 1990s redefines genre as a frame for social action, thus reminding teachers to attend to the features of the situation rather than the features of the text to learn genre. Research on the redefining, reconceptualizing reconditioning of genre learning situations has implications on the teacher’s role in designing such learning contexts. As a classroom teacher my question is: Is there a “goodness of fit” between recent theory on fostering connections with genre and the design and practice of the DL?

Participants of this study are students, the teacher, and an education assistant trained in the DL. I examine a number of DLs shared over two years in my classroom for
a match between what the research tells us and the DL sharing shows us about learning genre.

The results of this study indicate a "goodness of fit" between what contemporary researchers tell us about the learning of genre and what the DL sharing shows us. My research results indicate the DL is effective genre theory in practice; and that situated, social action and a coherence with identified conditions of learning effectively engage learners in fostering connections with genre. Finally, I discuss the implications of using the DL as an instructional tool to cultivate the use of genre to deepen and enrich literacy learning.
Dedication

This document is dedicated to Hazel Botcher, master-teacher, who forged the Morning Letter decades before research rewrote genre in the classroom. She invented it in response to the complexity of literacy teaching and learning in her multi-age classrooms, and out of her deep understanding of how truly meaningful learning arises from students' active engagement in situated, social, active learning. Numerous teachers have been blessed to be apprenticed by Hazel in the practice of the Morning Letter. I am one of those lucky ones.

This document is also dedicated to Norma Jansen, Laura McCabe, Sheena Skinner, Sue Gordon, Dinah Phillips, Selina Millar, Diane Kucheran and those others who apprenticed in the use of the Morning Letter. They also understood the potential for Hazel's flexible genre as a tool for comprehensive literacy learning, and reinvented it for themselves and their students.

This document is also dedicated to Dr. Marilyn Chapman who taught me how to take full responsibility for quality literacy learning in primary classrooms so that I could protect, and breath life back into, the Primary Program (Ministry of Education, 1995).
Acknowledgements

The author’s profound thanks to . . .

...my mother and father for always encouraging me to play
...my husband, John, for having always been my hero
...my daughter, Alena, for inspiring me to write as she does
...my son, Jamie, for his loyalty and support
...my son, Zak, for always caring so much
...my advisor, Meguido Zola, for his talented mentorship
...Norma Janzen, for her wisdom and faith
...Dinah Phillips for her diligence with at-risk Grade Ones
...Selina Millar, for embracing the use the DL with older kids
...Beirgette Neilsen, for inspiring high school students, and
...Carole Murphy, whose spirit lives in all of us who dare to care so much.
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Background Information

CONVENTIONS: I use several conventions in this thesis, I refer to a student as “he” and the teacher or student-as-teacher “she.”


DEFINITIONS
Moderator: the leader of the sharing of the Daily Letter
Mentor: a literacy learner who possesses these qualities: awareness of himself as a responsible group member with a high level of competency in an area of literacy that can be shared with others
Apprentice: a literacy learner
Social action: active construction of knowledge through collaboration with others

Traditional Genres:
Traditional genres are defined as: “(a) primary literary, (b) entirely defined by textual regularities fin form and content, (c) fixed and immutable, and (d) classifiable into neat and mutually exclusive categories and subcategories” (Freeman & Medway, 1994, p.1). It is a classification of complex secondary, literacy works with categories such as the classics: tragedy, comedy, an epic, lyric etc. (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Contemporary Genres:
Contemporary genres are defined as: “purposeful staged cultural activity” (Barrs, 1994). A genre is: an instructional instrument or label for different kinds of writing and had different functions in written discourse and society” (Barrs, 1994, p.248). They are: “Not just forms. Genres are forms of life, ways of being. They are frames for social action. They are environments for learning. They are locations within which meaning is constructed.”
The *Daily Letter*

The *Daily Letter* is an individual or group written text that fits into the *Daily Letter* template. This teaching tool is designed to help a writer share his genre with the whole literacy learning group for about an hour each school day of the year. (Figure 1)

**Figure 1** The *Daily Letter* Template (front and back)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
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<td>1. Text</td>
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<td>2. Visuals /Graphics</td>
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<td>3. Reading Word Study</td>
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<td>4. Ask Me...?</td>
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<th>6. Written Word Study</th>
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<th>8. 3 R's: Reflect, Relate, Reflect</th>
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<th>9. Special Component: Choice</th>
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Prologue

In the Beginning...

I left Alena at the door. I meant to give her one more hug but she bounded away not looking back. So there I was at the start of a new life without her.

The need to be near Alena on her first day of Grade One pushed me excitedly to the door of her classroom promptly at 3:00. Finally, with happiness and some sadness the school day ended and my daughter returned to me. She rewarded me with a hurried hug and her news of her first day at school.

“How was your day Ali?”

“Look! Here is my Daily Letter!”

And so with this gift of the Daily Letter (DL), both our lives were forever changed. Alena was at the beginning of a love affair with her DL and learning literacy; and, although I did not know it at the time, I was at the beginning of my love affair with the DL and teaching literacy.

Each of my children had the DL as part of their Grade One literacy learning with Norma Janzen, an expert literacy teacher who adapted the use of this tool from a neighbouring master primary teacher Hazel Botcher. All three of my children were very different in their learning styles, interests and abilities, yet each blossomed from their time spent with the DL. I witnessed each of them work with DL collections that were as unique as each of them, and priceless in their worth to meet each of their interests and literacy learning needs.

I treasured each night when, if only for a few brief moments, I was able to share in the events of my child’s school day. Together we laughed at the photo of Jessica’s toothless grin on her Birthday DL. We cried over Mandy’s Goodbye DL and whispered a special prayer when reading about Nibbles the Guinea Pig’s passing. We reminisced about Brandon’s lost boots with the Trip to the Pumpkin Patch DL and rejoiced with the DL recounting the birth of the lamb at the farm.
I treasured my time spent with each of my children as they shared of the events of their new lives in school. I also treasured my witnessing of the miraculous transformation of each one of them into a reader and writer through their daily shared reading of the DL. I was intrigued by the gradual increase in the complexity of the text and the active involvement with the text given the number of coloured crayon circles and underlines highlighting various conventions of print, word families, meanings and personal connections of each lovingly teacher-crafted DL.

With my own children tucked snuggly into their own school lives, I returned to teaching, excited over the prospect of using the DL with my own multi-age class. I contacted Hazel, the master teacher who had invented the Morning Letter (as she called it), as an invaluable tool for teaching early literacy. I was excited and a little nervous when Hazel accepted my request to visit her class. Teachers were not intimidated by Hazel, but intimidated by her legendary teaching approach. I looked forward to my one-day apprenticeship with a master teacher in the use of the Morning Letter (ML).

All the impressive things I had heard about Hazel’s teaching proved to be true. Within five minutes of being in her room I was privy to a study in situated, social and active learning. Her clear quiet voice invited students to listen respectfully to the stories and news of their lives together. Her steady smile and calm presence invited students to participate actively with each other with a “can do” spirit that permeated the entire population of Grade One and Two’s.

With a softly spoken invitation, twelve little bodies formed a neat circle on the carpet, laying out their ML books and placing crayons at the top of them. With hands neatly folded in their laps, Hazel snuggled into her place in the circle to read the ML. Tracking fingers unfolded to move systematically across the ML page as the text spun softly off her lips. Each child participated in the tracking of the text and the active colourful coding of the words and phrases of the text. Each student made blue and red circles and lines around, over and beneath the text as the formal examination continued. At the close of the ML, with a kind thank-you to from Hazel, the students returned to their desks.
I witnessed the situated social and active sharing of the ML with a group of beginning Grade Ones. I observed them demonstrating a remarkably focussed, concerned, conversation with their teacher, and each other, about a page of text. Each student was highly motivated to search for words and phrases in the text, and fully engaged in the sharing of ideas among all of the members of the group about a topic well situated in their school life.

With her signature kind manner, Hazel had invited the group to participate in the formal examination of text for a full twenty minutes without a break in the concentration of the group. The pacing was deliberately quick and steady yet afforded a student the wait time he needed to articulate his thoughts. I sat in awe of the depth and breadth of the collaborative active learning that was taking place with these youngsters.

Hazel’s classroom teaching practice is legendary. She affords very young learners a deep respect and understanding of how they learn best through situated, social active learning with her invention of the Morning Letter as a tool to make literacy close to the hearts and minds of her students.

Hazel has a vision of a way to teach literacy invented in response to the complexity of literacy teaching and learning in her multi-age classrooms and out of her remarkable understanding of how meaningful learning arises from students’ active engagement in situated learning. Numerous teachers have been blessed to be apprenticed by Hazel in the practice of the Morning Letter, blessed with a vision of that which is most essential to organize powerful literacy learning.

To teach well, we do not need more techniques and strategies as much as we need a vision of what is essential. It is not the number of good ideas that turns our work into art but the selection, balance, and design of those ideas. Artists know this. Artistry does not come from the quality of yellow paint or from the amount of clay or marble but from the organizing vision that shapes the use of the materials. It comes from a sense of priority and design (Calkins, 1994, p. 3).

I have now been using the DL for more than ten years. It no longer resembles the Morning Letter Hazel used from the 1960s into the 1990s (having been modified for use
with older students), and yet, it still remains true to Hazel’s original design of creating a classroom ritual of sharing the lives of the students and the class through text that is about them, or connected to them, and is shared in a social and active learning context. I know many teachers who use a variation of the Morning Letter in their classrooms based on the model set out by Hazel many years ago.

Now after all these years of teaching with the DL, I am beginning to feel some sense of priority, balance and design with it as an instructional tool for literacy learning and an organizational tool for literacy learning sharing. It has taken easy and tough classes, gifted, strong and fragile children, laughter and tears to discover what literacy is all about. Now, I wonder if this evolving literacy learning tool, in the form of the DL, has “a goodness of fit” with what the recent research says about fostering connections with genre to deepen and enrich literacy learning.
CHAPTER ONE
RATIONALE

Success in school and society is largely dependent on a student's abilities to become literate. A literate student typically stays in school. A student who struggles to become literate typically makes less progress and may drop out. Although there is much controversy over effective approaches to accelerate the early literacy success of a student (Flippo, 2001), there is little controversy over the critical importance of it for both the child and society (Flippo, 2001; O'Flahavan & Seidl, 1997).

Given the critical importance of early literacy for both child and society, the context for students to learn genre as a way of deepening and enriching early literacy learning is therefore of utmost importance. Where literacy was once practised by an elite few (religious scribes and government clerics), it now plays a role in most social contexts, such as the home, community, school and workplace (Guthrie & Graney, 1991; O'Flahavan & Seidl, 1997). We now have a proliferation of literate forms to serve an array of purposes for the masses. Students today are born into a myriad of socially constructed and evolving genres.

Richard Beach, in his essay on genre, explains that a reader and writer frequently use the concept of genre to understand and explain literacy practices thus suggesting that genre is a powerful tool. A reader uses the knowledge of the conventions of text to have a "stance" to understand a text, i.e.; a student recognizes a fairy tale by the beginning lines. A writer also employs certain conventions associated with a genre or combines conventions with a particular purpose in mind. (Beach cited in Harris and Hodges, 1995).

In 1994 Barrs suggested the growing importance of the role of genre to literacy learning: "We are just beginning to realize the full importance of large scale textual or
speech structures for readers and writers to draw on" (1994). The research of the late 1990s renews interest in the role of genre, of systematically thinking about the large scale text and speech structures, in a student's language and early literacy development (Chapman, 1999). Given this new found interest in the role of genre in the classroom, I wish to investigate those necessary teaching and learning conditions for an elementary student to cultivate his understanding of genre to deepen and enrich his literacy learning.

The traditional role of genre, defined as a format of text and conceptualized in teaching practice stressing structures rather than purpose (Chapman, 1999) attempts to, but does not foster connections with genre to deepen and enrich literacy learning (Barrs, 1994); however; recent research redefining, reconceptualizing and reconditioning genre as ways of participating in the actions of a community (Miller, 1984) or as a "frame for social action" (Bazerman, 1997, p.19) has the potential to renew and reinvent the role of genre in the classroom today to deepen and enrich literacy learning (Chapman, 1999).

Many literacy specialists now recognize the importance of attending to the details of the learning context to cultivate genre (Chapman, 1999; Bazerman, 1997). Contemporary genre theorists remind teachers to attend to the features of the situation rather than the features of the text to foster connections with genre.

They remind teachers to involve their students in the situated, social active participation of genre and not just direct students towards it. Rogoff's research shares with teachers the finer points of the learning conditions in her "community of learners" framework for literacy (1994). Chapman's research (1999) is a detailed review of the conditions she and Bakhtin (1986) believe best support genre learning. They agree that conditions of engagement, inquiry and exploration, personal connections and meaning making, participating in a discourse community, apprentices and mentors and talk about text (Chapman 1999; Bakhtin, 1986) are important to the cultivation of genre to give depth to literacy learning. Other literacy experts such as Cambourne (1999), Wells (2001)
and Vygotsky (1978/1986) compiled extensive works theorizing about the importance of learning conditions that apply to genre learning.

As an elementary school teacher, I am interested in the potential for these new insights into genre to inform the design of my teaching practice of the DL, an instructional tool I invented to teach early literacy. If I can replace the traditional conceptualization of genre as simply stressing format of text and the labelling of different forms of literary writing with genre as a “forum” or frame of social action (Chapman, 1999) of communicative purposes that give rise to particular features, with the teaching of the DL, I have the potential to deepen and enrich literacy learning of my students.

My aim here is to examine the body of educational research on genre to inform my understanding of the most effective teaching and learning conditions to cultivate genre, those conditions that focus on both cognitive and social processes, to foster connections with genre . . . “to diversify students’ ability to use many and varied forms of literacy in the pursuit of a broad range of personal and social interests” (O’Flahavan & SeiDL, 1997).

Theorists talk about “effective” literacy as “high degrees of control of language” (Cambourne, 1988; Cambourne & Tumbill, 1987). They posit that a student gains this control through contexts that allow him access to a wide range of linguistic choices, and shape, use, and interpret a wide range of discourses, and that “truly meaningful learning arises from students’ active engagement in shared learning experiences” (Lave, 1988). I am interested in examining research on classroom contexts or situations that allow a student to participate in shared learning experiences to see if there is “a goodness of fit” between genre theory and practice of the DL and the classroom conditions that are flexible enough to engage students in the shared learning of three dimensions of genre learning: learning genre, learning about genre and learning through genre (adapted by Chapman 1999; Halliday, 1978/1985).
Anderson (1985) contends that if teachers attend to the finer points or details of learning conditions in their classrooms, they will improve literacy learning and quell some of the debate over the “perfect method” to learn literacy and genre. He and other researchers challenge teachers to review and share the wealth of agreements held about those effective conditions of language-based literacy learning (Flippo, 2001) and use these to inform their literacy teaching practice. They challenge teachers to commit to a complex “principled eclectism” (Stahl, 1997) in their classrooms, and to be aware of “program directives without variation, requiring procedural compliance” (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999).

Researchers such as Shanahan and Neuman (1997) and Stahl (1997) urge teachers to search for principled, methodical eclectism in the design of literacy learning contexts. This is the essence of my rationale for examining the potential for new genre theory to inform the design and practice of the DL. This is not the search for a perfect instructional method, “no single method has ever been proven to be the cure-all” (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999). It is not only about research into just genre instruction, but also about research into learning conditions that foster a student’s connection with genre. With this study, I ask questions about both the instructional tools to teach genre and those conditions that best support genre learning in an elementary classroom.

Does the design and practice of the DL match with what recent research tell us about the learning conditions for a student to learn genre? Is there a “goodness of fit” between the revised definitions, conceptions and conditions of genre as situated social action (Chapman, 1999) and the design and practice of the DL to cultivate genre and deepen and enrich literacy learning of my students?

The purpose of this study is to examine the “goodness of fit” between recent research insights into the teaching and learning of genre and the design and practice of
the DL to foster connections with genre in an elementary classroom.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Part One: Redefining, Reconceptualizing and Reconditioning Genre

My review of the literature is an examination of the revised theories of genre as part of a discussion on revitalizing the role of genre with the DL to cultivate genre thus deepening and enriching literacy learning in the elementary classroom. Research concerning genre is limited (Freedman, 1993a, p. 226), with most discussions regarding it being enveloped in the larger discussions on children’s literacy development. Within the limited body of research on genre acquisition, researchers agree about the importance of the teaching of genre but disagree about the most effective teaching and learning conditions for genre cultivation.

This review explores the shift from the traditional belief that genre is learned “by encountering a number of instances of the form, discovering (or being told) what its rules are, internalizing that abstract definition, and using it as an algorithm to generate new examples (Hunt, 1994, p. 246) to the contemporary belief of a shared responsibility approach to learning genre by inventing or invoking them in response to a social situation (Hunt, 1994) and by forming analogies and making connections with the ones we already know (Bazerman, 1997). Along with the review of research on the contemporary defining and the conceptualizing of genre teaching practice, I examine literature on each of the learning conditions (Table 1) identified in research for the cultivation of genre.
Traditional Defining and Conceptualizing Genre

Barrs tells us that genre teaching was about "an instructional instrument or a label for different kinds of writing that had different functions in written discourse and society" (1994, p. 248) until attention shifted, with the influence of sociolinguists and socioculturalists in the 1980's, from the features of the text to the features of the writing situation (Freedman and Medway, 1994). Barrs reminds us that traditional genrists did not embrace the new understandings of literacy learning of their time. They wrote about children's developing literacy, but their papers revealed an "arrogance in this, and some ignorance" (Barrs, 1994, p.253). They made few references to the rich body of literature of Goodman (1979), Harste (1984), Rogoff et al (1996), and Wells (1986) to inform their teaching of genre. Little of the knowledge about the rediscovery of Vygotsky's prominent work (1978) and Halliday's Learning How to Mean (1975) play any significant role in traditional teaching of genre.
From this review of the research on genre, I notice a number of important ideas supported by amassed amounts of research about emergent literacy, the sociocognitive and sociocultural construction of knowledge, process writing and genre learning, that are not taken into account, and in some cases ignored, by traditional genre theorists, ideas that contemporary genrists embrace to inform a teacher’s instruction of genre.

**Looking Back: Structure over Purpose**

Until recently genres have been conceptualized as “(a) primarily literary, (b) entirely defined by textual regularities in form and content, (c) fixed and immutable, and (d) classifiable into neat and mutually exclusive categories and subcategories” (Freeman & Medway, 1994, p.1). Traditionally, emphasis on genre meant: “an instructional instrument or a label for different kinds of writing that had different functions in written discourse and society” (Barrs, 1994, p. 248). Genres were viewed as a classification of complex secondary literary works with categories such as the classics: tragedy, comedy, epic, lyric etc. (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

The literacy learning pendulum has swung back and forth constantly, and regularly, for decades, between those who prefer a structured teacher-directed curriculum of basic skills and those who believe in a process driven, child-centred form of education. Typically in the 1970's genre theory was conceptualized in the classroom as the direct, formal teaching of the features of the text (format)-stressing structure over a purpose. Theorists of the time believed that learning of genre came about through the rule bound transmission of knowledge from teacher to student (Barrs, 1994). Genre was about the layout of literary ideas and words (and their associated vocabulary), through explicit teaching of the smaller units of language, rules to be followed, or models to be imitated (Barrs, 1994). Dominant ideas about genre appeared to be strictly about how language worked, about coded findings.
Traditional Teaching of Genre

In the traditional direct teaching of genre, the teacher handed over a format to a student to be copied or imitated. A “one size fits all” method of teaching structure of text was rigidly imposed, with little interest in genre as purposeful communication. A student typically had direct, explicit teaching of the features of one particular genre, often story writing, rather than personal writing, with the analysis of a student’s piece by the teacher after formal instruction. He produced text independently, often under testing conditions. Learning was product-oriented with the learning of genre as an end in itself. A student did not write with his own voice to make personal connections. The teacher assessed if the student had been successfully “inducted into the use of a particular linguistic form” (Barrs, 1994). The view of acceptable texts was narrow with writing samples viewed as failed adult texts (Rothery, 1984). Michael Halliday led the field in the analysis of writing samples using linguistic categories (Hallidayan linguistics). Little evidence exists in the research about student genre writing and the attitudes at this time.

In Britain, the writing tradition of the 1970’s and 1980’s was typically a style of progressive, indirect teaching (Barrs, 1994). British teachers did not systematically require a student to structure his written texts with a particular form. Instead of traditional direct teaching practices to teach genre, a student was “invited” to write. Genre instruction was characterized more by discussing writing with him and providing responses to writing. A child learned to develop and edit his work in process. In this student-centered approach, the teacher’s role was to provide a stimulating environment, while the student chose his own activities. He had opportunities to explore his ideas, make inquiries and collaborate about these.

Many genrists did not support a style of progressive, indirect teaching to cultivate genre charging that “child-centred practices left the learning of genre to osmosis” (Kress, 1982) and “abandoned children to their own devices” (Martin, Christie and Rothery,
1987). Some genrists, who believed that learners acquired knowledge through active exploration, disagreed. Despite the apparent lack of formal instruction of British students they produced a great deal of writing and their attitudes were positive. (Barrs, 1994).

In North America in the 1970's and early 1980's genre learning was about the formal structure of text with a predisposition to examine the small units of the text such as sentence and paragraph development. Genres were part of a “relentlessly didactic” formal discipline of linguistics, a cycle of genre analysis of a writing sample, identifying the gaps in the piece, and systematically filling in the gaps with explicit teaching (Barrs, 1994). Students produced limited pieces of writing.

By reviewing literature on genre acquisition, I have discovered that in the 1970s and 1980s, a teacher had little knowledge about theory to inform her teaching of genre. Linguists recognized the importance of genre but were not able to assist teachers in the translating of genre theory into practice (Barrs, 1994). Teachers were given a rigid definition and conceptualization of genre as the stressing of structure through direct teaching. Typically, a teacher knew what formats she was teaching but was not aware of the learning conditions necessary for a student to develop a grounded understanding of genre. Theorists not only held a set of beliefs and values about genre, but also about the relationship between instruction and how students learn.

Disagreements about different methods of teaching imply differences in beliefs about how children learn which were rarely made explicit, yet these different assumptions about learning produce different approaches to instruction, most obviously evidenced in the examination of genre (Cambourne, Fitzsimmons & Geekie, 1999).
Table 2 Summary of Genre Definition and Conceptualization in Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Traditional Genre Theory</th>
<th>Contemporary Genre Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>structure, set of fixed features</td>
<td>stress purposes, set of flexible features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literary, complex</td>
<td>may, or may not, be literary or complex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined by text regularities</td>
<td>flexible, plastic, format not set</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exclusive categories</td>
<td>genre in genre, numerous possibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instructional instrument</td>
<td>location for meaning construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>layouts of ideas in words</td>
<td>multiple representations of ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal, labelled writing like epic</td>
<td>informal, instrumental i.e. message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher directed learning</td>
<td>snared responsibility for learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explicit teaching of regulated format</td>
<td>some explicit teaching, process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rule bound</td>
<td>rules arise out of action, discovered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conceptualization

| layout of literary ideas, few formats | social, community action, many formats |
handed over format | format invented in social experience
---|---
format to be copied, or imitated | make analogies between genres
one size fits all method of teaching | individual needs met
independent work by students | social, collaborative work
viewed texts as failed adult texts | approximations of adult texts
learning is abstract | learning is situated
learning conditions not identified | awareness of learning conditions
theory not yet translated into practice | theory translated into practice

Redefining and Reconceptualizing of Genre

The most drastic shift in the research on genre over the last three decades has been from defining and conceptualizing genre as a teaching method stressing form or structure to genre as ways of participation in the actions of a community with genre learning being embedded in and developing out of various spheres of human activity (Bakhtin, 1979/1986). Today genre has been redefined and reconceptualized as a forum for purposeful, social, collaborative communication. Bazerman explains:

Genres are not just forms. Genres are forms of life, ways of being. They are frames for social action. They are environments for learning. They are locations within which meaning is constructed. Genres shape the thoughts we form and the communications by which we interact. Genres are the familiar places we go to create intelligible communicative actions with each other and the guideposts we use to explore the unfamiliar (1997, p. 19).
In the late 1980's, the "best method of education" pendulum went into a full swing, and debates over direct teaching versus child-centred learning heated up the flawed search for a perfect method (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999). Some genrists, influenced by sociocognitive theory, made a shift away from the study of the individual toward the social group reinventing genre into a purposeful, staged, cultural activity of text and all forms of language (Wertsch, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 1986). This gave researchers, and teachers like me, the opportunity to bypass the search for the perfect method and take a broader approach to genre instruction that is neither teacher-directed nor student-centered, one that shares the responsibility for the teaching and learning of genre between the teacher and students.

Today many literacy specialists recognize the importance of attending to the details of the learning context in the teaching and learning of genre. Contemporary genre theory reminds teachers to attend more to the features of the genre learning situation rather than the features of the text to cultivate genre. Once a teacher redefines and reconceptualizes genre as a social context, a forum for learning, rather than a format to be taught, she can then attend to the features of the situation rather than the text to help her students learn genre. Genre in the classroom has gone from being a traditional teacher directed situation focussed on format, to the contemporary shared responsibility for the teaching and learning situation focussed on the teacher and the student working together.

This revised concept of genre as a frame for social action (Bazerman, 1997) represents a major shift for many genrists who refuse to examine the study of the social group and the role of social contexts to understand how genre is constructed and displayed. Instead, some genrists continue to press for the prescriptive, direct and explicit teaching of genre as a format as the best method for genre acquisition. Genrists such as Kress, Martin, Christie & Rothery, imply a contempt for modern approaches to
language education or what Myra Barrs describes as “actually an incomprehension of such approaches” (1994, p. 252). They remain uninfluenced by learning theory and the role it is having in rewriting the role of genre in the classroom.

A Broadened Definition of Genre

This review of the literature indicates that numerous forms of genre are being explored today, many taken from a much wider perspective than traditional genre theory allowed. E-mail is an example of a nontraditional genre with a format that is derived or invented through the situation of a person’s purposeful action of sending a message for information, not style. "It is what students learn as they discover for themselves, in process, what constitutes a genre and how to produce it for the setting" (Harste, Woodward, Burke, 1989, p.189). A student does not have to be handed a format of e-mail and asked to imitate it to learn how to use it. The format is invented (and learned) through the purposeful communication of sending a message of information economically or efficiently. Genres in the workplace and home (e-mail) and emerging technologies (voice mail) are examples of instrumental genres today (messages and notes) which fit into this perspective of a wider definition of genre and are conceptualized in practice as a format arising, or being invented out of an action or a situation.

Traditional genres are formal classic literary genres such as a tragedy, comedy, epic. Nontraditional genres are a range of genres other than literary works, yet still classified by form, technique and content. E-mail and action comic books are an example of nontraditional genres. Both traditional and nontraditional genres are a part of the teaching of genre today. Bakhtin (1979/1986) initiated the expansion of the definition of nontraditional genres to include a wide variety of forms, including speech genres such as sermons, lectures. Today there are an ever widening variety of genres such as those used in social exchanges such as lectures, eulogies, invitations, reports and negotiations (Beach cited in Harris and Hodges, 1995). Speech genres are even broken down into
styles of either formal or informal speech.

Teachers and students today are exposed to a wide range of genres of varying complexity. Given the number and variety of modern genres and the importance of each, a teacher is required to be thoughtful in widening of a student's genre repertoire. Anderson reminds teachers that a wider repertoire in and of itself will not necessarily guarantee that deeper genre learning takes place (1994).

The awareness of an ever-increasing variety and range of complexity of genre is an important insight for a teacher redefining and reconceptualizing genre. The knowledge of which and how many genres to teach, is an important insight for the teaching and learning of genre today.

Redefining Genre: Primary and Secondary Genres

Today the genres used in everyday communications are called primary genres (Table 3). Primary genres are context-embedded, localized, tied to time and place (Chapman, 1999). Daily classroom routines create opportunities for students to work with a wide range of primary genres, playing an important role in literacy learning of young students. Students are capable of being responsible for many instrumental genres such as reminders, class meetings, discussions, problem solving, planning, invitations (Chapman, 1999).
Table 3 Looking at Genre in School’s Today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Genre</th>
<th>Secondary Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>simple, everyday communication</td>
<td>complex, professional communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-traditional</td>
<td>traditional and nontraditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instrumental</td>
<td>literary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genre woven into genre</td>
<td>genre woven into genre, or single genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Daily Letter</em> genre, Daily News,</td>
<td>folk tale, fairy tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendance, class meetings</td>
<td>essay, speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>context-embedded</td>
<td>decontextualized, requiring more complex communications, often abstract</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Daily Letter*, the instructional tool I have created to teach literacy, is a primary genre to teach genre. It is embedded in the experiences of the community of learners in our classroom, localized in the classroom and homes of the students and tied to the daily sharing of our news. With this instrumental genre, students are able to share reminders, class meetings, discussions, problem solving, planning and invitations (Chapman, 1999) as well as a number of the more traditional literary genres such as fairy tales, tall tales and student authored personal narrative, description and genre within genres.

Only a small body of research on the use of primary genres as an instructional tool for literacy learning exists. The origin of this primary literacy learning genre goes
back to the oral sharing and recording of events in the "language experience" of the 1970s (Stauffer, 1970), although it has only been formally recognized as a genre with the broader defining of genre of the 1990s. The process of using context-embedded, localized, tied to the time and place genres, or primary genres, in the form of shared daily news of the students has been examined by Morrow (1993) and Sampson, Sampson & Allen (1995) and McGee and Richgels (1996). Despite the variation in the names of this primary genre about the daily process of news sharing: News of the Day, Morning News, Daily News, Daily Letter, Morning Letter, Reflections, the defining of the genre is largely the same with a whole group (community) sharing of the news of the students. The teaching practice, however, is conceptualized in a wide variety of ways as shared reading from the blackboard, or large chart paper (Holdaway, 1974), to shared reading and writing on an individual letter size page to the use of the Daily Letter sharing as examined in this thesis. The teaching practice ranges from direct instruction in a rigid, structuralists approach to a direct instruction as a conscious attempt to focus a student's attention to particular aspects of the text rather (Chapman, 1999). The shift in practice of this primary genre over time is not documented in the research. McGee and Richgels indicate that the primary genre called news of the day, or daily message, is being successfully used by many teachers (1996).

Secondary genres, those traditionally taught in school, are highly developed, organized, cultural communication. Secondary genres are more complex in communicative value, not necessarily in structure. These complex decontextualized genres were, typically, the only ones taught in classrooms of the 1970s /1980s. Most of these genres were taught one form at a time. Most of the genres taught today, whether primary or secondary, are not taught one at a time. Bazerman (1997) determines that any new genre is learned by a student forming analogies and making connections with the ones he already knows. Today teachers need to create a learning context with
opportunities for students to talk with each other about their intertextual learning.

Redefining Genres: Genres Within Genres

Many of the genres today cannot be placed in discreet categories in the same manner as traditional ones are. Some genres recognized today are genres within genres. The Magic School Bus books by Joanna Cole are an example of a genre within a genre, a popular combination of narrative and expository text. The DL is a genre I invented to teach genre and the other components of a comprehensive literacy learning program. The DL is a primary genre (a communication tool) for the teaching of genre that has a number of genres within a genre: speech genres for the talk about text, a variety of written text genres such as narrative, poetry, notes or messages and a written retelling or reflection. Many students today are producing genres not commonly believed to be written by apprentice writers, although research evidence concerning genre is limited (Freeman, 1993a, p. 226). A capable elementary student writer today may write using narrative but include description, with the deliberate plan to achieve a particular purpose (Chapman, 1999).

Reconceptualizing Genre as a Multiple Language Processes

Contemporary genre theory makes a strong connection between all language processes. Traditionally, emphasis on genre meant stressing only one language process at a time (reading or writing). Clustered summary agreements of literacy experts (Flippo, 2001) suggest that instead of deliberately separating reading from writing, it is important to plan purposeful reading and writing instruction around this relationship for they are important parts of a complex language process (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Contemporary genre theory recognizes the importance of multiple language processes to support genre learning beyond just writing or reading. In the 1980's traditional genreist Gunther Kress acknowledged that students learned writing from reading but indicated that he did not value the role they may play together. Today a coherence among all
language processes is recognized to assist in the learning of genre, and that students need to use active construction processes (that may seem invisible to some because they are not necessarily directly taught) to foster an understanding of genre.

Some traditional genrists continue to view learning speech and learning writing as discrete unrelated processes (Barrs, 1994). In fact, they emphasise the differences between spoken language and written language positing that written language is not acquired in the same way as spoken language. Educators today such as Wells oppose this emphasis confirming that children are "partially literate" when they come to school (1999). Some genrists suggest students with little preschool experience, are less-able learners and support the setting up of a variety of educational programs for students of different social classes. This belief is refuted by cognitive constructivists who recognize the important relationship between speech and writing and the necessity of building on the student's early language experiences in the school. The rationalization of students of varying linguistic-generic backgrounds as needing separate programs to those students of diverse social classes creates a divide between educators who have concerns that full literacy will not be achieved if teachers "defined learning differently, and call for different educational programs for children from different social classes" (Barrs, 1994). Many contemporary genrists view the relationship among all language processes as important.

Reconceptualizing Genre as Situated, Social and Active Learning

The notion of apprenticeship as a model for a child's cognitive development is appealing because it highlights the central role if active learners in a community of people who support, challenge and guide novices in their development (O' Flahavan & Seidl, 1997, p. 204).

Traditionally, emphasis on genre meant student working independently in contexts where the learning was imposed through a rigid structuralists direct teaching method of a format. The teaching of complex, decontextualized secondary literary genres was largely accomplished through individual study by students as passive learners,
devoid of social and collaborative action. Today emphasis on genre means genre being "invoked or invented (reinvented), in response to a social situation" (Hunt, 1994, p.247).

Bakhtin, perhaps the most influential modern genrist, views genre as "purposeful, social actions situated in contexts that gave rise to particular features" (1979/1986). He broadens the conceptualization of genre as he applies his understanding of how language functions in particular active contexts. His most important work is his explanation of genre as situated, as the "structures embedded and developed out of various spheres of human activity" (1979/1986). Chapman conceptualizes genre as arising out of "relevant situations, as part of general and genuine communication that are tied to the specific routines and the immediate purposeful and real activities a student is involved in" (1999). A genre learner is provided with time and contexts to write in functional authentic ways. Bakhtin's research on genre as a method for creating a community of purposeful, situated, social actions has implications on the contexts teachers design for genre acquisition.

Many contemporary genrists agree that genre is social. In 1986, Himley reiterates that genre learning is social: "It means, in essence, learning how to participate in the actions of a community." In 1990, Swales defines genre as "a class of communicative events [in which] the critical feature is the some set of shared communicative events." Bakhtin suggests genre is social, that all language is dialogue because our understanding of the words and how to use them is shaped by and developed through interactions with others (1979/86).

An extensive body of research has been amassed on conditions of learning today. Bruner like Bakhtin (1997) recognizes students to be social beings who, through social action, "acquire a framework for interpreting experience and learning how to negotiate meaning in a manner congruent with the requirements of the culture" (Bruner,
1996). The concept of learning as social and active informs teachers of the importance of such a learning context and the role of the teacher in organizing it (Goodman, 2001; Flippo, 2001).

Along with the need for genre learning contexts to be frames for social actions, contemporary genre theory suggests a student's needs to be actively involved in the learning of genre. Chapman conceptualizes genre learning as active in the sense that they are dynamic, flexible, purposeful (1999, p. 541; Bakhtin, 1979/86) Genres are learned through activity, by talking and doing. Bruner describes writing in genres as active when, for example, he describes narrative as an instrument for meaning making and requires work on the writer's part "reading it, making it, analysing it, understanding it's craft, seeing its uses, discussing it" (1996, p. 41). Today genre theory recognizes the "immense amount of work that both adult and child do in the course of the learning process" (Barrs, 1994). This immense amount of work, according to contemporary genre theory, needs to be situated, social and active.

Reconceptualizing Genre: Sociocultural Process, Learning Is Primary

Vygotsky's ideas on human learning," presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children can grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88). He explains that in the relationship between instruction and learning, learning is primary. Wells and Rogoff, through a meticulous exploration of Vygotsky's views on human development, agree that in examining the nature of the relationship between instruction and learning, learning is primary.

Cambourne and Bruner show teachers how learning theory is relevant to most methods of teaching. Learning theory is invaluable to inform the design of a range of literacy learning events, including genre and that after many years, the debate over best teaching method, or what Duffy and Hoffman refer to as, "the flawed search for a perfect method" (1999), is not an issue (Flippo, 2001). Literacy experts remind teachers to
honour and hold onto the belief of the complicated nature of literacy learning, and give up the notion that there is one perfect practice or method (Flippo, 2001). Duffy & Hoffman remark that "it seems obvious that the reality of individual differences does not warrant pursuing a perfect method solution" (1999). In Reading Researchers In Search of Common Ground, Flippo indicates that although there is no one best way to learn literacy, there is some common ground of contexts and practices that tend to facilitate reading and others that tend to make it more difficult for most children (Flippo, 2001). This research indicates there are some alternative ways of looking at literacy learning that represents facets of a broader approach to learning through apprenticeship and mentoring that is neither teacher-directed nor student-centered.

Direct instruction, explicit instruction, response centered instruction and whole language differ substantively from apprenticeship models in the ways they address social and personal functions of literacy and the role of literate behaviour in sociocultural activity (O’ Flahavan & Seidl, 1997).

Reconceptualizing Genre: Process Learning and Principled Eclectism

Review of the literature on genre indicates much disagreement over who should have responsibility for the learning of genre. Today some genrists remain convinced of the need for the learning of genre through direct teaching with the responsibility for the learning resting with the teacher (Martin, Christie & Rothery, 1994). Some genrists consider the traditional method of genre instruction incompatible with process writing. Other genrists suggest that like other aspects of school writing, genre is best conceptualized as an emergent process (Chapman, 1999). It is learned most effectively in contexts that support engagement with process writing mediated through both individual and collaborative literacy apprenticeship practices and shared responsibility between the teacher and student for learning (Chapman, 1999). Chapman reminds us that primary genres need to be appreciated as transitional forms of writing or approximations of more mature forms. She reminds us that in the revised contemporary
conceptualization of genre learning, genre is cultivated through the shared responsibility of choice, creativity and voice, using both a learner’s own individual ideas, and those of the discourse community (1999). Freeman and Medway agree, suggesting we need a gradual transition or progression from provisional varieties that are more comfortable for younger and less-experienced students (1994). Bazerman confirms that genre is descriptive and is most effective in contexts that support engagement with process writing, not simply a prescriptive following of teacher-directed rules (Freedman, 1993a) or “ritual repetition of standardized statements” (Bazerman, 1997, p. 24).

Reconceptualizing the Learning Situation: Community of Learners

This review of the literature indicates that contemporary genrists are doing a much better job of helping teachers make shifts in the way they conceptualize reading and writing tasks, texts, and contexts. They inform teachers of practical, effective ways to put revised genre theory into the classroom that is not one sided as teacher-directed or student centered learning (Table 4).

Contemporary literacy experts, Rogoff et al (1996) and Cambourne et al (1999) support the belief that literacy learning should be placed in a much broader framework, neither teacher-directed nor student-centered, one that recognizes that “these competing methods of acquiring genre knowledge, concern differing views of learning theory” (Cambourne, Geekie & Fitzsimmons, 1999). Rogoff, Matusov & White, translate contemporary genre theory into a much broader framework with a model of “community of learners” (1996), a context where the community works together with everyone being a resource for everyone else to become literate: “to interlace their own developing understanding of the form and function of literacy with recent and long-standing achievement of the literate culture in which they participate” (O’ Flahavan & Seidl, 1997, p. 204). This model is not just one-sided in who promotes the learning. There is a mutuality of responsibility of both teacher and student. A student learns through assisted
social action by a process managed by mentors and apprentices. The community participates in shared thinking and joint decision making with individual and shared problem solving. "Like a family, the caring classroom provides a sense of belonging that allows for lively, critical discussions and risk-taking" (Lewis & Schaps 1996, p. 21).

Over time students grow in their independence of instruction, a process Rogoff labels "transformation of participation" (Rogoff, Matusov & White, 1996). This sharing of the power among the teacher, the student and the text makes both teacher and student co-participants in their learning. Students become confident independent problem solvers with the gradual shift in roles over time as they assume the belief that they are not dependent on teacher instruction. Rogoff's "community of learners" model, matches the conditions of learning researchers' Vygotsky, Wells, Bakhtin and Chapman identify as effective in fostering connections with genre (Chapman, 1999; Bakhtin, 1979/1986).

Students work harder and do better, when they feel accepted, respected and liked by their peers and teacher(s). They also will take risks, contributing new ideas and making mistakes in a safe, supportive class, a trait recognized as critical to intellectual growth (Lewis & Schaps 1996, p. 20).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-directed</th>
<th>Student Centered Learning</th>
<th>Contemporary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teacher directed</td>
<td>student centered, process learning</td>
<td>shared responsibility, direct and process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one sided learning, passive learning by student</td>
<td>one sided learning, exploration</td>
<td>two sided learning, transformation of participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual learning</td>
<td>learning between student/teacher</td>
<td>assisted social action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent action</td>
<td>social action</td>
<td>social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managed by teacher-expert</td>
<td>managed by student and teacher</td>
<td>managed by mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher directs, involved in teaching, no close relationship to the students</td>
<td>teacher provides environment, involved with the students</td>
<td>teacher responds contingently, involved with the students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Two

Review of the Literature: Part Two

Reconditioning Genre

This review of the literature indicates that the most drastic shift in genre theory over the last three decades has been around the conceptualizing of genre learning as the rigid direct teaching of genre stressing structure to the reconceptualizing of genre learning as communicative purposes that give rise to particular features. Many literacy specialists now recognize the importance of attending to the details of the learning context (Bazerman, 1997; Chapman, 1999) to most effectively assist students in fostering connections with genre. Contemporary genre theory reminds teachers to attend to the features of the situation, rather than the features of the text, to cultivate genre. Rogoff's research details the finer points of the learning conditions in her "community of learners" framework (1996). Chapman's research is a detailed review of the conditions she and Bakhtin believe best support genre learning (1999; Bakhtin, 1979/86). They both indicate that engagement, inquiry and exploration, personal connections and meaning making, participating in a discourse community, apprentices and mentors and talk about text (1999; Bakhtin, 1979/86), are important conditions for cultivating genre. Other literacy experts have similar ideas on these important conditions (Table 5).
Table 5 Comparison of Conditions of Learning Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cambourne</th>
<th>Vygotsky/Wells</th>
<th>Bakhtin/Chapman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>immersion</td>
<td>dialogic inquiry</td>
<td>exploration/inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>response</td>
<td>personal meaning making</td>
<td>personal meaning making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstration</td>
<td>participation in a discourse</td>
<td>participation in discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>community</td>
<td>community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engagement</td>
<td>engagement</td>
<td>engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment,</td>
<td>collaboration</td>
<td>collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shared resp.</td>
<td>shared responsibility</td>
<td>shared responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment</td>
<td>mentors, apprentices</td>
<td>mentors, apprentices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approximations</td>
<td>approximations</td>
<td>approximations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yetta Goodman reminds us . . .

... readers and writers are dynamically involved in their own learning about the reading process and the strategies they use. Kids learn a great deal about the various subsystems of language and how they work in reading as a result of being readers and writers, not as a result of didactic teaching of discrete skills" (2001; Flippo, 2001).
Contemporary genre theory supports a range of learning conditions with a flexible range of complementary teaching approaches required to apprentice students into literacy learning and foster their connections with genre. For this purpose, it is worth reviewing the literature related to this.

**Condition of Genre Learning: Through Engagement**

My review of the literature on engagement indicates that engaged readers in the classroom coordinate their strategies and knowledge (cognition) within a community of literacy learners (social) in order to fulfill their personal goals, desires, and intentions (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). A student's motivation is an important condition for a student to engage in genre learning. Engagement requires a process where a reader actively has "intentions" to read and write: "That is . . . a person reads a word or comprehends a text not only because he can do it, but because he is motivated to do it" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). For children or adults who are not moved by the need or desire to read, "reading will be put off for other more impelling pursuits" (Mullis, Campbell, & Farstrup, 1993; cited in Ruddell & Unrau, 1994).

Chapman explains that like other aspects of writing, genre is learned through engagement (1999, p. 473). She reminds us of the importance of designing contexts in which a student's writing involves choice, and is meaningful and purposeful and the teacher is deeply committed to facilitating choice, meaningful and purposeful learning. "The involved teacher knows about the students' personal interests, cares about each student's learning and holds realistic but positive goals for their effort and their learning" (Guthrie and Wigfield, 1997).

Literacy experts identify a number of important conditions to motivate a student to actively engage in their learning. Smith reminds us to make sense of any aspect of language, a child must perceive a purpose for it . . . "children must understand not only the content of the instruction-the materials they are expected to read-but also the
purpose of instruction" (Smith, 1978). “Choice is motivating, because it affords the student control. Children seek to be in command of their environment, rather than being manipulated by powerful others” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). Giving a student the role of decision maker fosters motivation, which in turn, fosters engagement in genre learning, which in turn fosters improved achievement. “Motivation is the foundational process for engagement. As a student becomes an engaged reader, he provides himself with self-generated opportunities that are equivalent to several years of education” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999).

Condition of Genre Learning: Through Inquiry and Exploration

For teachers and students alike ... learning is more effective when it takes place in a community whose members carry out inquiries on topics to which they have a personal commitment and who engage in collaborative, critical, and constructive dialogue . . . In such a community of inquirers, the role of teacher and learner are interchangeable for all are learning and, at the same time all are helping other to learn (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992, p.51).

Wells supports Chapman and Bakhtin’s determination of inquiry as an important condition for learning. The revised concept of genre draws heavily on the wisdom of Vygotsky, and Bruner, extended and translated by Wells for insight into inquiry teaching (1999). Vygotskyian insights, formulated into teaching practice by Wells, stress the important role of a learner as thoughtful and analytical, one who engages in dialogic inquiry. “In the place of competitive individualism, his (Vygotsky) theory proposes a collaborative community in which, with the teacher as leader, all participants learn with and from each other as they engage together in dialogic inquiry” (Wells, 1999). A student not only learns genre categories and labels of forms develop out of various spheres of activity but he also learns culturally specific ways of communicating and thinking and solving problems in collaborative discourse communities. “Consciousness is shared” (Cambourne, 1999, p. 2). A student is not just taught to model a form that is simply
"handed over" (Diaz, 1994) but is also taught to participate in talk about text, to participate in discourse about the way students thinks about things. He actively engages in the interpretation of his world through participation in dialogic inquiry.

John Dewy, as early as 1938, indicates the significance of investigations with first hand exploration of familiar aspects of a student's experience. He reminds teachers of the importance of inquiry as an organizing principle of curricular activity. Since then, many cognitive scientists have determined that "a major purpose of the activities in their classroom community is to cultivate a general stance with respect to the world of experiences that might be characterized as a disposition to engage in systematic inquiry about the questions or topics in which one is interested"(Wells, 1999, p. 63). Along with the critical success factor of 'engagement', a student requires a positive attitude or disposition to engage in exploration or inquiry, about a topic of his choice as an important condition to foster connections with genre.

Condition of Genre Learning: Through Personal Connections/Meaning Making

This review of the literature indicates that contemporary genre has been reconceptualized as a tool for learning ways to make sense of the world. Bruner reminds us of the importance of students developing a "feel" for myths, histories, folktales, the stories that form a cultural thread for people, "to frame or nourish identity"(1986). He suggests genre is an instrument of the mind for meaning making.

A teacher can use this tool for situating or resituating students. With a rich variety of genres students can explore a variety of perspectives of others, "we can put ourselves into different situations, see things from different perspectives, and situate ourselves differently in relationship to other times, places and people" (Chapman, 1999, p. 480). Genres such as narrative are powerful tools for students to create a personal identity, connecting with others, the culture, and the world. (Bruner, 1986).

At one time school reading and writing were not for personal expression or
communication (Fu & Townsend, 1999). A student was expected to work silently or in situations of drastically reduced classroom talk and often with decontextualized language or practice papers of narrow relatively low-level skills. He had models to follow, formats to imitate that gave his cognitive abilities little opportunity to develop in broad, deep ways (Fu & Townsend, 1999).

Is a piece of writing perfect when it’s without meaning or any sense and is the writing called serious work? For children, truly serious learning would draw upon all the resources and require their most concentrated effort to move in deep and imaginative ways beyond what they already know (Fu & Townsend, 1999).

Today genre is conceptualized as an important tool for making individual, personal connections, and a tool for the process of meaning making through a group. Bruner (1986), reminds us that although meanings are “in the mind”, they begin in the culture where they are created. A student needs time to make connections between what he already knows and new information that he is receiving. As he grows cognitively, he also develops attitudes toward learning, and responds emotionally as well. A student needs to have personal emotional connections to learning experiences to strengthen the connections to the learning. It is through personal connections being made to the text that students are motivated to express their own personalities and beliefs in their writing, so that the writing then becomes a valued, individual creative process as well as a social one.

Meaning Making Through Patterning

Research has determined that the mind imposes structure on the information available from experience. **Patterning** is the meaningful organization of information (Caine & Caine, 1991). This research suggests that a learner needs to take information and organize it into personally relevant and meaningful patterns if he is to understand it. A student learning genre would likely benefit from clustering genres into meaningful
patterns, seeing one genre in relation to another rather than working with one genre at a time in isolation. Listening and observing for the patterns in situated demonstrations, or explanations, is another way a learner can make new knowledge personal and relevant and memorable.

Along with the critical success factor of 'engagement' and inquiry, a student learns genre from a context that provides opportunities to make both personal connections with the genres and collaborative group meaning making.

**Conditions of Genre Learning: Participation in a Discourse Community**

Writing is real when the readers and the writers engage in conversations about the text . . . through classroom conversations about their own and others' writing, students can become more aware of the reader's or audiences expectations, coming to understand the textual features rather than arbitrary rules to be followed, are conventions that enable writers to communicate: They help frame a text so that readers can make sense of it (Bakhtin, 1979/1986).

A student is motivated to learn in purposeful reading and writing situations. Genre is made purposeful and active when students have conversations about their own and others' writing. Tizard and Hughes (1984; Wells, 1986) indicate that adult/child conversations are fewer and briefer at school and teachers contribute far more to conversations than do mothers. Home conversations are more balanced between adult and child.

Traditionally, emphasis on genre through direct teaching meant stressing the rigid structuralists discourse of the teacher and the passive listening role of the student with the teacher contributing far more conversation than the students. In contemporary genre teaching, students learn genre through having purposeful, meaningful talk about text in more balanced conversation between the members of the discourse community, by making the teacher's conversation briefer and fewer and increasing a student's number and length of conversations. This may involve some direct instruction that is more of a conscious attempt to focus a student's attention on particular aspects of genre
that a student may not discover on his own (Chapman, 1999) and involves an active role of a student in the conversation.

**Conditions of Genre Learning. Talk About Text**

Halliday says language learning has three dimensions, learning language, learning about language and learning through language. Chapman adapts this idea suggesting that genre has three dimensions also (1999). Chapman reports that students need opportunities to participate in a discourse community about three dimensions of genre learning: learning genre, learning about genre and learning through genre (1999).

Chapman, in her adaptation of Halliday’s view of three dimensional learning indicates that the first dimension of learning genre means acquiring a repertoire of genre through participation in a discourse community about different genres. Students learn genre, about genre and through genre, given plenty of time for balanced talk about text between all members of the learning community. This means of communication is likely to deepen and enrich their understanding of genre.

According to modern genrist Coe (1994), it is difficult to assess a student’s understanding of the second dimension, “learning about genre”. Teachers may have difficulty determining how generically aware a student is because it may appear that he has knowledge of genre because he speaks and writes in it, yet, this does not necessarily mean he does have generic awareness. With traditional genre teaching, a student could use a genre, slotting ideas into a format, and have little metageneric awareness and/or the teacher have no assessment of the student’s metageneric awareness. A teacher develops metageneric awareness and assesses a student’s generic awareness through his participation in a discourse community to talk about his awareness of what he knows about genre.

Metageneric awareness of genre is an important learning dimension of genre to be introduced with primary students and developed through large group talk about text
with intermediate students (Chapman, 1999). Research supports the importance of students thinking about their thinking, that pressing for the ability to plan, monitor success and correct errors when appropriate (Brown, Collins, & Durgid, 1989). A teacher develops metageneric cognition through talk about the text and facilitating the ongoing participation in a discourse community.

A student's learning through genre, the third dimension of genre learning, is about social and cognitive construction (Chapman, 1994, 1995). Contemporary genre theorists see genre as a cultural, cognitive tool for supporting and extending understanding of both the individual and the group. Genre is, according to Berkenkotter & Huckin, the "intellectual scaffolds on which community-based knowledge is constructed" (1993). Freeman & Medway (1994) suggest that disciplines are communities of practice that construct knowledge and representations of reality in particular ways. Russel (1997) describes disciplines as activity systems and “the process of learning (to write) new genres, is a part of a process of expanding one’s involvement with activity systems”. Russel argues that learning to use genres as cognitive tools, is more important than adopting textual features (1997, p. 516). A student's whole process of learning the information in the genres occurs through his collaborative talk about the text with others. “Texts are constantly reinvented as readers construct different understandings for them in a hermeneutic circle. Meanings for texts are dynamic, not static, as individuals, texts, and contexts change and interact” (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994). Students need to participate in a discourse community to talk about what they are learning to learn “through” genre.

Researchers suggest that along with the conditions of engagement, inquiry and exploration, the use of discourse within the community of learners to talk about learning genre, learning about genres and learning through genres (talk about text), is another important condition of effective genre learning (Chapman, 1999).
Condition of Genre Learning: Mentoring/Apprenticeship

Today a student learns genre, the knowledge of the relationship between form, function and strategies and conventions, in a social context. For a student to become literate, he negotiates literacy "interdependently". Rogoff determines that cognitive development of an individual occurs in contexts where... "children are active in learning and in managing their social partners, and their partners are active in structuring situations that provide children with access to observe and participate in culturally valued skills and perspectives" (1990, p. 37). Rogoff's ideas on collaboration are not new. Dewey suggested this concept a long time ago. "The principle that development comes through interaction and that education is essentially a social process, this quality is realized to the degree which individuals form a community group" (1938, p. 58).

Much like Dewey's ideas on social process, Vygotsky, in his cultural-historical theory of human development, believes that children need to be socialized into the way of the culture and that individual literacy is only possible through participation in a literate culture. He believes this occurs through apprenticeship in the community, immersion and participation in the work in the community and by insisting that participants take responsibility for what they are capable of. Vygotsky believes that more capable peers are role models demonstrating learning in use, scaffold and guide the learning and participation, and provide assistance and support when needed. Lave agrees with theory on the roles of apprentices and mentors in learning contexts. "Apprentices learn to think, argue, act and interact in increasingly knowledgeable ways with people who do something well, by doing it with them as legitimate, peripheral participants" (1988, p. 2). Vygotsky's critical tenant of social interaction and the "zone of proximal learning" (1978) informs the understanding of the value of a shared thinking process, ritualized during the time when support of an expert is accessible to the learner (Rogoff, 1990, p.192). Research studies that express the importance of mentoring and apprenticeship roles in
literacy learning contexts to cultivate genre date back to the 1970s.

Mentors in the community of genre learners provide demonstrations and models of genres in use. Effective teachers demonstrate what can be done (and their own attitude toward what can be done), and they help others to do it. They make newcomers members of the clubs to which they themselves already belong. Tremendous but unsuspected amounts of learning are accomplished in this manner (Smith, 1978).

**Condition of Genre Learning: Social Collaboration**

Genre by a contemporary definition is social (Chapman, 1999). Read alouds of various genres are social. A speaker/reader has listeners. Writing is social. A writer has readers. Literary events are social. A leader interacts with real social others. Mentoring and apprenticeship roles are social and collaborative. Chapman reminds us that genre is an emergent process and that it involves both social and cognitive construction (1999).

Engagement, inquiry/exploration, personal connecting/meaning making and talk about text are conditions cultivated through a social, collaborative group supported with mentor and apprenticeship roles.

Learning is a cognitive function in that children invent genres for particular communicative purposes, much as they invent spelling and punctuation. It is social in that children learn through the interaction of others and in that characteristics of the writing situation itself determine the genres the children use. (Chapman, 1995a).

**Cultivating Genre/Literacy Learning: The Difference a Teacher Can Make**

The classroom teacher is responsible for the coherence of the learning conditions critical to genre cultivation. The teacher makes the difference. It requires the adaptability of the teacher to manage this complex array of conditions for students to foster connections with genre. Wells confirms, with his research, the difference a teacher can make with their decisions about the classroom learning conditions (1986).
If they choose to, they can make, of their classrooms, communities on which members engage collaboratively in actions which they find personally meaningful and socially relevant; in which students are assisted to appropriate the valued resources of the culture, including the artifacts and skills that are not purely linguistic; and in which individual creativity and diversity of culture, class, and gender are also recognized and valued (Wells, 1986, p. 265).

If the seductive appeal of the perfect method is flawed, if there is no one “perfect practice” for teaching literacy, teachers, policy makers, researchers, and teacher educators, need to recognize that the answer is not in the method, but in the teacher” (Duffy and Hoffman, 1999), and the conditions of learning set up by her. Socioculturalists continue to lobby for the shift of the role of the teacher to that of fellow-learner, the “leader of a community committed to the co-construction of knowledge,” as one key tenant of the resolution to the conflict between traditional teaching and unstructured learning, and one critical condition for cultivating literacy in the classroom (Wells, 1999). The role of the teacher is to respond contingently by assisting students when needed or being able to withdraw and hand over control whenever they show themselves capable of proceeding independently. The role of the teacher is to encourage the community of learners to seek solutions to their own problems and to use peers as a resource for learning (Cambourne, Geekie and Fitzsimmons, 1999).

Duffy and Hoffman remind us of the adaptive nature of good teachers. Duffy reports that effective teachers are at times, highly explicit and sometimes less explicit in the way they explain things in other ways (Duffy and Hoffman, 1999). He suggests that not one kind of program is best, the effectiveness of a program lies in the abilities of the teacher to be thoughtfully eclectic and modify programs to meet the needs of their students. Stahl explains the need for an adaptive teacher with an understanding of learning theory and “principled eclecticism” (Stahl, 1997). Shanahan and Neuman (1997) describe this as “methodological eclecticism”. Numerous research projects establish that
combinations of methods orchestrated by the teacher who decides what to do in light
of children's needs gives the best teaching results (see Barrs, 1994; Bond & Dykstra,
1967; Pearson, 1997; Stahl & Millar, 1989). Literacy instruction effectiveness lay not with
a single program or method but, rather, with a teacher who thoughtfully and analytically
integrates various programs, materials, and methods as the situation demands (Duffy &
Hoffman, 1999). Charlotte Huck and Gay Su Pinnell firmly believe that it is the regular
classroom teacher who needs to be empowered, and honoured, for their critical role as
the "responsible, informed player" to facilitate successful literacy learning for all students.

Classroom teachers are the most important factor in the success
or failure of at-risk children in our schools. They are responsible for the
minute-by-minute instruction; decisions teachers make and the kind of
instruction and support they provide make the difference between success
and failure. Even in schools with strong instructional support programs
and specialist teachers, children spend most of their time with their
classroom teachers. For children, classroom teachers maybe the last and
Conclusions on the Review of the Literature

This review of the literature on genre tells me that there is full agreement on genre as a powerful concept and defined as more than: "a useful label for different kinds of writing that have different functions in written discourse and in society" (Barrs, 1994). It also tells me of the agreement by experts on the importance of the role of genre, (the thinking about large-scale text and speech structures, as well as control of the smaller parts of text) in learning to read and write to deepen and enrich literacy learning. With this review, however, I discovered that beyond this agreement about the importance of genre, there is less agreement on the practices and contexts to support genre cultivation.

Clearly the literature on genre indicates that there has been a considerable shift in the definition, conception and conditions of learning of genre in the last thirty years. The most dramatic shift has been the redefining and reconceptualizing of genre teaching practice and conditions of genre learning. Many contemporary genrists have reinvented genre as a context for learning rather than a format to be taught and call for classroom practices and contexts that attend to the features of the situation rather than the features of the text to cultivate genre. A few traditional genrists continue to disagree, advising that genre should continue to be taught in the traditional manner of direct teaching of a genre structure rather than through a purposeful situation.

The strongest disagreement over revising genre theory comes from a group of Australian genrists who believe genre should be taught through a direct teaching approach, although the specifics of how this would be accomplished are not detailed. Their research that demands the direct teaching of genre does not take into consideration large bodies of research on emergent literacy, the socio-cultural construction of knowledge, the writing process, and some other widely and commonly held beliefs literacy experts have today. They miss making connections to the rich
collection of literature for addressing the complexity of human learning. Studies on spoken and written language, the active construction process of language learning of Vygotsky (1978), Wells (1986, 1999), Bruner, (1986), Cambourne (1999), Rogoff et al (1996) etc. have been ignored. This research of traditionalists Martin (1993), Christie and Rothery (1987) disagree with the clustered summary agreements conducted by Flippo (2001), an expert study of a large group of highly respected reading experts beliefs and agreements on contexts and practices that support reading. The evidence of Reading Researchers In Search of Common Ground (Flippo 2001) is, however, on common ground with the larger group of progressive genrists such as Bakhtin (1986), Bazerman (1997), and Chapman (1999).

Conclusions

Review of the research indicates that some genrists have not paid attention to a number of important issues. For example they ignore the issue of conceptualizing of genre teaching beyond direct teaching to the organizing of social, collaborative, learning contexts or the situations for genre cultivation. Some genrists ignore the social nature of genre learning, choosing to keep it in the context of “one size fits all” direct teaching (Kress, 1982) and by ignoring the large body of research on the social nature of learning.

Learning, according to some contemporary genrists, is an active construction process, not understood through just direct teaching or osmosis. They recommend a social, active construction process for the learning of genre involving collaboration, discussion and an emphasis on the role of relationships in the class. Many genrists have a contempt for any approach to literacy education other than the direct transmission of genre form and structure (Barrs, 1994), convinced that it is only through the direct instruction stressing structure of genre that students will succeed in fostering connections with genre.
Today some genrists continue to focus on conceptualizing genre learning as product-oriented learning dismissing the role of process learning in supporting students in their approximating of genre. They ignore the large body of research on the process approach to writing of Murray (1975), Holdaway (1974) and Calkins (1994) that argue that direct, explicit teaching is insensitive to the students genre writing attempts.

Some genrists also ignore the role of the teacher in their use of principled eclectism to create learning situations that work to meet the need of particular groups of students. Direct instruction of genre, in a rigid structuralists sense, negates the development of active roles for the students and the potential for apprenticeship and mentoring roles thus limiting the relationship between teacher and student. The imbalance in the length and amount of conversation between the teacher and students stifles the development of a relationship among them in a "one size fits all" teaching method. The teacher provides strategic teaching that dominates the conversations causing students to have briefer and fewer purposeful interactions and remain largely anonymous to the teacher.

A number of genrists ignore the amassed literature on the parallels between language and literacy development, emphasizing the differences between these in genre theory. They also ignore the parallels between learning to write and read, and the amount of thinking about genre that may be going on when writers read and readers write. Contemporary genrists believe in the value of connecting all language processes for genre learning.

Traditionally, genrists had a limited view of the variety and complexity of genres. Today genrists have broadened the scope of genres to include traditional and nontraditional genres, primary and secondary genres and genres within genres. Traditional genrists are concerned with the explicit teaching of certain genres such as "power genres". Today many genrists do not believe in the limiting of teaching to only
"power genres". They believe that what is important is being in the position to insure that the writing reaches the audience. They contend that knowing power genres does not guarantee access to power.

Traditional genrists ask for students to learn a particular way of thinking, a particular genre through imitation. This is contrary to modern genrists who invite students to not only take on a voice and stance they have never used, but also to develop a way of thinking, of writing in their own or a chosen voice, not one they have been told to use. Today, rather that having students imitate models, students participate in conversations about the deconstructing and reconstructing of assorted genres to understand and to own them.

This is a brief examination of the way contemporary researchers redefine and reconceptualize genre learning contexts to revitalize the role of genre in the primary classroom (Chapman, 1999; Bazerman, 1997). Today, theorists are now better prepared to advise teachers on best genre teaching practice. Replacing traditional views of genre with these newer ones (Table 6), has a much greater potential to revitalize the role of genre in the classroom in a way that has not yet and most likely cannot be accomplished with traditional direct teaching practice of genre.

**Table 6 SUMMARY: REDEFINING, RECONCEPTUALIZING, RECONDITIONING GENRE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Genre Learning</th>
<th>Contemporary Genre Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>impose, hand over formula</td>
<td>discover formula, invent, inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transmission to individual</td>
<td>transaction between community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning imposed</td>
<td>authentic, purposeful, engage through choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rote learning, rule bound</td>
<td>rules discovered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rigid, explicit instruction</td>
<td>principled eclectic, collaborative instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher directs learning</td>
<td>shared responsibility of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one at a time</td>
<td>analogies between genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discreet categories, literary</td>
<td>genres in genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stress regularities</td>
<td>irregular, invented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stress structure /construct text</td>
<td>stress purpose/construct other worlds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regulate content, teacher talks</td>
<td>choice of content, talk about text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listening, writing</td>
<td>participation in discourse community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genre end in itself</td>
<td>learning in response to social situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imposed through teaching model</td>
<td>situated, social, active learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>product oriented</td>
<td>process and product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decontextualized</td>
<td>contextual and decontextualized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>one dimensional learning: genre</th>
<th>3-D: learn genre, about, through</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>student: one role learner</td>
<td>student: many roles, mentor, apprentice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no special support of at-risk</td>
<td>guided learning with scaffolding, for at-risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading and writing separate</td>
<td>integrated language processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher owned responsibilities</td>
<td>shared learning responsibilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER THREE

PROCEDURES

The Design of the Study: Show and Tell

I have written this thesis as an account of the "goodness of fit" between the design and practice of the Daily Letter (DL) and recent research to foster connections with genre through a series of stories that "show" a primary regular class participating in the sharing of the DL. These real life vignettes examine the match between the recent redefined, reconceptualized genre of research and the DL practice in my grade two/three class. I have written this collection of vignettes to study the students during the DL to showcase the conditions or the critical success features of the DL and examine their "goodness of fit" with what the research tells us.

Conceptual Schema of This Ethnographic Research

This study specifically shows the organization of a community of genre learners. I interpret the situation primarily from the perspective of the individuals being studied in light of what Geertz characterizes as "thick description"(1973). I examine the collective social action of the sharing of the DL. I examine a community of learners and the regular structured ways these students interact to share a multitude of interests, choices and purposes for their DLs. These vignettes provide a window into a literacy culture as the members related to one to another in their growing collective understanding of a wide variety of genres, about genres and through genres. They show the design of learning conditions that affect how the genre learning is cultivated.

Phenomenological Nature of this Study

I study the phenomenon of the DL from the perspective of the members of the community experiencing it. I observe and describe the students participating in the DL for almost every day of the school year for several years. I note the behaviour of the
students in their workplace, their own classroom, to understand what it means to the class being studied. I focus on understanding the conditions under which genre is cultivated. Data collection procedures and instruments have a minimum influence on the phenomenon of genre acquisition. This grounded theory on the DL is generated from the data of samples of DLs and the notes on the performance of the DL resulting from the insights and understanding of the review of the data.

The Naturalistic Setting

I conduct this research in a natural setting, a primary classroom with the regular occurring assembly of a class organization each year. I observe what happens with the DL as it naturally occurs without my manipulation of variables, simulation, or externally imposed structure on the situation. The data is interpreted in the context of the classroom where the DL takes place.

Typically ethnographic research is not concerned about the generalizability and the accurate and adequate description of the classroom. There is a good chance, however, of generalizability of these results because there is a good correspondence between this context under study, my regular classroom, and other regular primary classrooms.

Holistic Perspective

Data analysis had been inductive over several years as I concentrate on the entire classroom context maintaining a holistic view. The hypothesis on cultivating genre emerges from the data through the research, not from a formulation of one prior to the research. The methodology emerges as the research progresses.

Data Collection Procedures

This ethnographic research involves a variety of data-collection procedures, the primary one being observation of DL samples and sharing. The mainstay of data collection in this research is conducted by me, the classroom teacher, as participant-
observer. I am identified openly as a researcher. I assumed the role of active participant. Field notes are the basic format of data.

Sets of Data

I use copies of variety of the DL, stories of teachers, students and parents and narrative field notes. In September I collect data to determine each student’s literacy learning level using various measures such as informal spelling, reading and writing inventories, the Qualitative Reading Inventory II (1995), running records of both DLs and trade book literature, anecdotal records describing word and comprehension strategies, problem solving methods used, and informal interviews of both the students, teachers and parents.

Observation

I generate data from observing the students as they participate in the DL sharing. I observe their expressions of thoughts, feelings and actions. I record what events happen as I observe the students.

I do not use a structured observation inventory. In fact, the observation is quite unstructured. Observation is a continuous process in the classroom during the DL, for one to two hours each school day over the course of several school years.

At times I participate as a privileged observer. After “handing over” the leading of the DL to more capable students I focus my energy on the research and move around the classroom. I summarize and synthesize field notes immediately after each observation. Samples of DLs are kept with the field notes.

Participant Selection

Teacher

I participate in the study as an experienced teacher certified with a Professional Certificate from the B.C. College of Teachers. I have completed my Master's Degree
course work. I also lead a number of literacy workshops and courses for the school district and university. My interest is in life long literacy learning for all students in the class.

Students

The students I observe in this study are enrolled in my English Grade Two/Three in a dual track, English and French Immersion Elementary school of 550 students from Kindergarten to Grade Seven. Children range in ages from six to nine years of age. The children typically come from a middle-class neighbourhood of two-thirds Caucasian, one-third Chinese, population. All families have similar socio-economic backgrounds. The students have attended this neighbourhood school since kindergarten except for students who transfer into Grade Two or Three from other places or other programs (French Immersion). Parents are actively involved in the school and supportive of home and school literacy initiatives.

Assistants

The SEA (special educational assistant) assigned to my room is agreeable to assisting in the preteaching and preparing of the DL with any or all of the students in the class. Other participants are sixty Simon Fraser University preservice teachers who design their own DL genres for use in grades one to seven.

Research Site Selection

The site is selected because of the characteristics of it being a regular primary classroom, making it suitable for this research. This is an appropriate setting because I have the opportunity to observe the creation of the DL each school day as both teacher and observer.
School

The school utilizes a "pull out" learning assistance model for the identification and intervention for at-risk students from Kindergarten through Grade Seven. Two learning assistants provide service to the school, one helps English-speaking students, and the other helps French Immersion students. Students in Grade Three who transfer out of the French Immersion track are placed in a regular English classroom and helped by the English Learning Assistant. Students with English as their second language receive an assessment and placement in a pull out English as a Second Language class for one or two half hour blocks per week.

Identification of Subject

Subjects observed are the regular classroom students during the sharing of the DL. Individual students are routinely observed according to their role in the classroom as the moderator/ mentor or apprentice/collaborator.

Summary of the Procedure Discussion of What Research Was Done, How It Was Done

The observation of the making and sharing of DLs takes place between September and May over several school years. I collect data on the making and sharing of the DLs. I organize samples of DLs with accompanying notes on my observations of students working with their DLs into vignettes to examine the "goodness of fit" between the DL and contemporary genre research.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Part One: Defining and Conceptualizing the Teaching Practice of the *Daily Letter*

**Defining the *Daily Letter***

... it is essential that children are deeply involved in writing that they share their texts with others, and that they perceive themselves as authors, I believe these three things are interconnected. A sense of authorship comes from the struggle to put something big and vital into print, and from seeing one's own printed words reach the hearts and minds of readers (Calkins, 1986, p. 9).

The *Daily Letter* (*DL*) is my instructional tool for literacy learning. It is a primary genre I created from observing a teacher working with her students on the shared news process common to many primary (K-3) classrooms where a whole class community comes together to read, write and share with others what is important to them (Stauffer, 1970). The *DL* it is a tool that teaches emergent and developing literacy processes and fosters connections with genre that is suitable for use in grades one to seven.

This tool is called the *Daily Letter*, because it happens daily. It is called the *Daily Letter* because it is composed on an 8 1/2 x 11 page, or letter size page, formatted into nine components (see Figure 4.10). I have invented this tool to teach both the individual student and the community of students for educating both their hearts and minds.

**COMPONENTS OF THE *DAILY LETTER***

The Shared Reading Text takes up most of the front of the *DL*. The teacher or student prepares her own one page of text. She will read her genre out loud later, and talk about the text to foster connections to her genre.

A Stretch Chart is posted in clear view to assist students with the sharing of text. It is used to guide the participation in the discourse community about the text on the front of the *DL*, or the "stretching" of the students' understanding of the text. This chart is the list...
of clues for the moderator’s strategic teaching of the text. It facilitates the reflection of the various “stances” (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994) readers use to make meaning of a particular piece of text (writer’s stance, reader’s stance, personnel, metacognitive stance etc.).

Students actively code and mark their text with coloured highlighters.

Sample Stretch Chart:

**Taking a Stance on Personal Response**

Find a word, phrase or sentence that helps you respond to:

- a person word, proper name, improper
- a person who reminds you of someone you know
- reminds you of yourself
- who seems real or life-like to you
- something important to you
- something you wonder about

Word Study # 2: Shared Reading Vocabulary are on the front of the DL. The DL has several lines of words after the main text. A student reads these to practice reading strategies. The short list of vocabulary (no more than two lines) is chosen from the text. A student practices these words and converses with the teacher (teacher as co-learner), the moderator and peers, on useful strategies and skills for decoding words.

The “Ask Me” section of the DL helps a parent enter into a conversation with their child about one aspect of the DL at home. A parent can ask his/her child something specific, and avoid the classic line “What did you do at school today?” Example: Ask me to tell you the part of The Twits I liked the best.

The Word Study # 3, Shared Writing Word Study is located on the back of the DL. These lines are for a student to encode words dictated by the moderator. The list of
words encourages the joint attention for students in a conversation to relate and reflect upon encoding words, spelling origins, patterns and meanings usually from the text.

The Communication with parent(s) or caregivers is an important component of the DL. A student carries notes from the teacher to his parent(s) or from the parent and child to the teacher, as the DL goes to school and back each day. This is a component of the DL where compliments can be given and received by any of the people working with the DL.

Poetry, songs or chants are on the DL each day. A student writes or finds a suitable poem to go with his topic. By the end of the year he will have a collection of more than 190 poems, songs and chants that have been shared in class during school, and with parent(s) or caregiver(s) at home.

There is a space on the back of the DL where the thinking and learning that has taken place can be retold, related to and reflected on. A student thinks about his understandings and share them with others. mini lessons, a short, relevant strategically, "needing to be taught" lesson may be taught here.

The format of the DL changes with the literacy needs of the students. There are many possibilities of new features suitable to meet the needs of a particular group. This genre is flexible enough to accommodate each unique community of learners. (Example: joke of the day, blessed books or sign language).
Components of DL Conditions of the DL Learning

The DL is one page (double sided) of text constructed by me, the teacher, or a student-as-teacher, for sharing with the class. The DL is the community of learners' source of attention for the DL sharing where a student-as-teacher will see her own writing, reach the hearts and minds of her classmates through nine activities related to her genre: shared/guided and interactive reading/writing and special attention to how letters and words work in reading/writing.

Table 7 Components of the Daily Letter and Conditions of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of DL</th>
<th>Conditions of Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shared text (read aloud, shared/guided reading)</td>
<td>engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visuals, graphics (read aloud, guided reading)</td>
<td>inquiry and exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading words (attention to letters/decoded words)</td>
<td>meaning making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home school connection (shared writing, talking)</td>
<td>personal connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing words (attention to letters/encoded words)</td>
<td>collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communications/compliments (shared writing)</td>
<td>participation in discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poetry songs and chants (read aloud, shared reading)</td>
<td>talk about text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflections (interactive writing, independent writing)</td>
<td>Mentoring/apprenticing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wild card, special feature (any of elements above)</td>
<td>shared learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adam’s *Daily Letter* (See Appendix B page 212)

Process Approach: The 4 P’s: Planning/Preparation/Practice/Performance of the DL

Adam ‘plans’ for his first DL. He chooses to write a narrative about his cats and create a series of nine components of his Cat DL, and plan for the related literacy learning activities:

- text study about Luke and Licorice the cats for shared guided reading
- drawings of his cats for guided reading of visual literacy
- decoding word study (Luke, white, place, like nice, name, love, mice) for word play
- “Ask me” about Adam’s cats (Ask me about Luke and Licorice) for talk about school at home
- Message or Communication line for independent writing for a purpose
- encoding word study for dictating/talk about cat words from text
- Cat poetry (written by Adam) for shared, guided reading
- line for each student to write something about their pet for shared writing
- additional feature: Luke and Licorice visit the classroom demonstration
Adam prepares these components coherently into his DL over several school days. He photocopies the finished DL and gives each person in the class a copy. He selects the stretch chart he will use to support his talk about text. He practises how he will “moderate” over the talk about this text with his mother at home. He is then ready to be the “moderator”, to perform his DL genre and share the components that make up his DL with the class at his prescheduled literary event.

Adam, is a new student to our class. His first DL shares his adoration of pets with the class. This immediately cements his relationship with a circle of fellow pet lovers that will continue for the rest of the year. This initiates him into the class as a capable presenter and valued group member sharing a common interest.

Other students go on to write pet DLS. For example, Vanessa’s DL about Kirby, her dog, has a very sad ending. Christina and Kevin have pet stories with happy endings. Whether happy or sad, these are the important stories in the hearts and minds of students in grade two and three. These are the contexts for full engagement of these literacy learners as they come to know and care about one another. These are also the contexts that teach all those elements of recognized, comprehensive literacy programs (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) at the same time.
A literacy event is a communication act that represents any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants interaction ands their interpretive processes (Heath cited in Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Each month a student-as-teacher, the moderator (she is called this when she is teaching the class, or "moderating" over the talk about text), has one or two occasions to mentor her whole class in genre learning. To mentor the class, she leads the sharing of her DL with her peers, moderating over the collaborative participation in talk about text and the nine other literacy learning activities associated with her genre. On the days a student is not sharing his DL, he is apprenticed into thinking and talking about text with another class member moderating over the sharing of her DL, until it is his turn to share his DL genre again.

In this daily DL sharing event the community actively learns genre, learns about genre and learns through genre, interpreting their individual and collective ideas, stories and worlds through the close examination of the text on the DL that day. Day by day the students share a common background experience that is remembered and expanded as the class develops control over the social processes that cultivate agreement about genre and the meaning of things. The teacher, or a student-as-teacher, oversees the sharing of her genre and associated DL components on her scheduled day. The whole class participates actively as a discourse community to the talk about text as a daily ritual.

Chantelle's DL (assisted by Heather and Emily), The Scary Mummy (See Appendix B page 213)

The Scary Mummy DL is a literacy event to remember. Chantelle has a robe of linen draped around her waist, tied to one side with a gold tassel. She has an exquisitely painted face of black kohl and a gold ankh hanging from her ear lobe. A lapis and jasper necklace sprawls across her neck. The procession of Heather, Emily and Chantelle
forms and moves with stately grace to the front of the class. Chantelle steps forward taking a censer from her companion. She holds out her arms, as in an offering for the ka, and begins to read The Scary Mummy DL. After performing the ceremonial reading of The Scary Mummy DL, Chantelle uses a Barbie Doll to explain the preservation of the dead and describe the sacred resting place of the Pharaoh. The students watch as if slaves themselves on their faces at an invisible tomb entrance. For this brief time the readers have been transported back along the ancient Nile for this intriguing talk about mummification.

The demonstration of mummification gives way to the formal sharing of each component of the Scary Mummy DL. This budding Egyptologist and her assistants have meticulously prepared their read aloud, talk about text, Egyptian word studies (decoding and encoding words), a Shel Silverstein mummy poem, and reflection on mummies. The conclusion of the Egyptian DL brings a spontaneous round of applause from the students.

This is a situated, social (three moderators), and active community of learners fostering strong connections with literacy with the sharing of The Scary Mummy DL for about one hour (see Table 8) This is a good example of the creation of a literacy learning event that recognizes the close relationship between reading, writing, talking, listening and demonstration. The blending together of all these language processes creates a context where literacy learners, whatever their strengths and weaknesses, have support as meaning makers through whole class participation in discourse around each of the components of The Scary Mummy DL.

The world is filled with demonstrations and if we engage with one of them, we internalize some aspect or portion of that particular demonstration. If we engage with repeated demonstrations of the same action and/or artifact, we begin to select other aspects of it to internalize and, as a consequence, we begin to interpret, organize and reorganize our
developing knowledge until we can perform and/or produce that demonstrate or a
variation of it. This is another way of saying we learn (Cambourne, 1988).

Table 8 The Scary Mummy Daily Letter: Sixty Minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduce and Read DL mummy demonstration</th>
<th>5 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk About Text with stretch chart</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Study (decoding words in list from the text)</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Study (encoding words from the text)</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry Reading/talk about text</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Reflection/determine genre</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 60 minutes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Roles of the Daily Letter Genre Learning: Moderator

We are the meaning makers every one of us: children, parents, teachers. To try to make
sense, to construct stories and to share them with others in speech and in writing is an
essential part of being human. For those of us who are more knowledgeable and more
mature-parents and teachers-the responsibility is clear: to interact with those in our care
in such a way as to foster and enrich their meaning making (Wells, 1986).

The moderator presents her choice of DL. As moderator, she leads the talk about
each of the components of her DL inviting apprentices to engage in the process too. She
demonstrates what she is interested in and knows about (Table 8). She actively shares
her cognitive range of knowledge about print. She demonstrates how to read fluently.
This mentor thinks out loud and explains what reading/writing strategies she is using.
Over time, with her experience as moderator, and exposure to a different DL each day by
her peers, she internalizes genre as actions of her literary community and develops confident attitudes about reading, writing and speaking. Through discussion the moderator focuses the students' attention on genre as a way of thinking and communicating ideas within a particular context, for example, when a moderator shares a legend on her DL, students are exposed to a way to represent and communicate history by people within a particular culture. A moderator may invite apprentices to write their own legend as a way of exploring genre using criteria or attributes determined in the sharing of the DL. Literacy and genre are cultivated as students act and react to one another with each DL they lead and share.

**Adam as Moderator**

Moderators have many leadership/teaching roles. Adam designs a strategy for a fair way to select students to talk about text when he is the moderator. He has a formal, systematic plan to ask one person from each group to share their ideas, first choosing a girl and then a boy. This way all members of the class are given equal chance to talk. Every voice, no matter how tiny is heard. Overseeing of the details of the DL is an important function of a moderator/public speaker.

Adam will see twenty other students model the sharing of text as moderator, and have one or two opportunities to have this role himself each month. Over the course of the year, Adam will participate in almost one hundred ninety other DLs, and moderate over 8-12 of these himself. He will become literate through his inclusion as part of the larger literate group as they relate to each other to accomplish social and communicative functions. He will have time to practice, goal set and get better with each DL he creates and leads.

In his role as moderator, Adam is put in the unique position of being the one to accept and value the contributions of his peers and to facilitate their efforts to make-meaning in the large group share. Being the leader of the DL is a challenge to encounter,
process and appropriate knowledge with his peers. Adam as student-as-teacher (moderator), shares authority in the meaning-negotiation process, creating a situation where apprentices seek verification of ideas within the community as a whole, rather than depending on the sole authority of the teacher (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994).

**Roles of the Daily Letter Genre Learning: Teacher**

The teacher participates as co-learner in the apprenticing community assisting in a manner flexible enough to support the needs of the individual students and the collective group. The DL sharing is what Bruner refers to as a “forum”, which means that the teacher for the most part, assumes a passive role (1986).

**Leading From Behind**

In the community of DL learners I do not do something for Adam which he can do for himself. I do not give the impression that I am bigger, better, more capable, more experience and more important. Having Adam do what he can do for himself empowers him to experience his own literacy abilities. I can show trust and faith in his abilities, give him a sense of well being based on his realization of his own capacity to meet and solve problems, and develop self-efficacy through his role as moderator. This shows respect for him as a capable literacy mentor and apprentice.

The DL sharing empowers Adam to direct his own, and the larger groups learning. My role as teacher is to give Adam room to move. He tries, I step back. I trust that Adam as the moderator, or student-as-teacher, can solve problems and take the literacy leader role seriously. I can provide less assistance and more encouragement. The empowerment of Adam to teach his genre to the class as a literacy event prepares him to have his own voice and develop positive attitudes toward literacy learning. When he becomes the moderator, he is placed at the centre of his literacy learning event, demonstrating how both he and I can function in the classroom in various leadership, mentor, apprentice and collaborative roles. As teacher I am necessarily aware of the
need for the complementary use of traditional genre teaching and process learning with the organizing of the DL and can step in when and if necessary (as can other mentors in the class).

**Roles of the Daily Letter Genre Learning: Students**

The students in the class are the apprentices, the fledgling literacy learners at the DL sharing. They learn new genres. They learn about genres. They learn through genres. They are invited to make personal connections and new meanings. They gain new insights from the connections and understanding expressed by their peers. The students can compare their DL to others and to work together to extend both their individual and the collective understanding of a topic or genre. They develop metacognition of the reading and writing in the Shared Text Study, Word Reading Study and Word Writing Study, participating in a mini comprehensive literacy program that leads them to rise above themselves, to move ahead of their present development. They can take their ideas from the DL and apply them to future DLs. This knowledge gained through situated, social action, in turn, can be applied to new situations outside of the classroom.

Children are socialized into literacy through participation in a kind of social dialogue: a child processes the words of others (both spoken and written) dialogically into his/her own words with the help of other’s words (Chapman, 1997, p. 45; Bakhtin, 1986, p. 163).
Steven's *Daily Letter*: Armadillo Rodeo  (See Appendix B page 214)

Steven's *DL* teaches me how students can provide powerful modelling and support for one another in various roles around the classroom to learn literacy. Steven's autism, learning disability, and English as a second language, makes it a challenge to plan his literacy learning. Steven loves books and selects one to talk about with his teaching assistant Sally each day. Sally comments on how much he loves one particular book Armadillo Rodeo by Jan Brett, a book about an armadillo that falls in love with a cowboy boot. They construct a *DL* which Steven decides he wants to share with the class at his own *DL* sharing.

I suggest scripting what Steven will say at his *DL* sharing and practise it ahead of time. Sally rehearses with him. On the day of Steven's presentation, he refuses any help from Sally. Steven introduces and reads his *DL* to the class. He leads the *DL* unassisted. This is a wondrous, remarkable event with Steven calling on people by name to share their ideas. He makes eye contact with them during each component shared.

Since kindergarten Steven has been known to only call people by the name "girl" or "boy", with the exception of calling his sister, "sister". During his *DL* sharing, Steven consistently calls on each student by name, thanking some of them by name, as they finish making their contribution to the talk about text. When a student goes to clap at the end of Steven's *DL*, others students quietly restrain him, reminding him of Steven's sensitivity to loud noises. I am rendered speechless by Steven's marvellous participation with the class. Steven goes on to share more *DLs* with the class this year.

Steven wants more than anything to be included in having a role in the *DL* sharing and he conducts it just as everyone does before him. The students are as intrigued as I am of the language this boy is using to participate in the actions of this community. They watch me, to see my reaction, as he proceeds. I cannot begin to fathom the importance of this inclusive relationship between the class, as the skilled
learners, and Steven as the less-skilled learner, working side-by-side in the fostering of connections to literacy. Each and every student, is considerate of the relationships that exist in the classroom and their role in supporting Steven's literacy development during his sharing time. Including Steven in the DL ritual each day has helped him develop and share his intelligence with some cognitive, emotional and social skills improving into the normal range. The DL has brought Steven into the mainstream interaction pattern with enormous growth in his attachment to the group and his willingness to participate with them in each of the roles of mentor and apprentice.

**Defining the Daily Letter: A Community of Literacy Learners**

When we know our students, we can in real and practical ways:
acknowledge and respect individual differences; allow, indeed value, personal choices: promote autonomy; give children responsibility for their learning; encourage children to monitor and evaluate their own learning and progress; and so on . . . (Zola, 1998).

The DL translates modern genre theory and sociocultural theory into practice with a model of "community of learners" (Rogoff et al, 1996), where each member can know, help and learn with each other in real and practical ways through a special kind of mentoring and apprenticing community. Everyone is a resource for everyone else. It is a supportive classroom, an attachment village (Table 9), with the guiding principle of interdependence and caring, a cooperative spirited group without individualism or competition. The students are attached to the teacher, and have peers as their working attachments, helping them feel more secure, lessening anxiety and leading to more focussed attention. A student does not need to . . . "unconsciously assign greater value to a self-created internal universe than to anything or anyone in the classroom" (Mate, 1999). The community shares the belief that reading and writing and sharing is the heart of their literacy focus at school.
Table 9 Creating A Village of Attachments With the DL

- select student to substitute for the teacher as the first leader of the DL with care
- match-make with other support staff or any others responsible for at-risk student(s)
- recreate and preserve the group as an extended family
- make sure at-risk, or low progress students are “covered” by the teacher (expert)
- cultivate the importance of relationships with students, between students
- cultivate a closeness that cannot be threatened
- make the child sharing her stories feel valued

adapted from Gordon Neufeld Lecture Series, Trinity Western University, 2001

Jacquie’s DL “Michael”: A Community Building DL (See Appendix B page 215)

The DL on Michael is a deeply emotional one for all of us. Jacquie’s DL is about her brother Michael who passed away after a valiant battle with cancer at the age of fourteen. This DL facilitates a student like Jacquie in the sharing of this important personal story, Michael’s story. Jacquie decides that her DL genre will not be just about Michael’s death, but about Michael’s life, complete with a brief explanation about his medical condition (personal narrative) and some information about the “Relay for Friends” that is dedicated to Michael (expository text). Rather than supporting her written text with photographs or drawings, Jacquie chooses to bring in a collection of framed pictures of her brother.

This DL unfolds with grace and dignity as this poised, eight year old, shares her important story, heart and soul. Jacquie’s DL creates a situation where students come to know her, and one another, better. Sharing important life stories helps class members become comfortable talking, working, and being with one another. A teacher cannot make students feel secure and attached rather the attachments will develop as they gain confidence and experience with their DL. Their attention and emotional security remain
intertwined though the sharing of their childhood stories. "As they come to know each other, children and adults come to value the unique contributions that each person offers to the learning community in the classroom" (Short, 1990, p. 38).

Emily’s *Daily Letter, Leaving the Nest: A Community Building Daily Letter*

Emily’s family is moving to Chicago. She and her mother come to see me with a unique plan to have the *DL* forwarded to them in Chicago for the rest of the year. They express how important the *DL* had become to them as a family.

Emily came to Grade Three as a struggling reader. She has benefited from a routine of receiving morning preteaching of the *DL* before the afternoon sharing. Her full inclusion in participating in the *DL* with no pull out for learning assistance has proved successful. She has made significant progress in acquiring skills, understandings and a positive attitude toward literacy through her attachment to a capable literacy group. Improved attention through a number of strong attachments has motivated Emily to work even harder in her literacy learning. Emily has gained acceptance and thus feels safe and secure. Alyssa, Emily’s friend, offers to fax the *DL* to Emily each day until the school year ends. Emily’s mother is also motivated to improve Emily’s achievement, committed to a half hour review each night to consolidate the learning that had taken place during that school day.

The first *DL* Emily receives in Chicago is designed especially for her and about her. It serves the valuable function of keeping Emily alongside her former community until she feels right with those she is not yet attached to in Chicago. These special *DLs*, bridge the absence from her class with contact, stories, pictures. They serve as the tools to preserve the connection with others, a home base, providing something to hold close as she gets her bearings. Emily’s mother also has the *DLs* as tools to act with authority in her temporary role as teacher, to maintain Emily’s academic progress during the move. The *DL* sharing serves as a shield against stress, to keep Emily’s sensitivities from being
overwhelmed. It provides a literacy learning tool that encourages her to develop academically.

Emily's attachment to her peers and teacher is evident in her request for a subscription to the DL. I am pleased that the DL, and our community of learners, can secure an attachment to her and her family, in the transition into a new school and community. The DL is proving to be a useful tool to promote literacy and also maintain a close-knit community of learners.

**Defining the Daily Letter: Situated, Social and Active**

Situated, social, active demonstration is the essence of the redefined notion of genre today (Chapman, 1999). It is also the essence of the DL classroom. Each day a student demonstrates her genre that arises out of, or is embedded in, the activities the class is involved in. The DL is situated. Each day a student connects with other genres through the social act of the whole class talk about text of the DL literacy event. The DL is social. Each day a student actively demonstrates what Cambourne (2001) describes as the "doing" of lots of modelling of the process of reading and writing, with special emphasis on making explicit the invisible process that makes reading/writing possible. The DL is active. Students use highlighters to code the text to support the talk about text. The research definition of genre as situated social, and active (see Bakhtin, 1979/1986; Chapman, 1999) translates well into the design of the DL, for it, too, is situated, social and active.

**A Parent DL: Forming a Supportive Community of Parents (Appendix B page 216)**

I use the DL "Unity" on Parent's Night to demonstrate situated, social and active learning. I introduce myself to the large group of parents and begin the sharing by giving each parent a copy of the DL. I take one hour to immerse them in the exploration of the classroom ritual their children encounter each school day.

I read the DL out loud and then ask Heather's mom to read it. Heather's mother
is fun loving, good-natured and willingly reads the DL. I move onto the word study on seven words: unity, partners, share, learn, community, love and guidance. The parents around her remain rather reserved until the talk of text begins. Drawing their attention to the stretch chart posted on the wall, I model using highlighters to code the text, working from the clues listed there (i.e., Find a word or phrase or sentence that is important to you). The group relaxes as we play with the words and phrases and sentences on the page. Brandon’s Dad chooses the word “dreams”, responding that school wasn’t interesting for him and that he day-dreamed his way through most of it. Patrick’s mom selects the phrase “guiding hand”, to start a conversation about an important expectation of her son’s learning environment as a safe place. This opens up a discussion on how she notices the positive differences between this classroom (we are four weeks into school and Patrick has brought home fifteen DLs) and her own recollections of school. We talk about what some of our hopes and dreams for our children’s school life and how they differ or resemble our own past school experiences. The stretching of this text facilitates a shared conversation of expectations that we have for the children in this class. I participate in the conversation as a partner with them as the evening progresses. The tone of this parent community is relaxed and comfortable as they continue to share ideas.

From time to time I remind the parents that this sharing of text and talk is the same ritual I do each day of the year with their children. I explain how the DL is designed to support engagement of the students through situated, social, active learning, giving them choice of topics. I explain the importance of situated, active learning for young students. After more rich discussion, we continue actively coding the text. We play with a written word study and written reflection where parents have time to make a note for me of any concerns they may have for their child. I then liven things up with the poetry part of the DL, having groups take turns saying each line of the poem. The parents stand
each time they say their lines. All the anxiety of the earlier part of the evening has dissipated into smiles and giggles as big adult bodies alternate, bouncing up and down eight times to the rhythm of each line of poetry.

Situated, social, active learning is worth a thousand words to explain both what kind of a teacher I am, and the nature of the ritual of the DL that will fill part of their child's day for each day of the year. Active participation with the DL settles the parents into partnership with me, and prepares them to receive a DL, in the hands of their child, each school night. With each DL, the parents have a window to glance into the school lives of their child without asking the "What did you do at school today?" With the DL, the parents have a starting point to work with their child.

The DL has a section for the parents to communicate with me. Some parent will be diligent and try to write something each night to their child or me for the school year. I set a personal goal to actively comment in each child's book every couple of days. I want the conditions of this relationship to be situated, social and active for both myself, the students and parents.

Situated Learning

The DL is situated. It is situated because it is created in the specific activity setting of the classroom, the child's workplace. The writing here arises out of relevant situations, as part of general and genuine communication that are tied to the specific routines, and the immediate, purposeful and real activities a student is involved in (Table 10 and 11). A learner is provided with time and contexts to write in functional, authentic ways both as an individual and as part of the community.
Table 10 Situated Daily Letters:
General and Genuine Communication Tied to the Routines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Letter</th>
<th>Information Communicated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome DL</td>
<td>Letter of Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halloween Party DL</td>
<td>Party Invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts Group Performance DL</td>
<td>Performance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Lunch DL</td>
<td>Menu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Moving DL</td>
<td>Bon Voyage Party Announcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Day DL</td>
<td>Schedule of Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pet Parade DL</td>
<td>List of Participants, Timetable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jarrod's DL Peter Pan: Situated Learning  (See Appendix B page 217)

Our class has been invited to see Peter Pan performed at a neighbouring school. Jarrod's mother is a teacher there, and has invited us to the matinee performance. Jarrod creates a DL about the school program for the play. On the front of his DL is a copy of the program with a synopsis of the original story and some information about the author, J. M. Barrie, and a short list of credits and a student's signed illustration of Wendy. The back of the DL has the usual place for a word study and reflection. Jarrod puts a list of the production crew for the play and each of their roles instead of a song. I am pleased that the format of the DL is flexible enough to be reinvented to suit the
purposes of this communication.

The students are excited about seeing the play Peter Pan. This is a genuine communication of a purposeful event in the lives of these students who will spend the next afternoon attending the play. At the DL sharing, the students learn a new genre, about genres, and information through the genre. This literacy event fosters connections to several new genres with the retelling of a famous story and play, a brief author study and Production List of Credits. The talk about text is rich in discussion about genre and about literacy with a discussion about everything from conventions, with a sentence with three semi-colons, to vocabulary such as cohorts, escapades, rousing and banished, an encoding word study of words such as gopher, photography, laughing and production, relations and tradition. Students examine words ending in ar-Millar, or-director, and er-choreographer. Parents and students learn through this genre, with the information about the school events their child is participating in. This is an example of situated, social, integrated learning, consistent with the genre research of Chapman (1999), Vygotsky (1978) and Wells (1999).
Table 11 Situated Learning: Immediate, Purposeful Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Letter</th>
<th>Information Communicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birthday DL</td>
<td>birthday stories, birth stories, birthday diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting Event DL</td>
<td>article, journal entry, news report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Holiday DL</td>
<td>celebration, arts and craft and family stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Treasures</td>
<td>artifact description, article, stories, poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trips</td>
<td>stories, articles, description, research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tragedy DL</td>
<td>relate, retell, reflect on death of pet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heather’s DL Situated Learning (See Appendix B page 218)

Children learn from first hand experiences, from situated learning experiences. Spending time in the field, going to plays, museums and special events provide a student with active involvement in situated, real life experiences. These experiences can then be translated into stories that a student can tell individually or as part of a group. These genres can then be shared for the meaning making and personal exploration of both the child and the community at the DL sharing.

The writing from our field trip to Burnaby Village Museum is prolific. This writing arises out of the experiences at a “hands on” museum with lots of integrative learning. The students work in a 1920’s one-room school, ride and study about a turn of the century carousel, help the blacksmith make a hook. They work in a dry goods shop, bank and farmhouse, barber shop and General Store.
These writers have situated, social, active experiences here and consequently have many rich stories to tell. It is late in the year and the students live 'conscious lives' as writers. Most of them have decided to write about something from their old-fashioned day even though it is not required, or even suggested. They have become writers, aware that the precious moments of their everyday experiences are the seeds to be cultivated into real life stories.

Heather has a common writer's problem. She is trying to find a clear writing focus, a narrowed down selection of what she will write about. The end result is a full-bodied text about the village houses and the carousel. Heather decides to divide her writing between a detail report on four of the homes of Burnaby Village and the Cantels of Carousel Horses. Her writing is thick with information gathered over a full day of serious "searching for specifics" of life in the 1920's. Her writing takes up the whole front of the DL after several major revisions. She has no room for a word study or visual literacy. Her genre utilizes the stretch chart that scaffolds talk about text from the stance of a writer. For the back of her DL, Heather writes a short poem about Burnaby Village in a form other writers have used. She adds an old-fashioned tongue twister and a joke of the day to her DL as well. Heather is a strong writer afforded an experience to further hone her skills with expository text and provide a wealth of information for our study on early British Columbian history. This is situated, social, fully integrated literacy learning.

Social

The DL is social (Table 12). The DL sharing context socializes a student into the culture's way of using literacy. This is what Vygotsky describes as "cultivating genre" not imposing it (1978). It is social because a student is immersed in talk about text in partners, small groups and a whole class. A student sees meaningful demonstrations of his own experiences, demonstrations of his own "doing". Literacy is learned within a culture with the DL as a literacy resource and the people, the literacy users, around to
assist each student in both the classroom and home. Adult mentors provide support to the apprentices through guided participation. Students share the responsibility for the teaching and learning.

Table 12 Social Activities/Roles of the Daily Letter Sharing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steven/ Kelvin produce a DL together</td>
<td>one to one mentor and apprentice roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three students moderate over DL</td>
<td>co-presenters/leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela models coding on overhead</td>
<td>mentor the whole class of learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley provide illustrations for DLs</td>
<td>one to one mentor and apprentice roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alyssa faxes DL to student</td>
<td>one to one friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sit group of parents during DL sharing</td>
<td>partners in learning role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cory helps peers code at DL sharing</td>
<td>mentor and apprentice role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Steven and Kelvin’s DL: Social Learning

Steven has participated in the creation of over twenty-five DL genres. Most of these have been constructed in the company of others. Steven is a student who regularly asks an important social question. “Can I work with a friend?” By Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligence definition (1985), Steven is interpersonal or people smart. His nature as a highly social being makes him an enthusiastic leader of the DL sharing, and a natural mentor for other literacy learners. Steven, as well as being a capable English
reader and writer, is a soccer, baseball, Pokemon and Nintendo expert.

Kelvin is a bright, capable ESL student who has these same interests as Steven. These boys have a special social relationship that extends into this classroom. Steven is an ideal candidate to help Kelvin engage in learning English just beyond his actual level of development. Kelvin moves his desk beside Steven for participation with him as the more experienced English reader and writer. In return Kelvin engages Steven in learning how to draw beyond his level of development. They form a strong out of school friendship and in-class partnership.

Much of Kelvin's literacy learning occurs through his working attachment to Steven as he begins to use language and literacy in ways beyond his actual development level. This mentor and apprentice partnership proves to be a demonstration of rapid growth of Kelvin's speaking, reading and writing in English. Clearly, it is not just the teacher who can assist in literacy learning through the production of the DL. It involves a whole social community of peers who possess greater knowledge or skill in specific situations and who use it to develop the less experienced members of the group. This mentor/apprentice role matches Vygotsky's work on learning (1979).

Active

The DL is active. It is active because it is entirely concerned with "doing". Readers construct meaning not only from printed material but also from the events, speech, and behaviours as they "read" gestures, images, symbols, signs, and signals that are imbedded in a social and cultural environment (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994). The DL engages readers and writers in cognitive and physical activity with the participation in a discourse community with a new text each day. Students use highlighters to mark and code the text during the sharing of the DL. Students take part in the active sharing of all language processes: reading, writing, speaking, presenting and listening.
Action with the *Daily Letter* Sharing: Active Learning (Table 13)

Adam is the moderator standing at the front of the group. He has assigned Angela and Jacquie to assist him by cruising around the room helping their peers code the text of his *DL*. Adam has selected two other students, Alyssa and Taylor to code the *DL* on the overhead, and another student, Cory to stand at the blackboard to write the word studies. Apprenticeship in the *DL* is consistent with research which posits the importance of . . . "the active role of children in organizing development, the active support and use of other people in social interaction and arrangements of tasks and activities . . ." (Rogoff, 1990, p. 39).

Table 13 Active Learning with the *Daily Letter*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderator/Mentor: Adam</td>
<td>leading the talk about the <em>DL</em> with class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices: 20 students</td>
<td>sharing ideas, coding text in groups of 4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistants (pair): Alyssa and Taylor</td>
<td>code <em>DL</em> transparency on overhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Moderators: Angela and Jacquie</td>
<td>walk around and help students with coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers: selected from apprentices</td>
<td>demonstrations of activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>moving to participate with individuals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conceptualizing the Practice of the *Daily Letter*: Multiple Goals of Instruction

Once a student (or a teacher) chooses a topic for the *DL*, she writes her one page genre (Table 13) and creates the literacy learning components to go with it. With the creation of each component of the *DL* she is preparing multiple representations of
her literacy learning. These components, when coherently produced into the DL genre, provide the basis of a comprehensive literacy learning hour, juggling multiple goals of literacy instruction (Table 14). There is "a goodness of fit" between the comprehensive literacy learning of the DL sharing and those of the commonly held beliefs of effective comprehensive literacy learning programs (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

... we need an understanding of how to juggle multiple goals of instruction. This means that each program or approach should state explicitly how it will orchestrate children's development of automatic word recognition, comprehension strategies and motivation and appreciation of literature ... (Stahl, 1999).

**Ode to the Paper Crunch**

Sometime in the 1990's the schools were hit by a serious money shortage leading to cutbacks in the use of paper for teacher's in their classrooms. With the DL I can cover all the areas of a comprehensive literacy learning program with one piece of paper each day. One piece of paper contains every component of a literacy learning program that in the old days may have been spread out on a number of pieces of paper or in a number of different notebooks or notices to go home to parents. It is a compact format to house as many as nine different activities. It contains what may have been in a reading notebook (of photocopied text for each student to read), a writing book for journal entries or stories etc., a word study book (words to decode), a spelling book (list of words to encode) a homework book (a message book that travels back and forth from school with a plan of homework), and messages or notes between a parent and teacher, a poetry book, a notebook for retelling, relating or reflecting on text or events (a learning log), a song or chant book and notices to parents of upcoming events such as hot lunches and field trips, special events such as Sports Day. All of these different aspects of a comprehensive literacy program can be housed systematically on one piece of paper conserving thousands of pieces of paper in my classroom over the course of one school
year without giving up any program and communication goals!

Table 14 Multiple Goals of Literacy Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Language and Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‣ listening to, and viewing a variety of genres through read alouds of trade books and DL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ speaking about each component of the DL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ shared reading, guided reading, interactive and independent reading, reading vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(how it works)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‣ shared, guided, interactive writing /representing ideas, written vocabulary/how it works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning About Language and Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‣ awareness of nature and purpose of language and literacy: print awareness, alphabetic principle, phonological awareness, symbols/sound relationships, language patterns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Through Language and Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‣ thinking and learning, literature response, information processing abilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adapted from the Primary Program: A Frame for Teachers, Chapman, 1999).

Arjan's Daily Letter: Multiple Goals of Instruction (See Appendix B page 219)

There are no prompts for Arjan to write his DL. He has the belief that he is a member of a literate environment where everyone has a story to tell. It is early in the year and he is already becoming conscious of the writing as a reflection of whom he is, what he
experiences and what he knows. He draws heavily on the activities of his own life for his first DL. This is where most, even confident writers, begin. Arjan’s DL is a first person narrative about his hockey life. He has written the text and prepared a hockey word study for the bottom of the page. He has supported the text with a photocopy of his Hockey Card and the crest of his Minor Hockey Association. He found a funny poem for the back of the DL.

This is an exciting DL sharing for this class of hockey fans. Arjan has his hockey jersey on, a display of his new hockey equipment and pictures of his team. This DL sharing, sparks the interest of the whole community, for some other students are also involved in hockey and named in his text (Cameron, Craig, Taylor, Bryan). Although it is early in the year, Arjan, is keen to have the moderating over this text handed over to him. He proves to be a capable, expert moderator over this serious discussion about his favourite sport. Arjan is confident about this topic of choice and well prepared, having planted a number of mistakes into the body of the text, which leads to much of the discourse of the community of learners about conventions of print in the talk about text. He leads each component of the DL, conducting the shared reading of the text, guided reading and talk about text with the help of the stretch charts, and the reading and decoded word study (how reading words works). He leads the interactive writing /representing ideas in the “Relate, retell and reflect component, and the written vocabulary (how it works) on the back of the DL. When Arjan’s mother picks up Arjan, and all his gear, she indicates that this is the most excited he has ever been about writing at school. Arjan has been involved in the sharing of multiple elements of a comprehensive literacy program meeting multiple goals of literacy instruction consistent with those in recent literacy research (Fountas & Su Pinnell, 1996).
Reconceptualizing Genre: A Great Variety of Forms of Genre

Where literacy was once practised by an elite few (religious scribes and government clerics), it now plays a role in a variety of social contexts such as the home, community, school and workplace (Guthrie & Graney, 1991; O’Flahavan & SeiDL, 1997). Students now have a proliferation of literate forms to serve an array of purposes all around them. Students today are born into and need to be aware of a wide variety of socially constructed and evolving cultural functions, literate forms, social practices, cognitive strategies and cultural conventions (O’Flahavan & SeiDL, 1997).

A traditional genre was typically, decontextualized, complex, secondary and literary, a completely “fixed and immutable model” (Freedman & Medway, 1994, p.1). Bakhtin has expanded the concept of genre to include a variety of forms in addition to traditional literary forms. A primary genre in the Bakhtian sense, is “a context-embedded, localized daily communication, intrinsically tied to the classroom workplace” (1979/1986). The DL is primary in the sense that it is a contextual ritual taking place in the classroom. The DL form of genre itself is not complex or literary in format although some of the genres shared on it may be (i.e., a DL genre with a Fairy Tale genre on it). The DL is an instrumental genre created more than ten years ago in the classroom in response to the demands of the complex activity of literacy learning. Hunt suggests we invent or reinvent genres in response to a social situation (1994). This is certainly true of the DL. It continues to be modified, in use, by my students and other teachers in their use with their classes (McGee and Richgels, 1996). There are many ways to expand the DL, the possibilities are yet to be discovered by new teachers and students in new situations (i.e., D. Phillips teaches sign language to support vocabulary development with her Grade One DL). The DL is a good example of an instrumental primary genre to teach genre and deepen and enrich literacy learning.
The *Daily Letter*: Teaching Without a Hidden Agenda

Years ago, instead of making the *DLs* myself, I turned the creating of the *DL* over to the students (choice of topic and genre). Initially I worried that there would not be the exposure to a wide enough variety of genres or that the curriculum would not be covered. Over time I have come to realize that within a school year with 20-26 students and myself sharing *DLs* there is a diverse, rich collection of genres and topics to share. I do not have to rigidly control the production or presentation of the *DL* to accomplish this. The *DL* has a match with a broad range of student interests and needs. With the handing over of the moderating of the *DL* to capable students I can trust the shared responsibility for the learning with them to explore and inquire, and make connections with a variety of genres. The curriculum gets covered with high levels of engagement, integrating all subject areas without me being solely responsible for the learning that takes place.

Within one year, a diverse list of the *DLs* (Table 15) shows how literacy with the *DL* integrates subject areas and genres and meets student’s personal and curricular needs. This list reflects an interesting range of cultural practices with students accessing topics and genres in accordance with their personal needs and life goals and also complying with the prescribed Ministry learning outcomes and recent literacy research.

**Table 15 Functions of Writing on the *Daily Letter***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrumental/self-maintaining: satisfy needs and wants, self interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>biographies, expert talks, interest inventories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Representational/informative: to communicate information
- instructions, label, tell, retell, actual report, explain process
- story maps or story webs
- science or social studies report

Directing: to monitor actions, control actions, get things done
- classroom rules, expectations, opinions, quotations, rules, procedures, keeping track of what needs to be done
- procedure for an science experiment
- making plans, give directions, instructions, schedule, meta-cognitive explanations
- request, persuade, argue, defend oneself

Personal/expressive: to discover self, express feelings, opinions
- personal experiences, personal responses, stories, biographies, all about me
- learning logs
- opinion on an event or experience

Interactive/interpersonal: to maintain social relationships
- invitations, friendship, thank you, ceremonies, rituals,
- celebrations, birthdays, celebrations, special events,
- field trips, greetings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imaginative/creative: to engage in pretend or make believe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- stories, dramas, role play, write in role (imagine you are immortal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- scripts, Reader’s Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- art demonstrations, posters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- invitations to write, ABC books, fables, legends, yarns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divertive/entertaining: to enjoy, amuse oneself and others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- word play, jokes, riddles, puns, amusing events, situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- nursery rhymes, jingles, chants, songs, raps, poetry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perpetuating/recording: to record events, ideas and feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- store of ideas, reminders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- real world issues, special events, travelling journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- record notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heuristic/epistemic: to acquire knowledge and understanding inquiring:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- ask questions, record data, problems, data, solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- articles, essays, stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- before/during/after predicting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- wonder, predict, hypothesize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- science experiments, demonstration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- recall/remember, reflect on learning process
- meta-cognitive explanations reasoning
- expand, clarify, analyse, interpret, evaluate ideas and information,

compare/contrast

Adam’s *Daily Letter: Writing For Varied Purposes*  (See Appendix B page 230)

Adam is an avid reader, but lacks the stamina or interest to read novels independently. He loves non-fiction books about sports and how things work. Passionate about some of the weird and wonderful ideas in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, Adam creates a *DL* about world records. He prepares for his *DL* sharing by marking out the length of a Great White Shark across the room, one of the records on his *DL*. This serves to make a really lively *DL* sharing. Kids have a great interest in bits of trivia and the mathematics that goes with this. Sharing of a variety of kind of information is significant to fostering connections with genre. Having a diverse collection of genres is critical to making analogies between them and holding the attention of students with a variety of reading interests and levels.

**Reconceptualizing the *DL*: Nontraditional Genre**

The *DL* is a unique “school” genre. School genres, according to Berkenkotter & Huckin, are “characterized by quite different textual features and conventions, given their classroom-based contexts and rhetorical functions” (1993, p. 488). The *DL* has nine unique textual features and conventions. The *DL* genre is flexible organizational tool invented to engage a student in a systematic daily exploration of genre through a nine component literacy learning genre.

...a response made by someone who wants to create an utterance that will make what Bakhtin (1979/1986) calls her “speech will” a part of the social situation and thus participate in a dialogue; they are invented by people participating in more or less stable social situations and so the forms they continually invent exhibit stable characteristics (Chapman, 1999, p. 247).

The *DL* is a powerful nontraditional genre with the important function as a ritual to cultivate genre and engage a student in a variety of different elements of literacy learning each day with shared, guided/interactive and independent reading and shared, guided/interactive and independent writing and decoding and special attention to letters
and words and how they work when you read and write them (Table 16). The moderator reads her genre aloud. She moderates over the shared guided/interactive reading of the text and visuals of the genre and paying special attention to reading of letters and words in it. On the back of the DL, she moderates over the shared, guided/interactive writing and paying special attention to the writing of letters and words in it. It is a teacher invented genre for a classroom context, a frame designed to accomplish a full range of nine literacy learning rituals consistent with surveyed research and descriptive literature examining research on language and literacy learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

The DL, as a nontraditional form of genre, is an efficient, effective genre to foster connections with genre. “Indeed, nontraditional forms as mediums of learning may be more powerful than traditional ones” (Diaz, 1994; Freedman & Medway, 1994; Chapman, 1999).

Table 16 Elements of a Comprehensive Literacy Program Used With the DL

| • Text: read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading (at home) |
| • Graphics: shared and guided visual reading, independent reading (at home) |
| • Reading Word Study: special attention to decoding words and decoding works |
| • Ask Me: shared and guided conversation |
| • Compliments/Messages: shared, guided, independent writing |
| • Written Word Study: attention to encoding words and sharing how decoding works |
| • Poetry: read aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading |
| • Three R’s: shared, interactive, guided and independent writing |
| • Challenge component: extension of any of the nine elements listed above |
Preservice Teachers and the DL:

The students in the SFU Language Arts Education Course are producing a collection of DLs for use in the classroom at several grade levels. This assignment provides these students with the task to focus their thinking about text for a particular grade or group of students and how to organize each of the components of a comprehensive literacy program with that text.

The students create a DL complete with a brief rationale for the design and implementation of each of the components. With this assignment they each wrestle with the choice of text for their grade level, keeping Ministry curriculum expectations in mind. They plan on covering numerous IRP learning outcomes by integrating art, social studies and language arts on this DL. They consider the font most appropriate for this text. They creates a Stretch Chart choosing a meaning-making stance to support the exploration of unfamiliar content of the text. The students design computer graphics to assist their students with meaning making and also prepare to share several strategies to support this as well. Each student has to think about a suitable word study to accompany the text choosing sight words for a brief discussion on different kinds of words and how to strategically plan to read them. Their “Ask me what I know about...”, invites the parents to share what they may know about the DL, creating a invitation for dialogue between parent/child when the DL goes home that informs them about one aspect of their child’s learning. The word study takes words from the DL that have “ing” endings, giving time for students to collaborate over encoding words. The poetry is tied to the text and brings opportunities for fun, with a look at rhyming poetry and exposure to a new poet.

To prepare this DL genre, the students have to think about the teaching and the learning of all kinds of things from decoding and encoding vocabulary, suitable text, the talk about text, visual literacy communication with the home (homework) and the
opportunity for integrated learning. They have to reflect on the teaching and learning of a read aloud, shared and guided reading and how readers decode words (front of the DL). They are in a position to reflect on how to conduct shared writing, interactive writing and independent writing and encode words (back of the DL) and think about ways to make the reading/writing connection, and speaking and listening connections.

This exercise for preservice teachers prepares them to confront their beliefs and understanding about best design and practice of a comprehensive literacy learning program and the modern definition and conception of genre for in the classroom. Planning and participating in DLs or various literacy events also prepares them to confront their beliefs and understanding about how a student best learn. Given some teaching experience, a teacher will then be able to begin the process of handing over the responsibility of the learning to the students. This cannot be typically accomplished until students-teachers can make sense of each component and understand the teaching and learning of it.

**Reconceptualizing the Daily Letter: Multiple Representations of Ideas**

When a student is working with representing on the DL, he is producing a record of his mental efforts, what Bruner describes as: "embodying thoughts and intentions in a form more accessible to reflective efforts. The process of thought and its product become interwoven . . ." (Bruner 1996, p. 23). A student prepares his multiple representation of ideas with the DL. This is an important design feature of the DL consistent with the modern reconception of genre as a cognitive tool. When a student is representing his ideas in numerous ways on the DL, he is more than simply "reflecting on what is in the mind of the learner" (Bruner, 1996). The DL, with multiple components becomes a student's tool for activating the learning processes of learning literacy, learning about literacy and learning through literacy. A student communicates what is in
his mind through the things he does, makes, or says with each component of his DL, accomplishing what Calkins describes as “bringing the work of [his] life to school with heart and soul” (1991). Avery reminds us that: “Children need an opportunity to make some text of their own, controlling the language and reproducing it in different ways” (1993, p.15). A student uses the DL to accomplish both the controlling of language and the reproducing of it in numerous ways.

Multiple Representation of Ideas: Kim’s Birthday Daily Letter

The Birthday DL is typically the all-time favourite DL. It is engaging for Kim the birthday girl and strangely engaging for the apprentices. Kim prepares to bring this precious moment in her life to school heart and soul. She is excited to moderate over the DL sharing with a variety of activities:

Text: one page of text: topic: Kim’s Birthday Memoir, format: narrative

Graphics: visuals: birthday photograph, self-portrait, graphic organizer: birthday timeline

Reading Word Study: 6-8 words from the text for the students to decode: “birthday words”: cake, make, take, birthday, thirsty, Thursday, purse

Ask me: one written line, an “Ask me...”, for the parents to participate in at home, example: “Ask me about my favourite birthday. Tell me about yours.”

Compliments/Messages: Very many happy returns of the day. I hope you enjoy your birthday.

Written Word Study: a space for a list of 8 words for the apprentices to encode, dictated during the DL sharing by Kim: birth, berth, bird, burst, burn, birthday, turn, burp, focus on word families

Poetry: a poem related to the text: List, a rhymed or unrhymed list about Kim, or present, or party etc.
Three R's: a space where a brief writeri retelling, relating or reflection on an aspect of your birthday

Challenge component: Birthday Present Word Search and Demonstration: show and tell of birthday gifts

An important part of learning is increasing one's repertoire of forms of representation. When students can represent their thinking in a variety of ways and discuss the various forms of representation, they learn about their own learning processes. Learning a variety of ways of representing allow students with diverse backgrounds, interests, and abilities to be successful (Chapman, 1999, p. 35).

The Arctic Fox DL: Multiple Representations of Ideas (See Appendix B page 231)

Angela and Heather's DL is an inquiry into the life of the Arctic Fox. They are the first two students to spend more time creating text and using visual literacy to support their text (most students write with few graphic design features). Along with a brief text about Camouflage, Looks, Enemies, Life, and Babies, they support their written work with a map, photographs, and simple diagrams of foxes. They have a creative title and a study of words from the text with the suffix “s”. They support their “fun” original poem with another illustration.

The Arctic Fox DL is a good demonstration for DL apprentices of assorted methods to express their understanding beyond words. These two girls have set the stage to stretch other students to produce sharing meaning in multiple ways on their DLs. They use visual literacy in the form of pictures, drawings and diagrams to support the understanding of the text. I want the students to learn to represent their learning in multiple ways to maximize their ability, and the ability of other readers to make sense of it. Other students go on to create DL with cutaways, worDLess text, time lines, zigzag diagrams, graphs and tables.

For their last component (9) the girls give a brief demonstration of several Eye-Witness books giving good examples of multiple ways to share information of a topic.
They invite students to try to prepare a DL using multiple representations of their ideas. The multiple representation of Angela and Heather's ideas on their Arctic Fox DL has a goodness of fit with the commonly held beliefs of recent research on learning a variety of ways to represent their ideas (Chapman, 1999).

Reconceptualizing the Daily Letter: Combining Language Processes

"What I can say I can write ( or someone can write about ). What I can write, I can read. I can read what others write for me to read" (Allen & Allen, 1966 cited in Tierney, Readence, & Dishner, 1995).

Spache reminded us long ago that effective teaching of reading is in the context of other language processes such as the development of speaking, writing, and listening vocabularies and the widest possible use of oral and written language (Spache, 1962, 1974). The 2001 clustered summary agreements of leading literacy experts, reports similar findings conveying that every opportunity should be made to combine reading with other language processes to bring reading/writing/talking/listening together "so each feeds off and feeds into the other" (Flippo, 2001). A student uses the combined multiple language processes of the DL to foster connections with genre each day. When a student shares her DL she explores reading instruction, vocabulary, visual literacy, phonic skills, mechanics of writing, development of speaking and listening vocabularies as well as poetry and personal responses. A leader of the DL shares the belief in the literature (Flippo, 2001) that meaningful learning arises out of demonstrations of combined language processes, bringing speaking, reading, writing, listening together on the DL.

Computers and the DL

The students in the class are making extensive use of the computer to produce their DLs. They get a lot of experience using many of the different programs to produce
each component of it. They are working with text, importing and modifying graphics, scanning in pictures and special design features. Working to create text on the computer is an easier method of getting ideas down for some students with written out put problems. It is helpful to have students produce work on the computer to enhance the readability of it for other students who will be looking at the text. Students can be especially helpful mentors, providing guidance for the less able computer literate students. Students can bring meaningful speaking, reading, writing and listening processes together with the use of the computer. A group of students are planning to get a web site up and running to post the DL on each day.

Talk About Text Through the Reading and Writing Connection

Diane DeFord reminds us that it is not important whether the idea is "good" but that in thinking together, we learn more (Flippo, 2001). Lucy, a student in Cambourne's research explains:

...Read, read, read, Write, write, write . . . You have to keep talking to other people, so that you can establish firmly what you know. Keep talking until you find where what you know connects with what others before you have known. Keep talking until you gain new insights into your problems and can generate possible solutions. Keep talking until you know exactly what you mean. That's what learning is about (Cambourne, 1999, p.205).

I make use of the reading/writing connection with the DL. It is an important condition of the DL and identified as important in the research for teaching and learning genre (Flippo, 2001). The moderator can use the DL to share examples, perhaps snippets (a DL can only hold one page of text), of good literature. A moderator's sharing of a good DL about a good book provides a strong language model for the whole class. I want students to read, share and listen to good stories to develop vocabularies, create a language awareness in the reader/writer and invite students to become writers. The writing done by others is a potent source for knowledge and learning about written language. Smith says the only reliable source of knowledge sufficiently rich and reliable
for learning about written language is the writing already done by others. "We learn to write by reading what others have written; we enrich our repertoire of ways to say things by reading what others have said" (1988). Selecting rich and reliable selections of good literature is consistent with research and practice of the DL genre.

The DL calls for a complementary use of class published literature (approximations) and real-world (trade books) published literature (models). I select from an author’s collection or following a genre or theme and then watch for aspects of the shared writing come up in a student’s own writing sometime during the rest of the year. I use the literature a student reads, and the shared text of a good book, to be the demonstration of good writing. The DL invites a student to try a writer’s style and move toward creating a style of his own (genre as a process). I teach genre largely from a process perspective with the text published on the DL as an “in progress genre” rather than a “product” emphasising the mentors role of being responsive to the needs of the writers rather than formal instruction (Freeman, 1996, Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992).

Teacher’s DL: Reading Meets Writing

The Mr. Jelly DL is not an original student or teacher written text, but a teacher-prepared excerpt of original text and pictures from the book Mr. Jelly, as is the poem on the back, The Dreadful Doings of Jelly Belly, by Dennis Lee.

Reading Mr. Jelly by Roger Hargreaves aloud has a powerful effect on my apprentice literacy learners. My quivering voice creates wiggly images of Mr. Jelly faltering with each unsure move he makes from page to page. The trembling of my hands and a startling undecided Mr. Jelly voice, cause the students to sit paralysed in anticipation of what jittery Mr. Jelly will jump about next. This kind of a read aloud is a powerful predecessor of an avalanche of adapted Mr. Men stories. Jimmy produces a Mr. Love story that spans more than one hundred pages.
This is a wildly popular book, DL, and invitation to write. There is much to see, talk and do about these Roger Hargreaves books with their universal topics of being nervous (Mr. Jelly), being hilarious and silly (Mr. Silly), and clumsy (Mr. Bump) etc. Phrases from the excerpt of Mr. Jelly such as "He hid under his bedclothes-trembling with fright" or "He took a deep breath" begin a serious talk about text and of the personal connections students can make to this character and story and their own lives.

This read aloud is a wonderful demonstration of a well-crafted narrative, rich with conversation and bold pictures matching to the text. This Mr. Jelly DL inspires students to make a strong connection between reading and writing. Everyone is reading Mr. Men books, drawing Mr. Men characters and writing Mr. Men stories for publishing on the DL. Those students writing lengthier stories, preparing favourite excerpts of their stories for the DL. Adapted stories are a powerful example of students making the reading-writing connection and cultivating narrative through situated, social DL action. There is a goodness of fit between research on the reading writing connection in theory (Flippo, 2001) and practice of the DL.

Reconceptualizing the DL: Genre and Process, Complementary Approach

Razerman, a modern genreist, informs us that learning genre is descriptive and like other aspects of writing is more effective in contexts that support engagement with process writing than traditional teacher-directed contexts where students simply following rules (Freedman, 1993a). Learning genre occurs in contexts in which genre is more than a "ritual repetition of standardized statements" (Bazerman, 1997, p. 24). Hunt reminds us that a genre is no longer conceptualized as learned "by encountering a number of instances of the form, discovering (or being told) what the rules are, internalizing that abstract definition, and using it as an algorithm to generate new examples" (Hunt, 1994, p. 264; cited in Chapman, 1999). "It is what students learn as they discover for
themselves, in process, what constitutes a genre and how to produce it for the setting” (Harste, Woodward, Burke, 1989, p.189). The DL is a genre that supports a student as he discovers for himself what constitutes the genre he produces on each of his DLs.

The DL, matching the modern research definition of genre, is not a format to be taught directly in the rigid structuralism sense, but a tool to assist with the learning of genre as a “process”. It requires the author to work hard designing, writing (drafting, editing, proofreading, publishing), giving it to each student for analysing, talking and reflecting on it at school, and leaving it with each student to share at home at night. With the sharing of the DL the teacher/mentor and students steadily accomplish the goal of approximating genre and fostering connections to new genres over time.

The direct teaching of various aspects of the DL may occur, but rather as a conscious attempt on my part, or the part of a student, to draw attention to a particular aspect of the DL rather than leaving the students to discover this on their own. I need to constantly assess the degree of explicit instruction required at any given moment of the DL sharing.

Adapting the Teaching to the Needs of the Students

I am constantly integrating or wedding process genre learning and direct genre instruction approaches in my classroom. I have needed to step in at the DL sharing to model the importance of emphasizing ideas of a genre rather than the format. I have jumped into the conversation to focus the students' attention on a genre as a particular way of thinking and communicating ideas within a particular context. I have also needed to help students notice a genre's text features and how they function and develop an awareness of the apprentices' needs as they relate to the genre. I have helped a moderator with the generating of criteria as part of the exploration of a genre. I have discovered that at times I need to help students focus on learning genres rather than on
producing them.

One of my most important intervention moments is when I focus the students’ attention on being responsive to each others writing on the DL. I am most often wise to keep to brief “teachable moments" to enhance and extend the learning. From my experiences with the DL sharing, I believe that process and genre need to be integrated into the sharing of the DL if students are to foster connections with genre.

Reconceptualizing the Daily Letter: Genre Approximations

The DL, like other primary genres, is no longer typically viewed as failed adult text, but appreciated as an approximation, transitional, or process form of writing. The learning of the DL is supported with conferences that are sensitive to a student's attempts, through little steps, toward more mature forms of writing. Learning to use this school genre typically means learning to use it as a cultural resource (Berkenkotter & Hucken, 1993) to help approximate genre. With it, a student moves from emergent genre writing, common to children his age, through the gradual transition to more conventional forms of genre typical of intermediate grades and on to becoming much like that of the disciplinary practices [disciplines being communities of practice that construct knowledge and representations of reality in different ways] of adults (Freedman & Meriwray,1994).

The DL is consistent with research of choice, creativity and voice, with a student using his own individual ideas and those of the discourse community, “in process” over the school year to approximate more conventional genres (Table 17).

A Developing Writer's Daily Letter: Connection Before Direction (See Appendix B page 232 )

Alyssa's Exmoor Pony DL is an example of her hard work to produce her first English DL since her transfer in from the French Program. Alyssa is a sensitive child so I spend lots of time conferencing with her to develop a close relationship. The flow out of
this warmth and respect for her vulnerability lead to improved security and attachment, soon to be followed by improved skill and attitude. Alyssa participates independently for the most part with the DL for her literacy learning. I spend my time with her working on getting our relationship on solid ground, making a close connection with her. Alyssa soon learns of my acceptance of where she is in the literacy learning process.

As Alyssa develops a stronger self-concept, she becomes more and more open to direction in her literacy learning. Alyssa has opportunities to approximate print, taking little steps, toward producing more mature forms of writing. She is given ample time for writing and some strategic one-on-one preteaching of the DL each day before the DL sharing. This combined strategic preteaching and process approach to literacy learning is complementary, and useful for developing Alyssa’s self-confidence. Alyssa works hard at her process writing of drafting, editing, proofreading, publishing. She is proud of her Exmoor Pony DL, a developing writer’s approximation of text.

Alyssa’s next DL, “At the Hospital”, shows a marked overall improvement in the quality of her reading/writing. Alyssa writes with the knowledge that she is an improving writer (not being judged for producing failed adult texts). She continues to receive strategic, one to one, teaching when required in the classroom, not as part of a pull out remediation model. The students are supportive of her efforts when she conducts her DL sharing, encouraging her to continue to pursue writing, some even offer to mentor her. Alyssa feels like a writer and continues to make steady improvement given this process approach toward literacy learning.

The process oriented cycle of the DL, complemented with some strategic teaching, is engaging enough to support Alyssa’s emergent literacy learning. The design of the DL is effective enough to support my freedom of choice and time to align and make a solid connection with Alyssa or other at-risk students. The effects of process
writing and aligned attachment on the positive self esteem of a student is well documented in research and evidenced in the practice of the DL.

Table 17 Fostering Connections to Genre as a Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIGN the DL: prewriting (ideas, topic, audience)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WRITING the DL: using the writing process to prepare a text of choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAPHIC LAYOUT of the DL: laying out visual support to the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTANDING of the DL: conference with more capable member on process, editing, proofreading, publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHARE at the DL sharing: whole class shared reading of the genre, demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYSIS at the DL sharing: talk about text, words and poetry or song etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTION at the DL sharing: written response, making connections to the genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVISITING the DL sharing: revisiting at home with caregivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW DESIGN of the DL sharing: beginning again with new ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW PARTNERSHIPS for the DL sharing: beginning with new partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A French DL: Approximating A Second Language (See Appendix B page 233)

I have used a DL to teach French. This demonstrates the versatility of the DL. Intermediate students can take a process approach to learning French. The French Hallowe'en DL has a word study, text on Hallowe'en and pictures of a cat, broom,
cauldron, witch, ghost and pumpkin. The accompanying Stretch Chart works to scaffolds a student’s talk about this text with prompts such as finding a phrase or word he is unsure of, one that he can translate into English, or one he can spell the same way in French as in English. The “Ask me” provides a starting point for a conversation in the home at night with the parents or caregivers to revisit French adjectives. Chanson D’Halloween, on the back of the DL, teaches students French through song. Space is provided for talk about encoding 6-8 French words from the text or poem, and several lines at the bottom of the page are used to construct a sentence in French. With this one French DL, a student is exposed to many elements of a comprehensive French program with a strong reading, speaking and writing components.

Reconceptualizing *Daily Letter*: Genre as Power

Learning genre is gaining prominence in research and practice as a prerequisite for students to be successful in school and the world beyond school. Richard Beach informs us that with this revitalized importance of the role of genre in education, there is considerable debate between advocates of the direct teaching of genre conventions versus whole language advocates who argue that genre acquisition is through exploration and process writing (Beach cited in Harris & Lodges, 1995). Researchers Delpit (1988) and de la Reyes, (1992) posit that some educational philosophies, such as process writing, (e.g., narrative) encourage writing with the purpose of becoming authors, and ignore the cultivation of academic and workplace writing of school and society. They argue that process writing disadvantages children from non-mainstream groups and that these children need explicit instruction to empower them to be successful at school and in society.

The DL cultivates the wedding of process and some explicit teaching as complementary modes of genre instruction. Many students require some strategic
teaching of some aspects of genre and situations emphasizing invitations to write in approximations and making analogies between each. Students get both with the DL. Beach supports this complementary approach to cultivate genre. "They not only need ample experience with text in order to understand the abstract concepts, but also information about abstract concepts that can provide them with insights into their experiences" (Beach cited in Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 95). The definition (design) and concept (practise) of the DL as a complimentary strategic teaching/ process learning approach is consistent with the modern reconception of the genre in the research (Chapman, 1999).

**Reconceptualizing the Daily Letter: Analogies Between Genres**

The DL cultivates process writing emphasizing both personal narrative, and introduces the academic and workplace writing of the larger world (including power genres). Stories are not the only written text students are exposed to. The DL shares a wide variety of genres, with about 190 DLs shared in one school year (one per school day). With proper "cultivation", a student is able to write various genres which have traditionally been considered beyond the abilities of primary grade school children (Chapman, 1999).

Students can write briefly for multiple purposes. They need to try a range of forms including stories, reports, information text, and select vocabulary and punctuation to meet the needs of a particular audience and purpose (McGee & Richgels, 1996).

The moderator tells how her genre was created at her DL sharing. An apprentice has descriptive rather that prescriptive opportunities to help him see the purpose behind the form. The guided practice and exploration of the text invites each student to explore one of the shared genres independently. A student soon has a working repertoire of choices of representation with to each new form explored day after day. He learns about
specific forms to suit particular contexts; and also learns an array of forms from which to choose in the future. Bazerman posits that genres are learned by forming analogies and making connections with the ones we know (1997). Shanahan (1997) agrees, arguing that students need opportunities to see connections among them. The DL accomplishes what Shanahan suggests, using genre as a cultural way of communication and facilitating the connections between forms.

The conversations are rich because the students bring so much variety to the DLs (Table 18). With each DL there is a brief conversation about the similarities and the differences with past DLs. Angela’s list of events in a butterfly’s day can be compared and contrasted with a recipe for cookies or picture directions of origami. The class spends a few minutes each day to talk about the purpose, format and style of a genre with other previously viewed genres. The duotang that holds the collection of DLs can be flipped back through to recall other genres that may be similar or different in one way or another. Talk about the similarities and differences of genre as the number of DLs grows is consistent with theory on drawing analogies between genres as an effective way to foster connections with genre (Bazerman, 1997).
Table 18 Drawing Analogies Between Daily Letters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Event (Death): Funeral of Pierre Elliot</td>
<td>Historical Event: Queen Victoria’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Event: Olympic Hockey</td>
<td>Dialogue: Christina’s Unicorn Story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research: Dangerous Water Creatures</td>
<td>Experiment: Battery Experiment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader’s Theatre: Star Wars</td>
<td>Adapted Fairy Tale: Ghostylocks and the Three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family History: World War Two Heroes</td>
<td>Field Trip: Burnaby Village Museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview: When I Was Young</td>
<td>Journal: The Accident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jokes and Riddles: 25 Wacky Kids Jokes</td>
<td>Tongue Twisters: The Woodchuck</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program from a Play: Peter Pan</td>
<td>Chapter Book: Little House in the Big Woods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Teachers breathe life into learning genres, learning about genres, and learning through genres when they “activate the dynamics of the classroom” (Bazerman, 1997) making writing situated, social and active (Chapman, 1999).

Learning all three dimensions of genre knowledge is an important concept in the design and practice of the DL and identified as an important concept of genre learning research. Halliday, talks about three interrelated dimensions of language learning: learning language, learning through language, and learning about language (1982). The ability to function with increasing degrees of sophistication in reading, writing and genre and are mediated by the use of tools that serve specific literacy learning functions. Vygotsky suggests that when human activity includes such tools, they “alter the entire flow and structure of mental functions” (1981, p. 137).
Tools can be technical or psychological (Wertsch, 1990). The DL and Stretch Charts, used by students to scaffold talk about text, are modern examples of technical tools to support genre learning. The language, alphabetical notation and visuals are examples of psychological aspects of the DL tools used.

Students develop the ability to use tools on the social level through interpersonal activity such as the DL sharing, reaching what Vygotsky refers to as the "inter-psychological plane" (1978). Here, in the context of social engagement, a student learns to use the tools. This continued social engagement transforms the learner's personal functioning with genre. The guided participation of the DL sharing fosters an individual student's genre approximation with the DL and Stretch Charts as tools.

Halliday's three dimensional framework of learning language, about language and through language provides an effective model for a way to look at the dimensions of learning of genre as well as the learning of each of the components of the DL (1982). Similarly, the DL is designed to assist apprentices with three interrelated purposes (Figure 24), learning genres, or widening students' genre repertoires, learning about genres, or fostering genre awareness, and learning through genre, or using genres as tools for thinking and learning (Chapman, 1999; adapted from Halliday, 1982). Each day a student participates in rich and varied text demonstrations to learn genre. He learns genre awareness through the daily uncovering of text styles, learning about genre. He becomes an informed student learning through genre through his information gathering with each DL.

The DL is the heart of the sharing time in which these three dimensions of learning occur daily. The DL sharing is the social place where assistance is given to a student in these three goal areas:
Learning Through Genre

The *DL* genre is what it means to "learn" genre because it crafts what Berkenhotter and Huckin describe as "the intellectual scaffold on which the community-based knowledge is constructed" (1993, p. 501) for the ritual of the *DL* each day.

The most important purpose of the *DL* genre is for students to learn through genre using it as a cognitive tool to construct thinking, learning and communication. The *DL* is a vehicle for cognition and for the expansion of their world . . . "rather than imposing rigid formulae on children learning genre gives them the tools they need to act in and on the world" (Martin, 1999). The *DL* genre is a cultural tool, the resource "for supporting and extending thinking" (Hanks, 1991, cited in Chapman, 1999). Empowering a student to use the *DL* as a learning tool is more important than adopting textual
features. The DL is an integrated approach blending traditional subject area knowledge within the DL genre. Social studies, science, math and fine arts are all woven into the fabric of the DL. It provides a venue for the sharing of conversations of a fully integrated curriculum.

**Learning Genre**

The DL is valuable for enriching of the student's own personal genre repertoire. It is a genre to showcase a variety of genres that are made by me, the students, parents, guests, crafted out of a desire to communicate genre learning practices. Each student collects one genre per school day into a collection of over one hundred ninety genres by year end. A student has a chance to make analogies between his DL and others, to work to extend both his individual and the collective understanding of a variety of genres over a period of a school year.

**Learning About Genre**

Another important purpose of the DL is to stimulate metagenetic awareness or the learning “about” genre (Coe, 1994). For a primary student metagenetic awareness is less important than the development of metacognition to assist in learning how to read and write (Chapman, 1999). Although the “awareness” of genre is not an expected learning outcome for a younger student it is learned through the DL.

For the developing reader and writer the DL is an excellent tool for furthering students’ literacy skills. For a student who is already a developing reader and writer, learning about genres typically means learning to use the DL to give a place to share their approximations of genre. With the DL a student's writing begins to move from emergent genre writing to more conventional forms and on to becoming genres much like that of the disciplinary practices of adults (Freedman & Medway, 1994). The DL scaffolds students in their period of apprenticeship when they cannot be expected to
either read or write like professionals. Students begin the apprenticeship into moving through the process of self-expressive writing, of personal writing, to preparing texts that are socially constructed, according to genre conventions to serve specific social functions. The DL scaffolds both individuals and the learning community of fledgling authors as they progress from context embedded (localized, tied to the time and place) primary genres, closer to the actual complex genres produced in adult related disciplines that are highly developed organized cultural communications. Freedman and Medway remind us that: "Rather than expecting students to write the way professionals do from the beginning, we need a gradual transition or progression from provisional varieties that are more comfortable for younger and less experienced students" (Freedman & Medway, 1994). The authoring cycle is process rather than the "product" oriented with the emphasis on mentors being responsive to the needs of the writers rather than formal instruction (Freeman, 1996; Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992).

A student of the DL learns about genre through the metacognition of genre by being placed first in the role of writing a genre as an apprentice and then through the invitation to teach his genre, leading the guided participation of the text at the DL sharing. The DL situates students to be social and active in noticing of a rich variety of genres, theirs and others.

Metageneric awareness, the metacognition of genre processes challenges some students to become engaged in their learning. One of the central features of the DL is the chance to attend to and record new genre understandings with each DL. A student begins to feel very successful with knowing about what they know. By means of this shared literacy event a student has the chance to revisit, reflect, and coordinate his latest discoveries with what he already knows (make analogies between known genres). Through the daily ritual, a student witnesses shifts of stance in his understanding of
literacy and gains new perspectives on both his own and his peers knowledge.

The DL is designed to prepare a student to function independently of the teacher to talk about the text and make meta-generic sense of it with others. Wells cautions us “Above all, they need to be helped to become reflectively aware of what they already know and still need to know, so that they can gradually take over more and more responsibility for their own learning” (Wells, 1986, p.67).

This DL practice of learning genre, about genre and through genre shares the belief of genre theory that genre is learned through a process of approximating conventional genres and making analogies between known ones. The most important lesson for student writers to learn is that genres are socially real and that to participate effectively in a discourse community one usually must adapt (or ground) readers' generic expectations. They should notice genres, to make sense of genre, even to renovate genres (Coe, 1994, p. 65).

**Friendly Giant DL: A DL to Teach the DL (See Appendix B page 234)**

The Friendly Giant DL is used with university students for the learning of the three dimensional quality of the genre learning: learning of a newspaper article (genre), learning about metagenre awareness, and a tool for learning through genre about classroom conditions for literacy and the elements of a comprehensive literacy learning program.

This DL, like many DLs used with much younger students, is valued for its epistemic quality (learning through genre). In this case, it is especially useful as a tool for preservice teachers to explore their knowledge about learning conditions in the classroom. We read the DL together and talk about life. The stretching of this text with these university students provides a rich discussion and active search through the text for examples of strategies to develop a “friendly” community. They colour code
words, phrases, and sentences in the article to inform our teaching practice about conditions for learning and each of the elements of a comprehensive literacy program (shared/guided reading, shared and guided writing, word play etc.).

With this DL sharing, I also introduce the students to a modern definition of genre as a situated, social active event rather than their widely held beliefs that genre is a format for text (learning about genre). With the sharing of this DL they begin to examine a more modern definition, concept of genre than they were previously exposed to. (This DL is also valuable as a tool for drawing attention to the use of meta-cognitive practice in teaching and learning of reading and writing). All learners, whether preservice teachers, teachers, or elementary students need to think about their thinking as they are learning. The ability to develop a repertoire of strategies, and to be strategic in their use, is another use of this DL (learning about and through genre). This DL showcases a teacher-made primary genre exposing these preservice teachers to an instructional genre to teach genre.

Reconceptualizing the DL Sharing: Demonstration of Modes of Representation

Language efforts should reflect the widest possible use of all aspects of oral and written language with child-produced materials in an environment which allows him to seek that which simulates him, choose that which helps him develop the most . . . (Spache, 1962, p. 150).

Demonstrations, some deliberate instruction, assistance through others, artifacts, both material and symbolic, art, diagrams, graphic organizers, dramatizations and other modes of expression are important representations at the DL sharing (Figure 25). These demonstrations provide a rich connection among all language processes within this situated, social and active DL genre sharing. The DL matches the belief of research that situated, social demonstrations of student selected, multiple language processes fosters connections with genre.
The DL sharing is a context for a moderator to integrate enjoyable and interesting activities and interactions with her presentation of the DL. A student can plan a DL sharing and all the meaning-making features on it with special related activities such as demonstrations, role plays, entertainment or creative projects. A student can personalize his DL sharing by presenting an additional representation of his learning with "hands on" activities in addition to traditional reading and writing and learning from text and visuals (Table 20). For example, at Christina’s Karate DL she demonstrates Karate moves, and all the students actively participating in a Karate lesson. These activities motivate and engage the personal interest of the DL moderator and apprentices.

“Teachers believe that reading motivation can be increased when texts and books are connected to stimulating activities (Nolan & Nicholls, 1994; cited in Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997), related to the learning events (Guthrie, Alan, & Rinehart,1997; cited in Guthrie & Wigfield,1997), or “connected to personally significant projects” (McCombs & Whistler,1997; cited in Guthrie & Wigfield,1997). Having students-as-teachers engage peers in "hands on learning" can lead to high levels of engagement.

Table 20 Demonstrations At the Daily Letter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Daily Letter</th>
<th>DL demonstration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>birthday DL</td>
<td>birthday presents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan</td>
<td>Why Volcanos Erupt</td>
<td>working model of volcano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristy</td>
<td>A Little House Christmas</td>
<td>pull taffy demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Buis</td>
<td>Blessed Books: Ox Cart Man</td>
<td>make peppermints recipe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Special Occasion Daily Letters: Demonstrations  (See Appendix B page 235 )

Students have adopted the role of creating DLs for special occasions. Vanessa and Heather write an "Easter and More Story" to share with the class. After the guided reading, talk about text, decoding word study and encoding word study, the girls present recipes for Easter Cookies and Marshmallow Easter Bunnies and Chicks. The girls have made the cookies and brought enough for everyone. The students participate in a cooking demonstration and are invited to try the recipes at home. Celebrations such as this Easter Cooking Demonstration become a cherished part of our classroom community, celebrations that come from the hearts and minds of the students. Special occasions such as Saint Patrick's Day and Valentines, Thinking Day (for Brownies, Guides, and Cubs), are owned by the students who gather together to plan special DL sharing with demonstrations that capture the interest of everyone, including parents who request permission to attend or participate in them.

Shared responsibility for learning is illustrated through the students making their own decisions about topics and genres they want to explore and making choices of how they want to demonstrate their learning. The students are highly stimulated to find things:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chantelle</th>
<th>The Scary Mummy</th>
<th>steps in mummification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steven</td>
<td>The Magic of Magic</td>
<td>show of magic tricks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelvin</td>
<td>Paper Folding</td>
<td>teaching folding a paper shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina</td>
<td>My Dog Biscuit</td>
<td>visit by Biscuit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to write about, to notice, to make sense of. Handing over the planning of demonstrations that are purposeful for them is an example of what research and the DL agree upon is a critical success factor leading to engagement in literacy learning (Rogoff et al, 1996).

**Reconceptualizing the Daily Letter: Sociocultural Design**

In effect, learning to be literate requires readers to interlace their own developing understandings of the functions and forms of literacy with recent and long-standing achievements of the literate cultures in which they participate (O' Flahavan & SediDL, 1997).

This sociocultural design of the DL values two ways to build a repertoire of genre, a personal/individual way and a social/collaborative way. The fundamental purpose of the DL is to be able to diversify a student's abilities to use varied forms of genre in the pursuit of both personal and social interests.

By having my students working independently and with others, I am fostering "knowledge workers" (Wells, 1999, p.72). I am the mediator of the genre learning context, providing both personal and social contexts for learning through allotting some personal time for students to make DLs and some community time for students to share DLs. I plan a daily scheduled afternoon workshop time to gives student time to play with forms and functions of language independent of formal instruction. I also plan the ritual of the scheduled hour for the strategic instruction in teaching genre with the formal sharing of the DL. Students have blocks of quiet time for as an individual to produce their DL, a time for the "in-the-head" dimension of learning with less emphasis on the role of the teacher and the DL sharing time with an emphasis on the social/collaborative dimension of learning with some teaching time. "Collaborative responsibilities, independence and self-direction are conditions of these (literacy learning) environments, and most optimum learning environments"(Cambourne & Turnbull, 1987).
Level One: The DL as Independent, Individual Level of Practice

Bryan has about one and a half hours per day of independent workshop time to work on producing the components of his DL. Bryan has this individual learning time to practise what he knows, a time when he is not formally guided through his learning by me or others. I believe that creating the DL emphasizes personal development for Bryan, with time for him to acquire knowledge by consolidating information on planes. Bryan collects information to answer his question “How do planes fly?” Bryan discovers and records an extensive collection of information on the parts of the plane that contribute to flight. He collects two or three word phrases from his reading and jots these down on a grid sheet to answer his question. When the sheet is filled with many phrases he color codes these bits of information that go together. Bryan works at an independent level to take the color coded phrases and construct these into sentences. He thinks of sentences and begins to record these into a genre format. All this discovery learning occurs during this scheduled time of independent activity.

I am comfortable being in the back seat, or as Wells describes, “leading from behind” (1986). I engage in a meaningful conversation with Bryan about his great interest in planes and how planes fly. Because I do not have a plan for this time other than to listen and meet with Bryan or other students, I don't have to rush the interaction and return to what I was teaching, instead, I have plenty of time for informal conversations and conferencing. Bryan and I talk about focussing on what he will write about and how to record his ideas by limiting his note taking to brief phrases. The conversation with him is serious business about what competent writers do. The DL workshop time is designed to meet the individual student’s interests, desires and goals to cultivate their own abilities, “to bring the work of their lives to school heart and soul” (Calkins, 1991).
Level Two: The *DL* Sharing as Community, Social Level of Practice

The *DL* sharing is an important social context for my students. This is the event where new learning takes place, learning leading development. At the *DL* sharing, Bryan is challenged to go beyond the “can do” level with the introduction to Pokemon words beyond his decoding abilities. Cory’s *DL* on Pokemon, challenge Bryan to say the names of many Pokemon that Bryan has never heard of before. He must think about his decoding strategies to make sense of these new names. Bryan loves Pokemon and has his own collection making him dedicated to trying this eclectic list of names. He enjoys trying them in the safety of the group that collaborates over the reading of the list. He is invited to go beyond what he is capable of doing, to be given a developmental nudge (Sulzby, 1986). He is given support, guidance, demonstrations and instruction by Cory as the more capable peer, for the decoding of words he is not able to do alone. Bryan’s learning is significantly impacted on by others around him. He listens to several students decode the words with some assistance from Cory. After several students share their reading of the eight words Bryan volunteers and successfully reads the list. Vygotsky described this kind of a social process as one where a student “grows into the intellectual life of those around him” (1978, p.85) The tone or the atmosphere of the classroom is that of a positive environment, what Janet Emig (1988) defines as an “enabling environment”. The *DL* sharing is an enabling environment where students such as Bryan are invited to work in the zone of proximal development:

...that “distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).
Reconceptualizing the *Daily Letter*: Complementary Dimensions of Learning

The *DL* provides two complementary dimensions of this literacy learning that has a match with recent genre research: the dimension of the child as a developing individual given time to process his ideas facilitated by the teacher and the dimension of the child as part of a social/collaborative group provided with strategic teaching by the teacher or capable other.

The students of the *DL* experience one level of working independently to practice learning within the zone of what they “can do” (Table 21). The students of the *DL* experience another level of working collaboratively where they are challenged to go beyond what they believe they are capable of doing. The *DL* has “a goodness of fit” with the reconceptualization of genre as “a social and cultural process in which a child learns about written language by internalizing social action” (Chapman, 1997; Dyson, 1993; Pellegrini & Galda, 1993).

Vygotsky has given researchers rich ideas to guide teaching and learning that can be extended to the *DL*, but unfortunately died before he conceived practical solutions. He did explain . . . “The teacher, working with the school child on a given question, explains, informs, inquires, corrects, forces the child himself to explain” (1978).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DL Production:</th>
<th>DL Sharing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;can do level&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;zone beyond the can do level&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>independent level, or small group</strong></th>
<th><strong>social level, whole group</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>student centre</strong></td>
<td><strong>leader directed, teacher supported</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>working on topic, choice, purpose of DL</strong></td>
<td><strong>progressive discourse</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>writing, visual literacy, components of DL</strong></td>
<td><strong>reading, writing, listening, speaking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>discovery process</strong></td>
<td><strong>guided performance, product</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>immersion</strong></td>
<td><strong>some explicit teaching</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>active learning, discovery time</strong></td>
<td><strong>active learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>developing at own rate</strong></td>
<td><strong>developing at rate of group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>developing personally</strong></td>
<td><strong>developing socially, collaboratively</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>work alone, sometimes with capable others</strong></td>
<td><strong>working with capable others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>time of indirect instruction</strong></td>
<td><strong>mediated instruction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>with and with assistance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Working with and without assistance</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Craig is an at-risk, low progress student with a great love of the outdoors. When he is given the choice of topic for his DL he immediately chooses to write about the new fort he is building on the vacant lot adjacent to his home. Craig has no shortage of ideas for his DL but finds it difficult to get them down on paper. Initially Craig is not motivated to write on his own even though this is an important topic for him. Patrick is a willing and able mentor to help Craig get his Prickle Fort experiences down on paper. The structure of a partnership provides more incentive for Craig to write, scaffolding him so that he too will meet the expectation that he will lead DL. Craig chooses to collaborate with Patrick and they are excited to produce and present their literacy event together. Craig systematically produces his Prickle Fort DL at his can do level with his drafting of his ideas into personal narrative. He works at editing and proofreading and presenting his DL with Patrick. Given some extended amounts of independent learning time and some mentor support with sharing his DL, Craig begins to see himself as a writer.

Craig systemically produces his Prickle Fort DL at his can do level with his drafting of his ideas into personal narrative. He works at editing and proofreading and presenting his DL with Patrick. Given some extended amounts of independent learning time and some mentor support with sharing his DL, Craig begins to see himself as a writer.

Craig's DL: Working In the Zone Beyond the Can Do Level (Appendix B page 236)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>work independent/ small group</th>
<th>working collaboratively with class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>independent problem solving</td>
<td>problem solving with guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent practice</td>
<td>risk taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ending with debriefing</td>
<td>guided activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilitate learning, individual</td>
<td>demonstrating learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This partnership between an emergent reader/writer, Craig, and a more skilled and knowledgeable, developing, reader and writer, Patrick, successfully scaffolds Craig...
during his emergence as a writer. Collaborating with Patrick helps build bridges for Craig's present understanding and his new understanding of text that he would not have developed on his own. There is a goodness of fit between what research tells us, and this DL practice shows us about the increased learning that occurs when students such as Craig are challenged to go beyond what they are capable of doing, of risking in the zone beyond what they can do (Vygotsky, 1978).
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS

Part Two: Conditions of Learning of the DL to Foster Connections with Genre

Critical Success Factors

"The learning environment has a powerful influence on students' motivation to engage in learning" (Marshall, 1992). How do we cultivate a responsiveness that increases a student's ability to achieve and desire to learn genre? Anderson (1985) contends that if teachers attend to the finer points of learning conditions in their classrooms they will improve literacy learning and quell some of the debate over 'the perfect method' to accomplish this. Genrists support this principle of attending to the learning situation, that we cultivate learning genre by "activating the dynamics of the classroom" (Bazerman, 1997). Many experts agree that the features of the learning situation are more valuable than the features of the text (Flippo, 2001).

Critical Success Factors (CSFs) are those conditions that when coherently implemented, typically, cultivate a responsive context for genre learning. Today many experts propose that knowledge is created and recreated in the discourse between people doing things together (Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 2001; Rogoff et al, 1996; Cambourne, 1999; Bakhtin, 1986; Bazerman, 1997; Chapman, 1999). Experts also agree that along with collaboration and meaning-making through discourse, engagement, mentoring and apprenticeship, and talk about text, are additional conditions which contribute to genre cultivation. Does the DL learning context have these identified conditions, consistent with what researchers say will activate the dynamics of a genre learning classroom? I will examine the goodness of fit between the learning conditions of the DL and those that researchers indicate activate the dynamics of a genre learning classroom.
Coherence between Critical Success Factors and the DL

The format of the DL and the critical success factors (CSFs) may be slightly different from class to class, and year to year, thus, the strategies and action plans that I implement for each class will also be slightly different. There is a need for my own principled eclectism in the organizing of the learning situation of the DL each year. Despite slight variations in the learning situation of the DL each year, so far it is guided by some standard critical success factors. These CSFs are the subject of this discussion on reconditioning genre (Table 22).

Table 22 Conditions of Genre Learning (Chapman, 1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement: Choice, goal setting, praise and compliments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry and Exploration: Integrated Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Connections and Meaning Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in a Discourse Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk About Text: Interesting Text, Strategy Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring and Apprenticeship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECONDITIONING GENRE: CRITICAL SUCCESS, FACTOR ONE: ENGAGEMENT

Education should be conducted as a dialogue about what matters that are of interest and concern to the participants. This is how children learn about the world as they simultaneously learn to talk before they go to school... surely we should enable children to build on that firm foundation by encouraging their desire to understand and their willingness to observe and experiment, and to read, write and talk with others about what interests them (p. xi, Wells, 1999).

Engagement is an important critical success factor of the DL. The DL motivates a student to engage as an avid reflective reader, writer and speaker, through reading, writing and speaking about what interests him. Research indicates that engagement and
motivation are important mediating processes between the teaching and learning of literacy. The ritualized encounter with the DL does not guarantee the learning of genre. A student needs to be responsive to activities that increase his responsiveness to genre learning. He becomes responsive when he has personal goals, desires and intentions and can share his strategies and knowledge within his community. Each student is invited to choose a personally relevant topic, design a DL about it, and share it. A sense of purpose, choice, self-efficacy, achievement, enjoyment and the "need to know" are some of the motivational factors for a student to be responsive to the DL. According to both theory and practice of the DL, meaningful, purposeful choice in the making and sharing of literacy engages a student.

**Stanley's Daily Letter: Engagement Through Choice/Purpose**

Stanley had a reputation for making a teacher's life difficult. When I saw that Stanley would be in my class I made a plan for him. I knew that he was much less likely to oppose me if our proximity and contact were close. I knew that if I could maintain a warm, nonthreatening, attachment oriented relationship, that he and the other students would be rewarded with less disruption and longer attention spans. I had another plan as well.

Stanley was one of those bright, capable kids who just didn't do well with the teacher's choice of reading and writing. I decided to give him as much room for choice as possible. Paying close attention to our relationship and giving him lots of choice would go much further than any firmly delivered instructions could. I recognized that having the DL produced and directed by a capable student like Stanley, was the essence of a motivating environment. Rather than lower the standard of the learning environment to that of my choice of what to read and write on the DL, it was essential for me to open it up, challenge him, to let Stanley and other students like Stanley share the responsibility to proceed in their own direction to meet or exceed the performance standard expected.
This did not mean that I would accept any old preparation or performance of text but that I would expect one to be relevant and important.

What Stanley produced for his DL was extensive, amazing, and accomplished in a brief amount of time. The Shark DL displayed a vast amount of knowledge about every kind of shark in the world. This text was surrounded by exquisitely detailed drawings and captions of little known facts about sharks. Stanley began his DL with a demonstration of an extensive shark collection. He wore a large shark tooth necklace and a shark sweatshirt that lit up when you pressed on one of the sharks printed on it. Stanley composed a shark song for the back of the DL which he taught to the class.

My long term goal for Stanley was to foster motivation that would arise intrinsically from his own nature. Stanley needed this truer form of motivation that reflected his own genuine inclinations, not the values and expectations of the teacher. Many teachers had tried to motivate Stanley by coaxing or pressuring him to accept what they wanted in their worlds, away from promoting the growth of his own natural, self-generated motivation. His need for self-determination, to feel competent and to be genuinely connected to others was accomplished by giving Stanley full choice to create and lead the DL.

Stanley went on to become a respected role model for the class as a consultant on research and illustrations for their DLs. The importance of the attachment relationship and numerous choices, were the underlying conditions that helped Stanley engage academically and socially in positive ways. The motivation associated with owning the DL significantly eased Stanley’s life in school.

Reconditioning Genre: Engagement Through Purpose

... to make sense of any aspect of language a child must perceive a purpose for it... children must understand not only the content of the instruction—the materials they are expected to read—but also the purpose of instruction (Smith, 1978).
Cambourne describes engagement as... “continually communicating and modelling a set of reasons for becoming powerful critical readers. Those reasons must be relevant to the pupils we teach” (2001). I have designed the DL to give students a purposeful reason to become powerful readers and writers with many choices set before them. I play the important role of guiding a student in his choice of topic, purpose, genre and mode of sharing his DL. Our planning together is a highly personalized interaction between the student and teacher. I fully expect some DLs to be for a student’s own purposes with no explicit curriculum demands from me as the teacher. I want him to have ample time to research a topic to pursue an area of personal interest, especially if he is convinced that this effort does further the purpose of his life (Flippo, 2001, p.14). I schedule conferences with each student to reinforce the learning and knowledge goals and reaffirm my support of each student making their own choices.

**Adventures on the DL: Purposeful Writing (See Appendix B page 237)**

Steven’s trip to Drumheller to the Tyrrel Dinosaur Museum is a great source of inspiration for the writers in the class. Steven’s adventure is a vehicle for sharing his trip and his new knowledge of dinosaurs with the others. His DL is the formal, multiple representation, of exciting life experiences that are the makings of new personal insights. His DL sharing is the formal communication of these insights to others. Steven’s turning of his powerful personal experiences into a recorded form, reflecting on what he experienced, and then wrestling with the language he needs to convey this to others, empowers Steven as a literate person.

**“Very Important Person” Daily Letter (See Appendix B page 238)**

Angela becomes an ethnographer when she puts together a story about her Grandma’s life. She is invited to put together a biography DL and prepares a DL sharing supported with artifacts from, and about, her Grandmother. Angela shows how she
values her Grandma and their relationship. Talk among the students at the DL sharing helps the students become acquainted with other important people, and helps them respect and show how to care for them and each other. A condition of this DL sharing, and one valued in the research, is one in which children become convinced that reading/writing is purposeful.

Communication Not Correction, Purposeful Learning  (Appendix B page 239)

I made this DL by photocopying a letter our class received from our local MLA to congratulate us on being selected to decorate one of the municipal Christmas Trees at City Hall. The DL is the useful tool to formally communicate and celebrate this very important information with every student in class. It is also a valuable instrumental genre to inform parents about upcoming events. Everyone is excited to take it home to share the good news.

The examination of this letter genre on the DL is an informative, focussed time for all the students. Everyone participates in the discourse to examine this functional genre about our upcoming trip to City Hall. The students are fully engaged with a DL that is addressed to them and about them. This DL is situated because it is integral and purposeful part of class activities. This letter is for communication, not correction.

For many of my students, writing had always been a contrived school experience within a subject area. This is a good opportunity for literacy to be valued and broadly defined beyond isolated school subjects. This is a moment for strategic self-talk about writing as a useful form of communication. We write letters to communicate. The letter is a way to show how people write for reasons that are real and significant. They are not assigned but come from within the writers themselves. This DL is legitimate, interesting and engaging literacy that exemplifies a genuine partnership between the class/school and community. This DL is a celebration of our way of life in the classroom. “Reading
should be first of all, interesting to the learner; and in order to be interesting, it must come
close to and enter the child's stream of thought" (Parker & Helm, 1902, cited in Kline et
al., 1987, p. 143).

Reconditioning Genre: Engagement through Open-ended Learning

Giving a student open-ended activities has serious implications on his motivation,
effort and engagement with text. A student is motivated to use more learning strategies
when participating in open ended activities such as creating a DL. He can also "exceed
expected performance standards" with the invitation from me to change or add to his
design of his DL. I want him to understand that the DL is a flexible model consistent with
the reinvented concept of genre. I set up individual conferences during the quiet
workshop time to provide a student with multiple and extended opportunities for
engagement and re-engagement in discourse with other students about open-ended
choices in the design of his DL.

Kevin and Cory: Open Ended Learning With the DL (See Appendix B page 240)

Kevin and Cory's Undiscovered Pokemon DL is a good example of the flexible
open-endedness of the DL genre. The boys have changed the DL genre format by
having the diagrams of Thundericer, a Devilicer, a Ragonea and a Kryss take up both the
front and back of the DL with boxes of text adjacent to them. They have produced a DL
format that reflects the unique work of two talented students exceeding the standard set
for them.

This DL explores a topic that some teachers may not value as a vehicle for
learning. Sometimes as teachers we have our own ideas of the literacy topics, forms and
practices we value. Cory is a student who resisted literacy. He needs to be reassured
that it is important to be involved in literacy practices which are relevant to him. The DL is
open-ended enough for him to flex his own valuable ideas. The plasticity of this school
based primary genre provides Cory with the assurance that I will honour his choice of
text. Once Cory recognizes I am not going to push him into a set of literacy practices he does not value, Cory relaxes and focuses his energy on his own creative processes. I support these and built on them whenever I can.

With the flexible format of the DL and the ritual of the DL under his direction, Cory has a vehicle for the sharing of his and Kevin's original Pokemons. Their sharing of their complex population of undiscovered Pokemons comes with diagrams and description, type, rarity and attacks, engages every child in the class. Twenty-one students participate, attentive for a sixty minute block of DL sharing time. This DL reminds me, as the teacher, to beware of the tendency to make decisions about what is significant for the learner.

Reconditioning Genre: Engagement Through Bringing the Work of Their Lives to School With Heart and Soul

A learner's motivation to achieve is enhanced if the interests and desires of his life are integrated into his learning environment. GoDLad points out that teachers are not always aware of the personal lives of their students when he writes: "...data suggests to me a picture of rather well-intentioned teachers going about their business, somewhat detached from and not quite connected with the "other lives" of students" (1984, p. 80). He concludes that teachers of the 1970's focussed more on text than on the children themselves. Teachers taught and children watched, in the traditional teaching of genre (Barrs, 1994).

Nancy Atweil reminds us that people think hardest and best when it is about something that matters to them, when they have an investment, when there's something at stake (Figure 28): "They can bring the work of their lives to school with heart and soul" (Calkins, 1991, p.304). The DL invites a student to bring his life to school heart and soul. Much like the Language Experience Approach of Roach Van Allen and Russell Stauffer
(1970) years ago, the DL begins with the student's own language and life. A student chooses the genre he wishes to publish on the DL in response to his own particular purpose in a particular context. A student learns that the forms of his DL arise out of the activities and events both in and out of the classroom that are most meaningful to him.

Bringing Our Lives to School Heart and Soul (See Appendix B page 241)

I was reading a story about teasing when I first hear the sobbing. I stopped and listened. It was Vanessa. Her bright blue eyes were torrid with tears. Her shoulders quivered as she dropped her head forward into hiding. She lifted a trembling hand to her reddened eye, blotting away a plump tear. She reactively uses her free hand to protect her withered hand.

"They call me Four Fingers," Vanessa whispered in a voice as fragile as her damaged hand. The students listen shamefully, more fully aware than I of the taunting that tested Vanessa's courage to come to school each day. Vanessa's story needs to be told but not in the whisper of a sad and serious moment.

When Vanessa shared her "When I Crushed My Finger DL" several days later the students were supportive of her and predictably curious about her accident. Most of them had little or no knowledge of what had actually happened to her, other than the teasing. Inviting Vanessa to share a DL about what happened to her was the defining moment for this community of learners. The sharing of her story wove these individuals into a tight tapestry of a caring community. As each student began sharing the important moments of their life, the whole idea of purposeful communication became real. The students were using the whole of the DL experiences to make sense of the parts. The DL sharing became something much more that working on plurals or tenses and prepositions it was about making sense on the page and in their lives. Students began to figure out the specific language elements that they needed to create a whole authentic DL text.
Students began to support each other in making personal connections and new understandings of each other.

The DL sharing time becomes more than working on skills. It illustrates the importance of the role as a mentor to initiate important talk. It becomes more than providing students with books to read and text to visit, for it encourages serious talk about our individual lives and our lives together as a thinking, caring, sharing community. The DL sharing engages students in learning through the relationships extended to others. This DL demonstrates that the best learning takes place when students are a valued part of a social group.

**Personal Stories**  (See Appendix B page 232)

Vanessa's hospital story was the first of three major pieces of personal narrative about accidents. Soon a number of hospital stories appeared. David and Alyssa, both low progress writers produced more writing than they had ever done before. These kinds of stories on the DL, are a natural outgrowth of a specific group interest, shared by the members of the class. They are experiences that they have an intimate knowledge of and can write freely about. These important stories are not just pretend school stories, simulations of story writing, they are the real events of their personal lives. The realness of Alyssa or David's story is what sustains and extends the DL context, a context in which language is used for real, social purposes.

Many of the DLs arise out of conversations between students and the teacher or peer during the course of the day. Writer's Workshop conferences and informal conversations discover many rich opportunities to provide new ideas for students to pursue in their own writing. Pet lovers write about their pets. Sports nuts write about the playoffs. Pokemon lovers invent new Pokemon. These conversations bring students together who may be quite diverse in their abilities but similar in their interests.
**Family Treasures Daily Letter**

A Family Treasures DL is a celebration of a special part of a student's home life, such as favourite foods, toys, treasures, friends, trips, pictures, events, histories and memorabilia, and cultural traditions. Natalia shares her collection of hand painted Ukranian Easter Eggs, and a video of her trip to the Ukraine. Heather shares her Mother's trip to Glasgow, Scotland. These kinds of DLs reflect cultural activities and expressions of their family lives. These are DL sharing times that transform Natalia's trip, or Heather's mother's trip, into culturally rich language events, which offer great opportunities for personal expression of culture. This embedding of the DL in the social and cultural contexts in which these students live, helps them make sense of their learning experiences in relationship to what they already know and are able to do.

Clearly, people learn in meaningful contexts (Chapman, 199).

Students of diverse backgrounds are sometimes paired to produce their DLs. Other times students of similar backgrounds are paired. The nonmainstream students follow the well-established ritual of the DL. Students assume a supportive, inquisitive and interactive role, when non-mainstream students present their DL. This event creates a sense of authentic sharing and community among the students of diverse backgrounds.

**Table 23 Selection of Topics for DL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>INTEREST</th>
<th>GENRE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steven</td>
<td>Chinese New Year</td>
<td>personal narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>Grandma from Greece</td>
<td>biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittany</td>
<td>French Crepes</td>
<td>recipe from Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelvin</td>
<td>Grandmoner In Taiwan</td>
<td>biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalia</td>
<td>Ukranian Easter Eggs</td>
<td>narrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reconditioning Genre: Engagement through Praise

The DL format and sharing has built in opportunities for students to receive informative compliments and foster self-efficacy without the use of rewards and reading incentive programs. One way I motivate ‘intentional’ readers and writers of the DL is through spending time during each DL talking to a student individually about his progress. I don’t give attention or praise to a student in the form of rewards, points, coupons or gold stars. I talk to him about his improvements in reading, writing and genre knowledge as the reminder of his growing competency as a literacy learner. I give a reader, writer or presenter of the DL compliments that inform him about the particulars of his successes. One of my goals is to develop intrinsic motivation and eliminate competition among my students, replacing it with a pride in being able to read and comprehend the DL text without rewards. My time with students is valuable, too valuable to spend time with rewards that lead to some short-term goals that value extrinsic motivation and focus on competitive performance. Our goal with the DL is to read and write genres a little bit better each day and enjoy the content of the genre, not to be better than someone else.

Craig and Compliments

I usually ‘hand over’ leading of the DL after the first few months of school. When students-as-teacher take over the moderating, I am free to move around the room, conversing with students of my choice. I visit Craig complimenting him on his effort with tracking the print (keeping his place with his finger), for attending to the text. The complimenting is done quietly. I whisper the particulars of this accomplishment to him, and ‘pen’ a compliment in the space on the DL (His mother will read it when the DL goes
home) to reinforce Craig as he uses effective strategies in his reading and writing. Each student I visit is complimented on his accomplishment with sincere recognition of the details of his effort or achievement indicating the specific aspects of effort or achievement or both. Wlodkowski tells us that praise should be “3S-3P”: “praise that is sincere, specific, sufficient and properly given for praiseworthy success in the manner preferred by the learner” (1985).

**Reconditioning Genre: Engagement Through Specific Sincere Compliments**

Parents, students and teacher compliment the effort or achievement of a student on the *DL*. Several lines are set at the top of the back of the *DL* for me to make written compliments that can be easily checked by the parent(s) when the *DL* book goes home that night. The parents can also compliment the child at home either verbally or as a note in the same place. I can monitor the involvement of parents by looking at the *DL* when it returns to school each day. Specific sincere compliments are an important part of the design of the *DL* to motivate a student to engage in talk about text and talk about his own progress as a learner with his mentor or significant others.

Effective praise is given contingently on effort and achievement, specifies the particulars of the accomplishment, shows spontaneity, orients students toward better appreciation of their work, attributes success to effort, and fosters appreciation of task relevant strategies (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997).

**Reconditioning Genre: Engagement Through Goal Setting**

Craig and I work together to set learning goals for the writing of his *DL* and sharing of his *DL*. He comes to understand the strength and weaknesses of his literacy learning as he prepares and shares his *DL* plans at weekly *DL* conferences. Each student has eight to twelve literacy events to develop his talk about text. As his talents and abilities ‘emerge’ over the course of the school year he can set reading, writing speaking and presenting (leadership etc.), goals with each *DL* presentation. He is oriented toward becoming better at talking about each of the components of his literacy
learning.

As the teacher, I am responsible for instructing a student in ways to monitor his own developing literacy competencies. I use the Performance Standards (Ministry of Education, 1999) to provide the language of learning my students and parents need that is specific and sufficient feedback. I show the Performance Standard descriptors which are supported with samples of the task to my students so they can set goals for their reading and writing progress. I use these descriptors to teach students to use goal setting to motivate them to engage in developing their own set of literacy learning goals. Goal setting is a design feature of the DL and one indicated in the research to improve learning.

Reconditioning Genre: Engagement through Achievement

An important form of motivation that typically leads to engagement is achievement. “Engagement is valuable in itself, but also leads to achievement” (Guthrie, 1997). Some students are highly motivated to achieve, always striving for success. I give a student multiple opportunities to select challenging goals with his DL preparation. He has the goal of presenting interesting or important books at the Read Aloud and to (typically) produce and present two or more of his DLs each month. I try to empower a student to make the connection between the writing he does (DL), the presentation of this writing (DL sharing), for the purposes of demonstrating his achievement. As a student engages actively and frequently with the DL, he improves his reading, writing and speaking skills and typically his achievement is higher.

“Motivation is the link between frequent reading and reading achievement. This link sustains the upward (and downward) spiral of achievement” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999). Facilitating engagement with the DL increases the competence of the genre learning student. This competence motivates the individual. Increased motivation leads to more reading. More reading leads to improved achievement. Achievement
cultivates readers to "become agents of their own reading growth" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999).

Achievement with At-Risk Students and the Daily Letter

Scaffolding an at-risk student so that he may participate fully with the large group shared reading experience of the DL, and feel successful doing it, is one of my most valued, important design features of the DL. My job as the most expert teacher is to support at-risk students, to spend time with them to prepare them to be successful with the DL prior to the large group DL sharing. This has the critical role of influencing an at-risk student to have the learned "intention" (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994) to read with success and enjoyment. As a teacher I have high expectations for all students participating in the DL and I especially want at-risk students to know I have faith in them. Allington warns us that a teacher needs to resist the tendency to lower expectations for a low progress student. It is important not to lower the standards for the less able students but to emphasize full comprehension of the text (Allington & Cunningham, 1999).

As a teacher sharing the responsibility for the learning with the students, I am afforded time to preview the DL with an at-risk student to assist him in being successful in their interaction with the DL. If it was not for the shared responsibility with the students for teaching and learning in the class, I would not have the time, energy or opportunity to take an at-risk apprentice and "front-end loading" by preteaching the difficult text to the student prior to the presentation of the DL. This is my job as the teacher and also the job of the educational assistant before the formal presentation at the DL sharing. It is my job to ensure that this student benefits from the intrinsically rewarding "flow" of reading a student must achieve to be motivated to continue to enjoying reading (Csikszenmihalyi, 1990). The use of a short piece of text optimizes the chance for every reader to participate successfully (given various amounts of scaffolding before hand) with about
90% accuracy on the text. It has been my experience that it is possible to hold all students at the same high standards with this short bit of text (up to one page of 8¾" x 11" page) of the DL.

Given some support a low progress student can read a slightly more challenging DL. Readers persevere with, and comprehend text above their instructional reading level sometimes because they either have interest in the content or scaffolding with the teacher or both. This measure of success for all students, (no small ability groups, or pull outs) ensures the feeling of belonging to the inclusive club, “the literacy learning club” (Smith, 1988) where every child in the class is a member. Literacy learning then, and for many, only then, becomes intrinsically motivating and enjoyable.

Angela's DL: Ghostylox and the Three Vampires (See Appendix B page 233)

Angela is highly engaged in her latest narrative for the DL. Angela's creation of an adapted story Ghostylox and the Three Vampires shows a remarkable improvement in her writing from the Britney Spears DL several weeks before. She is in an upward spiral of achievement, wanting to share her Hallowe'en Tale. Because she is more competent she is also much more motivated to increase her time spent reading and writing.

The students love her creative parody. The language is clear with some "story language" and a much improved use of sentence length and pattern from her last piece of writing. Her sentences are complete, with few errors. Most of the words she uses are spelled correctly and her presentation shows that she has paid close attention to the details of the text, illustrations, a border and selection of font size and style. Angela has prepared original poetry for the back of the DL and a Halloween costume time line. It is less than two months into school and Angela is beginning to foster connections with a number of genres and significantly improve her competencies with genre.

Creative parodies like this, are powerful genres for students to begin to think like
writers. Angela's DL sharing takes a new direction with a serious consideration of the audience and the reader's reaction. Angela is assuming a strong mentorship role and making an impact as a reader, writer and a leader. Her engagement with preparing DLs is high and she is beginning to feel the power of knowing more and more about what good readers, writers, and speakers do.

### Table 24 Cycle of Engagement with the Daily Letter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Increased Competence</th>
<th>Increased Motivation</th>
<th>More Reading</th>
<th>Improved Achievement</th>
<th>Leading to Continued Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Reconditioning Genre, Engagement through Enjoyment

In *A Place Called School*, John Goodlad writes “Classes of all levels, tend not to be marked by exuberance, joy, laughter, abrasiveness, praise . . . but emotional neutrality” (1984, p.112). Feeling successful and enjoying the learning process is an important condition of literacy learning and genre cultivation in both research and practice of the DL. I realize the importance of both knowledge goals and enjoyment with the students to foster connections with genre. Our conversations about genres such as jokes, riddles, quizzes etc. at the DL sharing have the power to engage and challenge students to a deep level of involvement and attention.

Keenan’s Daily Letter: In A Dark, Dark Wood  (See Appendix B page 234)

Boys have improved attitudes toward writing, and produce more writing in informal writing settings (Graves, 1989). Boys typically produce “playful writing” with the invitation of choice to initiate and explore playful opportunities to write. Keenan’s tale, *In A Dark, Dark Universe* is adapted from the popular primary story *In A Dark, Dark Wood*. 
Keenan is having fun approximating a popular genre. This story is loved for its rhythm and style. Keenan is a skilled writer and capable of reproducing the same rhythm and style producing a funny creative parody.

Everyone has a hand up to read Keenan's DL. As I listen, leading from behind (Wells, 1986), I notice that many of the readers are not using an end of line sweep. I initiate a brief strategic teaching moment with the whole class with Keenan’s permission. This easy short piece of text lends itself to a focus on skilled read aloud with careful attention to the punctuation to guide the reader through the end of line sweep. I briefly explain how I want them to attend to the punctuation to stop reading, and not stop at the end of the line unless there is a period there. We practice. I invite the students to listen to their parents read the DL at home, listening for their attention to punctuation and to watch for their end of line sweep. The students are keen to engage their parents in the reading of the DL to examine their use of end of line sweep. With this DL, both Keenan and I are able to complement each other in the teaching approach to this DL sharing. He shares his process writing and I strategically teach the whole class thinking about effective oral reading. My teachable moment initiates a cycle of self-assessment which will be continued with the individual conferences of Writers' Workshop where I can spend time with individual students to improve their oral reading. The learning of this DL is fun process learning complemented with strategic teaching.

**Songs on the DL**

Singing DLs make the classroom a fun place. Creating situations that recognize the close relationship between singing, talking, listening, reading and writing help younger readers make connections with the written code that might be otherwise difficult. Silly DLs, like a Hallowe’en song to the tune of a Christmas song make for good fun. A student, unable to read all the text of this DL, can, through practice, sing his way through
it. This is also a chance for some students to showcase their musical intelligence, engaging them in something they are good at or enjoy.

Jacquie and Angela's Daily Letter: Jokes and Riddles  (See Appendix B page 235)

Not all DLs are deep unravellings of the mysteries of life or universal truths. Some DLs are plain fun. Jacquie and Angela put together a collection of twenty-five wacky crazy kid jokes. Steven, Jacquie and Kelvin produce a Tongue Twister DL that has everyone talking at the same time! These DLs are silly, and all the kids participate, busting at the seams to answer a joke or riddle or try a tongue twister for the group.

The connection with jokes and riddles is fun, and the ritual of the exploration of each component of the DL genre is too. The students conduct these DLs as they would any other, continuing to draw their attention back to other previous genres, making analogies between how these formats of language and speech are constructed, once again keep the conversation about genre going.

Means must be found to ensure that all children's first experiences of reading and writing are purposeful and enjoyable. Only in this way will they be drawn into applying their meaning-making strategies to the task of making sense of written language. Only in this way will they learn to exploit the full symbolic potential of language and so become fully literate (Wells, 1986, p. 162).

Creating conditions where students engage mentally with what they are learning clearly transforms activity into understanding. Having students engaging, physically, mentally and emotionally with their choice of DL topic leads to long lasting learning and understanding. I ensure there is a coherence, a “merger” between a number of strategies such as choice, in the design and practise of the DL to cultivate genre through engagement. These same strategies have a durable representation in the research on literacy, learning and genre (Flippo, 2001; Wells, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). Engagement with the DL comes through choice or an open-ended invitation as students are engaged
through their heart and soul. Engagement is also through praise, compliments, goal setting and achievement. Students are engaged because it is just plain fun. Clearly, active engagement is one of the most important conditions learning of the DL to foster connections with genre.

**RECONDITIONING GENRE: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR TWO, INQUIRY AND EXPLORATION**

A major purpose of the activities in their classrooms communities is to cultivate a general stance with respect to the world of experiences that might be characterized as a disposition to engage in systematic inquiry about the questions or topics in which one is interested (Wells, 1999, p. 63).

Inquiry and exploration are important critical success factors of the DL and they are identified in the research as key tenants in cultivating genre learning (Wells, 1999). With the DL, a student is invited to personally inquire about a variety of self-selected topics. He is then invited to increase his understanding with the sharing of the DL with the larger discourse community.

John Dewey, as early as 1900, reminded us of the importance of inquiry as an organizing principle of curricular activity (1938). He indicated the significance of investigations with first hand exploration of familiar aspects of a student’s experience then. The sharing of a student’s inquiry on the DL is the invitation for other students to wonder about or share an interest in something or to critically challenge a body of information. This inquiry may be on a topic a student has strong feelings about. Wells supports students having this kind of invitation to explore topics they value reminding us to “arouse a student’s interest by engaging their feelings and values as well as their cognition” (1999, p.63).

The DL is an open-ended invitation to cultivate the pursuit of alternate possibilities encouraging a student to collaborate with others in constructing shared understanding and to ask a genuine question. Understanding starts with not any
question, but a genuine question, a question expresses a real desire to understand (Bettencourt, 1991; cited in Wells, 1999). It is this desire that moves the questioner to pursue the inquiry until an answer has been made. In his research on dialogic inquiry Wells reveals that the key feature of inquiry is for the student to have a goal of "making", not "learning" (1999). A student’s inquiry focuses his attention on making answers. Learning is the outcome of the inquiry because it requires a student to "understand in action". There is not one method of inquiry set out for the students of the DL except to encourage a student to ask higher level questions such as "Why". It is simply a context to encourage the posing of real question on self-selected topics/genres.

Most students eagerly take charge of inquiry about a self-selected topic. As the teacher I can also suggest an area of inquiry based on my understanding of what I see a child wondering about or relevant curriculum themes. If a question is taken over and owned by a child it is usually as engaging as if the student came up with it by himself. During construction of the DL, I have the role of co-inquirer with the student to facilitate a student's pursuit of the topic. I am a role model of being able to wonder about things and to encourage their action to understand things better. Students see me wonder about things and struggle to understand various concepts and such behaviour encourages them to do like wise. The demonstration of the teacher as learner committed to inquiry is an important condition of dialogic inquiry (Wells, 1999) and the DL context.

Kevin’s Daily Letter: The Second World War  (See Appendix B page 236)

I read the Cynthia Rylant’s, The Wall, the story of the Memorial Wall in the United States to honour the American soldiers of the Viet Nam War. As I read, I notice Kevin has a sombre yet inquisitive look. With Remembrance Day a week away, I invite Kevin to put something together for the November 11 DL. Kevin jumps at the idea and begins his inquiry into the Second World War with some real questions about this war and history.
His inquiry leads him to some personal connections with his "Oma" and her stories of the war. Kevin gains an extensive understanding about a topic of great interest to him and fully engages the students with his rich knowledge.

Angela's Daily Letter: Inquiry All about Saskatchewan DL (Appendix B page 237)

The DL is designed to offer choice for the student’s inquiry, yet the curriculum stands before each teacher. What is a teacher to do? I explained to the children that Canada is the country they live in and probably they already know something about it. The students have the broad invitation to compose a DL about something to do with Canada. Soon students form groups with an interest in a particular province and begin exploring their topic. Many are happy to join a study group to create text about a province for the DL.

Angela produces a DL called, All about Saskatchewan. Her writing offers clear, concise information and ideas that effectively tell us about Saskatchewan. Angela had improved her meaning style and form for writing to communicate ideas and information. Her DL has one full page of text, a vocabulary study using words from her DL, an illustration for a provincial flower, an original poem about Saskatchewan and a space for students to draw the provincial flower (with numbering of each part of the flower to assist a fledgling artist). Angela's DL sharing is supported with posters, pictures and a flag. Other students model Angela's lead and one DL is produced for every province/territory in Canada. The flow of ideas from one group to another is amazing. Instead of staying up all night creating a unit of study on Canada I have given a very broad invitation to explore a topic about Canada to a responsive group of writers.

Kelvin, Bryan and Steven take a much different approach to the invitation of creating a Canadiana DL. Their DL has a short handwritten text on Wayne Gretzky, a detailed border made of each of the pieces of equipment of a hockey player and a picture
of Wayne Gretzky. The boys scour numerous poetry books for a hockey poem (they have
to read lots of poems to find this). The DL sharing concludes with a trip to the local rink
for an afternoon of skating. I share a multitude of Canadiana read alouds, interspersed
between the Canada DLs the students share, further enriching both the learning of these
inquirers and providing new invitations for topics to pursue.

Engagement with the Canadiana DLs arise out of the choice the students are
given. These choices come under the broad topic of inquiry much as the “Canada
Study”. Learning through engagement means students wanting to learn. I give them
control of the learning, to make the decisions necessary as part of the learning for
themselves.

Kevin’s Daily Letter: Dangerous Water Creatures  (See Appendix B page 238)

Kevin has a burning question about dangerous water creatures. Kevin confidently
begins his inquiry collecting facts on each of five deep sea creatures. Systematically he
records his notes, colour-coding information that goes together. He soon has five
paragraphs, with introductory and concluding sentences. Kevin’s motivation to work so
hard comes out of his desire to learn in a direction purely of his own choice. He is a self-
motivated learner now moving fluently between a number of genres and needing the
freedom to move at his own pace. The DL affords him this freedom to proceed at his own
rate of learning about those inquiries that matter most to him. The DL classroom accepts
and encourages children to explore and creatively construct meaning. Traditional
classrooms give students information rather than encouraging them to construct their
own knowledge. To Kevin it is not the delivery of information by a teacher that creates
knowledge, but rather it is Kevin’s own planning and constructing of information and
knowledge. The ritual of the DL enables a student such as Kevin functioning beyond the
widely held range of expectations of grade two/three to conduct his inquiry. The DL is a
tool to help a student to discover this role as researcher, inquirer, and decision maker, early in his school career. A student can define himself as a researcher, and become comfortable with that role as a new way to empower himself. Writing is cultivated by noticing, wondering, remembering, questioning and yearning (Calkins, 1994, p.4).

**Inquiry and Exploration: Learning Through Genre**

The *DL* is important for its epistemic potential with late primary students (Grade Two/Three). One valuable purpose of the *DL* is for students to learn through genre, using it as a cognitive tool to construct thinking and learning. "Readers-even emergent and beginning readers-are able to test a hypothesis and are active theory builders" (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994). Learning through genre means using it as a vehicle for cognition and for the expansion of one's world: “rather than imposing rigid formulae on a child learning genre gives him the tool he needs to act in and on the world” (Martin, 1993). Through the process of sharing the *DL* a student invents what he knows and in doing so leads to what he communicates about genre. He goes through the process of bringing what he knows to a new level of awareness and organization. A student has the freedom to pursue a wide variety of interest and then benefit from seeing the connections among them ( Shanahan, 1999). A student bathes in integrated learning through the daily exploration and inquiry around shared books and a wide range of speech and writing forms on the *DL*.

Integrated instruction will serve literacy learning best if it focuses on genres as cultural ways of communication, and on being able to translate information from one form to another. These connections should be made explicitly, and process talks in which disciplinary similarities and differences are explored should be a regular part of integrated instruction. ( Shanahan and Neuman 1997, p. 17).
In a community that values written language, writing can become an important means for individual reflections and social connections. And it is that feeling of belonging to a community of connections to other people that helps make teachers' and children's school lives together personally satisfying and socially meaningful (Wells, 1986, op. cit. p. xvii).

The DL is a cultural resource or tool for both the teacher and student to build personal understanding through meaning negotiation. Having time for a student to make personal connections is an important learning condition of the DL and cites such in research. Freedman & Medway stress the importance of a student needing opportunities for personal meaning making (1994). A student can use the creating of the DL as a source of independent meaning making and personal connections and the sharing of the DL is a source of collaborative meaning making with the community assisting in the learning.

**Personal Connections through Demonstration of Our Lives**

Calkins reminds us there is a world of difference between stimulating writing, assigning topics, giving story prompts, and trying to motive writing, believing and trusting that a student has real reasons to write. A teacher's role, according to Calkins, is to help a student believe he can "become deeply involved in his own writing . . . that his life is worth writing about" (1994, p.12), and to accomplish this without artificial writing stimulants. The student's inspiration to write "does not begin with deskwork but with lifework" (Calkins, 1994, p.3). A student is challenged to begin living with a sense of awareness, to become what James Dickey describes as, "someone who is enormously taken in by things anyone else would walk by" (Calkins, 1994). The DL empowers a student to be in charge of his own celebrations through the habit of becoming conscious of his life, of finding the importance in his own life. Calkins explains:
...as human beings we write to communicate, to plan, petition, remember, announce, list, imagine . . . but above all, we write to hold our lives in our hands and to make something of them . . . Writing allows us to turn the chaos into something beautiful, to frame selected moments, to uncover and celebrate the organizing patterns of our existence. As human beings we have the deep need to represent our experience. By articulating our experience, we reclaim it for ourselves (1994, p.8).

Calkins outlines five authentic conditions to stimulate making personal connections and making meaning in the classroom. She reminds us:

of the necessity of “demonstrating the power and purposes writing has in our lives”
that students learn to live “wide awake lives-seeing, hearing, noticing and wondering . . .
” of the importance of “demonstrating an attentiveness in our own lives by establishing rituals in our classrooms that encourage our students’ lives” to refer to our students as authors, to treat them as authors to build a learning community by “establishing an atmosphere of graciousness and care and respect in our classrooms” (1994, p.31).

The DL context shares learning conditions characteristic of Calkin’s “workshop” based on her work with Donald Murray (1975). During the construction of the DL, a student is given plenty of time to read, write and talk without formal prompts. He has the choice of topics and numerous invitations to write with the belief he has stories to tell. He can think and imagine, or experiment with the language as he interacts with the teacher, text and others in the learning community. He can decide on his own writing topics without being lured into teacher-stimulated prompts to write.

**Angela’s Daily Letter: Personal Connections**  (See Appendix B page 239)

Angela’s DL is first person narrative about her teen idols, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. Angela tells about her dream of what it would be like to be one of her favourite singers. She lines the sides of the DL with photos of them, shares an original poem about them, and a time line. Angela’s reading and writing about these singers is a “from the heart response” sharing her interest with her class.
This DL sharing provides a rich discussion that forms lines along gender. The girls and boys share their different views on Britney Spears and why they like or do not like her. Engagement is high at this DL share. This is personal writing that Angela shares openly with the class. As a community of learners, we talk about why writers keep journals and record how they feel. This is clearly a moment where, as a teacher, I see the value of the flexible, open-ended nature of the DL to share both efferent and aesthetic styles. I am reminded of the work of Rosenblatt and reflect on the need to give students opportunities for both kinds of reading and writing. There will be occasions to share both efferent and aesthetic reading and writing to engage everyone in making sense of their text and their world.

**Narrative For Thinking and Feeling**

The DL is a tool for reading to learn about the important aspects of a student's world and introduce him to a host of other worlds. The need to grow, found on Maslow's needs hierarchy (1954), is the need to learn. Bruner expresses a deep belief that narrative is the mode of thinking and feeling that helps children (indeed, people generally) "create a version of the world in which, psychologically, they can envision a place for themselves-a personal world" (p 39, 1976).

Narratives are important in theory for their value as a tool of both thinking and feeling. Narrative is a popular genre for many students writing DLs. A student enjoys writing about his personal life and events. Time is perhaps the core element of narratives and separates them from other genres (Chapman, 1997, p.225). A student typically writes narrative as a sequenced of events of a trip with families, a trip to the hospital and adventures with friends. They are often simple sequences of situations, actions or problems and resolutions. Narratives in read alouds immerse a student in invitations to write DLs. Many students also love retelling, adapting or inventing fictional narratives including fairy tales, fables, legends, myths and biographies.
Once Upon a Time DLs (See Appendix B page 240)

Kevin produces a fairy tale called "The Magic Present". It is a story about the daughter of a policeman who receives the present of a magic pearl that grants her unlimited presents. Kevin ends his fairy tale with "They wished happily ever after." It is a matter of days before other fairy tales emerge on the DL: Steven authors "The Magic Blood",Jacquie authors "The Little Vampire", Emily authors "The Teacher From the Black Lagoon", Arjan and Bryan coauthor "Christmas Day", Heather authors a retelling of "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas", Jacquie and Angela coauthor "Stinky the Yellow Nose Skunk", and Christina authors "The Magic Unicorn".

There is no need to prompt any student in the class to write. The only point of contention is keeping track of who is ready next to share their DL. Students are keen to be the moderator and share their DL and don’t want to wait. These students are keen to be seen as real authors and look forward to their DL sharing as they can be treated, recognized and called authors. The students feel the need to demonstrate the power and purposes writing has in their lives. They grow in their understanding that writers have an attentiveness to their lives, to: "wide awake lives-seeing, hearing, noticing and wondering . . ." with these purposeful stories (Calkins, 1994, p. 31).

Meaning Making Through Demonstrations of How to Read

Ruddell and Unrau's model on the process of reading explores the complex nature of reading, showing that the reader's need to obtain meaning is a key component, a driving force, behind language performance and reading growth, and important to this discussion of genre learning as well (1994). Huey describes reading as the "most remarkable specific performance that civilization has learned in all its history" (1908/1968, p. 6). The DL can be used for a read aloud, to share excerpts of literary works, and/or for reading instruction so a student can make his own meaning. A
collaborative process approach cultivates both affective and cognitive conditions for the meaning-construction process to take place (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994). Clearly, the DL is a collaborative process approach that attends to the details of affective and cognitive conditions for meaning construction to take place. It also presses for improved individual student achievement.

Andrew's Mother: Demonstration of Learning to Read

After several days of watching Andrew's shy, reserved mom hovering in the doorway I invite her in to visit or perhaps help with little tasks that keep her close to her son and in full view of the classroom activities. This petite, sad, dark-eyed mother, with undecideDLy brown hair and a timid voice, is not your typical classroom helper mom but I am happy to have her here with us. I am guessing that she wishes to be close to Andrew in his transition into a new school and that she is looking to get her own sense of this new environment. I am a little surprised when she offers to come back the next day.

Despite having a busy schedule Andrew's mom shows up each day, sitting in on the beginning minutes of the day and disappearing shortly after the sharing of the DL. After several weeks of visiting, I notice that she is becoming more comfortable with Andrew's new setting. I ask her if she has any concerns about his new class. She responds that he is very happy and that she does not have any concerns. She pauses. She shares one more thing. She is grateful for the DL and her son learning to read. She was also grateful that she, too, is learning to read.

Meaning Making With the Daily Letter

Rosenblatt reminds us that the meaning of the text is not found in the text alone, and is not just found in the reader's mind but that it is "perhaps to be authorized by an interpretive community" (1978). Ruddell and Unrau concur with Rosenblatt's theory . . . "that meaning is not entirely in either the text or the reader but is created as the result of
the interactions among readers, text, teacher and the classroom community” (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994, p.103). The DL sharing is designed to support the construct that meaning making of the text is subjective and requires the community to talk about it to make sense of it. The DL component of talk about text facilitates the transactive nature between reader, text, teacher and classroom community and reflects Rosenblatt’s observation:

Fundamentally, the process of understanding the work implies a recreation of it, an attempt to grasp completely the structured sensation and concept through which the author seeks to convey the quality of his sense of life. Each must make a new synthesis if these elements with his own nature, but it is essential that he evoke these components of experience to which the text actually refers (1937/1978, p. 113).

Meaning Making with Familiar Texts

A developing reader needs to read a wide variety of interesting, comprehensible materials, with about 90% to 95% accuracy (Durrell & Catterson, 1980). A student’s reading fluency and comprehension generally improve when he reads familiar texts. Braunger and Lewis (1997) conclude that students learn to read by reading or the “practice effect”. The effectiveness of repeated reading experiences has a long history in reading research (Samuels, 1979). A student has a collection of DLs as an enjoyable source of rereading and reminiscing about the events of the school year. He has his own ready-made portfolio as a resource of text, word studies, poetry, personal reflections to review (and remember). An at-risk reader who spends time rereading can increase his speed and accuracy and improve his oral reading and expression. His practice with rereading selections can also lead to increased speed and accuracy in new unpracticed selections. This student’s improved learning can lead to an improved attitude toward reading and help foster connections to new genres. His improved knowledge and affect, in turn, can be transferred, or applied to independent reading and writing.
**Meaning Making through the Need to Know**

A student's need to know, to make sense of, is a highly motivating force to engage him with learning through genre. Meaning making is identified in research as a key motivation for a reader to read and a writer to write (Wells, 1986) and is important to learn genre. The purpose of the DL sharing is to have a student engage other students to think and wonder in a variety of modes, using words, pictures, symbols and numbers, talk, personal and interpersonal actions to grow in his personal understanding and the collective understanding of the class.

Concepts, language, word analysis, text-processing strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, classroom and social interaction procedures, personal and world knowledge can be highly motivating factors for some readers. A student's own preparation of the DL and the sharing of this genre is the ritual for the students to be immersed in challenges to learn any number of these various components of learning to read or write the DL.

**Brandon’s Daily Letter: How Do They Read?**

Brandon, a blond, blue-eyed, Grade One breaks the quiet buzz of the first day of school. “When do I learn to read?” I smile and respond that we will begin reading right now. This is the moment to begin the exciting process of mentoring Brandon’s in his initial interpretation of text. Conventional wisdom suggests that whole language events are too complex for emergent readers. With the sharing of the first DL, I convey the belief that everyone will become a reader. Brandon helps hand out copies of the DL to 20 apprentices. I read and initiate a brief talk about the three lines of text. I work the text in such a manner to make Brandon and each of the other 20 Grade One’s believers... believers that they are readers! This is not a rehearsal activity; it is the real thing! At the end of the day, standing in the doorway with Brandon’s mother, I hear him read his DL to his mother (from memory). His mother smiles and thanks me for this blessed moment.
Many of Brandon’s favourite Grade One DLs will be the songs that he can sing, and the patterned rhebus stories he can decipher with the help of the pictures. This scaffolding will help him believe he is a reader until he has enough understanding of “the code” he needs to learn to read. Even on this first day, the DL is an effective and appropriate literacy learning tool for Brandon who does not yet know how to read. Brandon, this hopeful young apprentice is initiated into the DL ritual, experiencing language in its wholeness, spending a few pleasurable moments this first day, decomposing it into parts. This is our first celebration of our literary way of life in the classroom. This is an especially inspiring day for this energetic grade one who came to school on the first day with the full expectation that he would read . . . and did.

Meaning Making through Strategies

The ritual of the DL also promotes the knowledge of metacognitive, metageneric strategies as an important aspect of meaning making. It supports a student repeatedly appropriating the use of strategies, which according to Wells, is important for meaning-making (1986) of the text and the development of word knowledge through practise. Wells reminds us a student must actively use both together effectively and efficiently. The moderator led Text Study, Word Studies, and Reflection components of the DL focus on making a student aware of the learning of strategies he can use with the DL. Over time a student develops metacognitive habits of his other reading/writing performances.

Meaning Making through Processfolios

Classrooms are becoming increasingly crowded with assessment using up valuable time for authentic literacy. The message a teacher gets from her school district and that testing is important and it is what counts in schools. The negative effect of repeated assessment comes from expecting students to do things perfectly without
process. A preoccupation with assessment is contrary to attending to creative, personnel, enjoyable purposes for self-directed learning. A literacy processfolio is a viable alternative assessment to some forms of traditional testing. These portfolios include evidence of a child's growing abilities to become literate over time. The DLs are kept by the student as a portfolio (duotang), a collection of valuable evidence of a student's literacy performance, process and self-perception over the course of the school year. A student's evaluation of his DL collection is a thinking process of what am I doing, what have I done and what I intend to do (adapted from Hansen, 2001; Flippo, 2001). Each student has a personal processfolio of the DLs he has created (8-15 DLs), and one for the collection of other student's DLs (175+) over the course of the whole year. The relationship of sharing responsibility for learning between teacher-mentor and student-apprentice comes with the sharing of many DLs over ten months. Howard Gardner reflects that learning it is made up of small successes rather than major breakthroughs and it must be nurtured and allowed to unfold over time (1989).

**Angela's Processfolio (Table 25)**

Assessment of the learning of, about and through the DL genre is a shared responsibility between Angela and me. The goal of the DL is to support the development of her motivation and self-regulating learning as she engages in collecting, assessing and reflecting on her own genre learning progress. This assessment is obviously for accountability purposes but also to enhance her motivation and strategic approach toward literacy. As an apprentice, Angela uses her writing processfolios and conferences to address levels of understandings in the literacy environment. Processfolios help motivate her to look at her DLs, and reflect on her craftsmanship. Over time she is monitoring her own growth in her own genre learning. She has a routine of weekly feedback which she receives during goal-setting and writing conferences using
self evaluation and Performance Standards (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1999). She is growing in her belief of her competencies which is important to the development of her intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1991). Angela's increased competency is motivating and sustains her continued engagement with genre.

Table 25 Some of Angels's Processfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Britney Spears: Dreams</td>
<td>personal narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghostylocks and the Three Vampires</td>
<td>adapted fairy tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chameleons</td>
<td>expository text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandma</td>
<td>biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Keller</td>
<td>biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anastasia</td>
<td>biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Bunnies</td>
<td>expository text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crocodiles</td>
<td>expository text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazing Butterflies</td>
<td>list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>personal narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentine's Day</td>
<td>poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild and Domestic Cats</td>
<td>research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stinky The Yellow Nose Skunk</td>
<td>adapted fairy tale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby Village Hacker i19 Carcusei</td>
<td>research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Old Fashioned Days</td>
<td>expository text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monkey Story</td>
<td>story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallowe'en RidDLes</td>
<td>jokes and ridDLes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECONDITIONING GENRE: CRITICAL SUCCESS FEATURE FOUR, PARTICIPATION IN A DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

"Mental life is lived with others, is shaped to be communicated, and unfolds with aids of cultural codes, traditions and the life" (Bruner, 1996, p. xi). According to research, participation in a discourse community is an important critical success feature in the
cultivation of genre. Sociolinguistic C. Miller reminds us to think of genres as "ways of participating in the community" (1984). Swales (1990) informs us that it is essential that we demonstrate genres as ways to communicate that give rise to particular forms rather than the forms themselves. Fu and Townsend suggest that children's language is fuelled by their curiosity, their creativity and their desire to connect and communicate with others (1999).

Through the DL, students learn to talk with their peers at a high level. The discourse of the DL sharing, questioning and revising of opinions, leads to a far superior community understanding of literacy for a student. The moderator's role is to sustain a conversation with the genre learning community (i.e., demonstrate a reflective moment, a reminder to use prior knowledge or a strategy such as looking back to a specific place in the text) about each of the components of the DL. In the effort of the moderator to make her understanding meaningful to others, she may reach a fuller understanding herself and an apprentice may further develop text meaning as well.

The discourse of the genre learning community is not comprised of just questioning strategies but also involves a conversation or a demonstration of how to talk about genre. The daily conversation helps a student make sense of and refine his abilities to respond to text. The discussion comparing and contrasting and cultivating genre, are not ends in themselves; they are flexible tools that provide the invitation to: "Change directions easily, to qualify our first thoughts, to reframe ideas in different ways, leap to new connections" (Barnes, 1992, p. 3). Participation in a discourse community is a critical success factor of the DL, and one clearly identified as important in the research for cultivating genre as sociocultural action.
RECONDITIONING LEARNING THROUGH GENRE: CRITICAL SUCCESS FEATURE

FIVE, TALK ABOUT TEXT

“We wrap talk in, through and around experiences to help them [children] develop the ability to reflect in action, and we talk afterward (debrief) to develop the ability to reflect on action” (Chapman, 1997, p.63). Genrists remind us that talk about text is an important condition for the uncovering of genre. Talk about text is a critically important success factor of the DL. The DL sharing is the setting for a rich discourse community, the context for the interaction between the text, the moderator and the apprentices. Here a student thinks out loud rather than in his head, internalizing self talk as inner speech. This is why talk about text is so important. If a student is to learn, he needs to be immersed in speech. The DL talk about text bathes a student in talk about experiences, ideas and words, for it is through talk, that he develops the ability to think. Wertsch reminds us that “treating text dialogically “ can be even more productive as the reader uses it as “a thinking device” to develop meanings that are not only for the reader but perhaps also for the culture as a whole” (1985).

Allen’s Daily Letter: Efferent Writing on the DL (See Appendix B page 241)

The DL sharing is valuable for exposing students to a wide variety of different genres, to stretch students into reading and talking about a wide variety of formats. Allan has an important role as student-as-teacher sharing a wide variety of Science interests, understandings and life experiences. He is mostly interested in the content, text features and special language of science. He demonstrates such a thirst for efferent learning that it is contagious. He has a great quest for knowledge and recruits others to work with him who are interested in topics such as volcanoes, rocks and life cycles. Allan is a student who takes full responsibility for his own learning. I do not have to prompt him to write to learn. He is already encultured into the discourse, reading and writing that is for efferent
purposes. He is most comfortable connecting his prior knowledge to new information and evaluating information, and less comfortable connecting to his own feelings and offering personal responses to things. The talk about text during Allan’s DL is about reading information. Other days, with other students it will be about strategies and/or response to text.

**Jimmy’s Daily Letter: Personal Response**  (See Appendix B page 242)

Somewhere in the middle of the school year, everything has gone crazy. *Harry Potter* has hit the bookshelves and kids are eating it up like starving bookworms. The timing is perfect as most of my grade threes are just making the switch from average to light speed in their silent reading speed. Some of these students, in fact, are hitting the peak of the greatest amount of reading and writing they will do in their elementary school careers. Talk about text and personal response to *Harry Potter* is easy. This is all they want to talk about, what they like, what they don't like, their opinions on every part of the book shared in their retelling, relating and reflecting on the story. These kids are committed to reading novels for about an hour each day with a growing interest in other chapter books of greater length and depth. They know what good readers do. The parallel improvement in their writing is also making them sensitive to what good writers do.

We create a rubric that the students believe will guide them through responding to text. They come up with questions such as: “What would you say to a good friend about a good book? What would you say to a friend about a really bad book? How would you know one was bad and one was good?” The answers to these questions lead to the creation of an instrumental DL listing all the ideas the students put forth about reading a good book such as *Harry Potter*. 
Jimmy nominates himself to prepare the first personal response on the DL. Jimmy, of course, selects *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Jimmy's DL includes a recommendation of the book, a brief summary of the book, how the book connects personally to his life, what genre this is, and an opinion of the book. Jimmy also includes a list of the other books written by J.K. Rowling and a poem about the dangers of watching TV. Jimmy concludes his DL with asking the students to reflect on if they would rather read *Harry Potter* or watch TV.

We have more than twenty personal responses to novels for DLs in one month. The students sit in self-selected literature circles to talk about the books they are reading. The difference between these reader response groups and the ones presented in research is that when the literature circle finished, through their DL they have a venue to share their responses with the whole class. The DL sharing is becoming a place and time to talk about their novel and their genre knowledge with the whole group.

**Teacher DLs: The Teacher Makes the Difference: (See Appendix B page 243)**

My teacher-produced DLs are strategically designed to bring students in touch with specific genres that may have remained unfamiliar to them. I always have the option of balancing process and genre teaching according to the needs of my students. The cultivation of a variety of genres positively stimulates both the thinking and the attitudes about learning genre. “Learning new forms of representation is exciting and challenging; it also allows more choices in open ended activities and promotes success for more learner” (Chapman, 1997, p 215).

I was so moved by the passionate eulogy of Justin Trudeau about his father Pierre Elliot Trudeau, I decided to create a DL about it to teach students about an important Canadian and expose them to yet another genre. The text of the DL is the excerpt of Justin Trudeau’s eulogy retelling his wondrous encounter, as a young boy,
with a man in a red suit and furry white trim on a trip to the north with his father. The DL is flanked by a picture of the mourners listening to the eulogy. On the back of the DL are several letters to the editor that changes from first person to second person, in their tribute to Trudeau and the quote selected by Justin Trudeau, “The woods are lovely, dark and deep. He has kept his promises and earned his sleep.”

I begin the DL in the usual way with a setting of some prior knowledge as a prereading strategy. I asked if anyone knows what a eulogy is? Jacquie hesitantly lifts and wiggles her hand, her arm bent and pulled in tight to her body as someone does when caught between wanting and not wanting to share. It was then that Jacquie shares that she knows what a eulogy is from when she gave one for her brother Michael. I remain quiet as I take in what Jacquie is saying. A hush falls over the class.

A quiet conversation arises out of this candid sharing about the death of Jacquie’s brother and her eulogy for him. The questions shift from one child to the next with comments and new questions being raised as students assimilate the latest comment. The classroom community is a safe place for members to share their insights, successes, problems, pain, joy, and experiences.

Jacquie goes on to write a DL about her brother, choosing not to present the actual eulogy but to share a story about Michael. The ritual of the DL creates situations that build a close relationships between the members through talk about the things that matter most to them and expose them to a new speech genre that they might not have otherwise been exposed to.

**Talk About Text Through Daily Letter Stretch Charts (see Appendix C)**

About 15 Stretch Charts make up a poster size reference set which serve as advanced organizers for talk about text at the DL sharing. The moderator uses the Stretch Charts to focus the group’s ability to collaborate on talk about the DL text.

The charts are referred to by the teacher, the moderator, and members of the
class during their 15-20 minute participation in the discourse over the text (Component #1 of the DL). A chart may be used to focus the attention of the apprentice's talk about one aspect of the text or several charts may be used simultaneously to flexibly teach sophisticated content (primarily with older students). The charts have large clear print with simple lists of prompts or invitations for a student to search and find information in the text as the basis for discussion. Here is a sampling of prompts off some different charts:

- Find a word that was hard to read, but now is easy.
- Find a word that tells what the story is about.
- Find a word with as many letters as in your name.
- Find a word that cannot be seen.
- Find a phrase that interests you.
- Find a sentence that reminds you of something.
- Find a phrase that makes a picture in your mind.

The DL sharing requires the organization of three types of material: a single letter size copy of the moderator's DL (distributed to each member of the class), an overhead of the front/back of the DL (for students to follow) and a display of Stretch Charts.

One Word Answers

Most students have a tremendous difficulty talking in school beyond a one word answer. It takes months to train them to formulate a longer chain of thought that takes them beyond one word. Some of them are comfortable with the option to never have to work at saying anything all day. They have learned that they can get away with a short response to something without too much effort or commitment and feel that they have satisfied the teacher.

I designed the Stretch Charts to help students learn to share their opinions and ideas and listen to others. I invented the charts (a genre in itself) out of the desperate need to help students learn all the different kinds of things to talk about when we discuss
a piece of text. As the teacher, I can carry this information around in my head but I think most of it is a bit of a mystery to the students.

Participating in a discourse community is a painstaking learning process for many. The students are supported with the Stretch Charts to situate them in their thinking and talking. Without the use of these charts, there would be little worthwhile conversation at the beginning of the year. By the end of the year, the students have a sense that they have the time and audience that will listen to them as they actually talk about something with thought and care, not just give a one syllable response or short phrase that really doesn't move their learning or the group's learning forward. They learn to talk and use wait time in their own presentations of their DLs. The use of Stretch Charts to focus the community to participate in the discourse about literacy has a goodness of fit with the research that calls for participation in a discourse community as a condition of learning that would be almost impossible for me to facilitate in my classroom with the scaffolding for the talk about text that these charts provide.

Guided Participation: Scaffolding Talk About Text

Guided participation at the DL involves the moderator posing and solving problems around her text (DL genre) with the discourse community participating at a slightly challenging yet manageable reading level. Rogoff describes the process of guided participation as communicating and sharing in activities inherently engaging children and their caregivers in stretching children's understanding and skill to apply to new problems (Rogoff, 1990, p.199).

The DL sharing matches with Rogoff's practical consideration of culturally organized activities when she explains how culturally organized activities: "lead to the structuring of children's participation so that they can handle manageable but comfortably challenging sub-goals of the activity that increase in complexity with children's developing skills and understanding" (Rogoff, 1990, p. 19).
Angela's Stretching of the Her DL Text

When Angela, as the moderator, completes the oral reading of the DL, she begins the talk about her text. Prior to her DL she has posted her choice of Stretch Chart(s) in full view of all the participants. Two assistants, selected by her, stand ready to highlight the DL transparency on the overhead projector (for students to find their place). Angela verbally selects one clue on the Stretch Chart, and sends the apprentices searching, as if on a treasure hunt, for related information buried in the text. Craig participates by raising his hand and standing up and sharing his ideas in response to the prompt given. Other students have related ideas to share. Angela oversees each student standing and sharing their ideas. Each student uses highlighters and pencils to code, or mark his own copy of the DL text highlighting the area under discussion. Craig can look to his neighbour's DL for more ideas. If he cannot find a word, phrase, sentence, or any of the text being shared, he can look at the overhead projector screen to locate it. Students assist each other when someone needs help in finding the words, phrases or sentences called out by the moderator. Students help students learn.

Coding The Text

A student's coding of the text is an active concrete means of participating in the talk about text (Table 26). Each student highlights or codes parts of the text a number of times using different colours representing different purposes or ways to stretch the text (e.g., yellow highlighter for personal response, connecting the text to his own life). A student needs to touch the language as well as see, hear and speak it. He has this opportunity to think about his neighbour's perspective, to think and talk about why he marks or highlights certain words. This helps a student shift psychological stances and to develop an appreciation for the reading and writing process from the perspective of others.
Table 26 Coding Text on the DL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clue on Stretch Chart</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>liked words</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>courageous +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words not liked</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>cancer -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown words?</td>
<td>Remission?</td>
<td>remission words!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hero words</td>
<td>!</td>
<td>hero !</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words you can touch</td>
<td>➡️</td>
<td>prosthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can't touch words</td>
<td>⚪️</td>
<td>determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person words</td>
<td>highlighted</td>
<td>Terry Fox</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value of Stretch Charts: Tools For Everyone

A Stretch Chart has value for all of the members of the community of learners. A Stretch Chart helps a moderator to initiate talk about text during the DL. It assists her leading of the DL to showcase her genre and share what she thinks about her reading/writing. Charts are useful and necessary support for some students to effectively in fulfilling their leadership role.

A Stretch Chart helps a student develop an awareness of introspection, reasoning, problem-solving in reading and writing, metacognition and various reader stances. The DL is designed to develop the reader's perspective and orientation toward a given text each day. It is a tool to assist each student in becoming a strategic reader or writer, to know how, what, why and when to use strategies to promote the actions of
becoming literate. A Stretch Chart assists a teacher in handing over the responsibility for learning to the students. Over time there is transfer of responsibility from adult, teacher-directed learning, to a student’s own self-management of the DL forum. The responsibility for initiating and sustaining talk about text is shifted to the student-as-teacher when he is ready. He comes to know how, when and where to integrate his knowledge of how language, literacy and genre work. The Chart assists a student in their new role as moderator over the text sharing. A teacher is out of the role of moderator and into a role as more of a co-learner with a Stretch Chart in the hands of the capable student moderating over the talk about text with the discourse community.

**Value of Stretch Charts: Multiple Perspectives on the *Daily Letter***

Being able to take on other perspectives is important with the DL and identified as important in the research on critical literacy of Freebody (1993). With the DL students get daily practice with focussing the reader’s attention on the purpose for reading (Rosenblatt, 1978). A student, over time, develops the understanding that readers can experience text through different stances or perspectives. Knowledge of stances can positively influence motivation, attitude and intention to read and provide more opportunities to foster connections with genre. A student will come to know genre if he has a positive attitude toward language processes.

A student’s engagement may be influenced by whether the stance is efferent or aesthetic. Rosenblatt informs us that there are two stances that may be taken away from the text. An efferent stance is characterized by the focus in information, ideas and concepts, and an aesthetic stance is characterized by the “living through during the reading event” (Rosenblatt, 1985, p.8), the imaginative or feeling focus of the text. She warns us that for many children the overemphasis on efferent reading may decrease the enjoyment of the text (Rosenblatt, 1985). Framing both efferent and aesthetic reading
and writing on the DL over time helps a student become aware of the subtle shifts in teaching and learning of each stance and genre. Awareness of stances is an important factor in developing higher levels of motivation, leading to higher engagement and higher achievement. Stretch Charts explore both efferent and aesthetic reading and writing and over time make a student aware of the subtle shifts in thinking required for the fostering of connections with each.

The reader’s stance may be aesthetic and reflect the intent of savouring the pleasure of construction and entering an imaginary worked of romance, intrigue, or interstellar space, or the reader may take a predominantly efferent stance to learn more about dinosaurs, jellyfish, or electromagnets. The reader may also adopt multiple stances to experience a text from many other perspectives (Beach, 1992).

A reader of the DL learns to draw on a variety of stances in his ritualized daily encounter with the DL: text participant, text user, text decoder and text analyst. The use of various stances offers a greater range of meaning-making choices to cultivate overall literacy learning. By adopting a social stance, a student acquires social knowledge and practice (Beach & Hynds, 1990). Drawing a textual stance (text participant) focuses a young literacy learner on features of the text and conventions. A field stance asks the reader to interpret the text frame from an expert’s perspective. A writer’s stance (text analyst) asks a student to think about how the writer constructs text. Beach & Hynds (1990), stress the need for him to learn to adopt stances in different situations. Thanks to the DL, students are able to understand how to manipulate text. The text representation begins to form in the reader’s mind: it reflects the reader’s meaning interpretation based on the text and is influenced by the other factors such as discussion with peers and the teacher. This representation is overseen and monitored by the reader executive and monitor. Prior beliefs and knowledge are used to help confirm, reject or suspend judgement of new interpretations (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994).
Roles of a Literate Person

Freebody describes four roles of a literate person: Text Decoder, Text Participant, Text User and Text Analyst (1993). Various Stretch Charts specifically assist a student to access to each of these cognitive stances to teach him to approximate his role as strategic reader and writer (Figure 32). Decoding Stretch Charts help a student to become text decoders, learning to employ a range of strategies to identify patterns in text at levels of letter, word, clause or whole text. Participant Stretch Charts promote the role of text participant, assisting a student in using prior knowledge in order to make personal and cognitive links with the text. Text User Stretch Charts facilitate students in learning to recognize that texts are required for different purposes. Text Analysis Stretch Charts support students in learning to becoming analytical, to assess and if necessary, challenge the text. Text Decoding, Text Participation, Text Use and Text Analysis Stretch Charts are designed to teach strategic reading and writing strategies or “tricks of the reading and writing trade” (Mamchure, 1997) in a way that optimizes the learning experiences of all students in the regular classroom and to stretch everyone’s cognitive and metacognitive growth and development.

Table 27 Roles of a Literate Person Stretch Charts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four Roles of a Literate Person: See Appendix C (adapted from Freebody (1993)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Decoder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Analyst</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List of Text User Stretch Charts: See Appendix C

- Taking a Stance on Graphic Layout
- Taking a Stance on Grammar
- Taking a Stance on Expression
- Taking a Stance on Genre
List of Text Participant Stretch Charts: See Appendix C
- Taking a Stance on Predicting and Prior Knowledge
- Taking a Stance on Context Clues
- Taking a Stance on Meaning
- Taking a Stance on Personal Response
- Taking a Stance on Aesthetic Response
  (Intermediate)
- Taking a Stance on Comprehension (Intermediate)
- Taking a Stance on Metacognition
- Taking a Stance on Phonological Awareness
- Taking a Stance on Comprehension (Intermediate)
- Taking a Stance on Critical Literacy

List of Text Decoder Stretch Charts: See Appendix C
- Taking a Stance on Words
- Taking a Stance on Conventions
- Taking a Stance on Emergent Letter/Shape/Sound Correspondence
- Taking a Stance on Emergent Letter/Shape/Sound Correspondence
- Taking a Stance on Words

List of Text Analyst Stretch Charts: See Appendix C
- Taking a Stance on Discovering Your Subject
- Taking a Stance on Sensing Your Audience
- Taking a Stance on Setting the Tone, Making it Reader Friendly
- Taking a Stance on Searching for Specifics: Part One
- Taking a Stance on Searching for Specifics: Part Two

Stretch Charts for Reading and Writing

A limit of up to one page of text with the DL motivates students to accept the challenge of examining the text. An at-risk reader can more realistically handle the exploration of a short piece of text on the DL than he may be able to in some lengthier books. An at-risk reader has the goal of reading up to one page of text and an at-risk writer producing up to one page of text. The DL is valuable for an at-risk reader/writer,
who may have only emergent skills, to remain encouraged and maintain his reading/writing intention for the full length of text. He may have trouble with longer text where the time to read/write the text will likely be much longer that his expectations and abilities.

The level of difficulty of reading and writing activities of the DL can greatly affect a reader’s intention to continue to read or write. Text variabilities affect a reader’s prevailing feelings, action orientation, and evaluative beliefs about reading. Aspects such as the inclusion of pictures, print size, and the author’s writing style can affect the reader’s interest, acceptance and comprehension of text (Mathewson, 1991). The DL exposes a student to a myriad of text variables which help him develop an awareness of a set of strategies he can use when he encounters new and different genres or difficult texts.

The DL is not designed to be a written to conform to a reading level. Each DL is unique with considerable variability and irregularity in design and reading level complexity. It may at times be a difficult page of text for some. It may be cognitively challenging enough that there is some need for scaffolding for some students with an adult expert before the DL. Difficult texts challenge some readers to make sense of it. A student learns to approach a text as an unknown and learns over time to use multiple strategies to make sense of it. He learns that a single strategy may be limited in its usefulness. He learns to be prepared to be flexible and adaptable in his application of strategies and knowledge to new text.

The daily use of a variety of Stretch Charts helps a student adjust his reading and writing strategies according to the different text features before him each day. Displayed charts remind a writer to develop an awareness of available options. A beginning, less skilled, reader is unaware of both (Paris, Lipsom, Wixsom, 1994). Novice reader/writers may read/write haphazardly, “A pervasive problem is the insensitiviy of young children to the need to recruit any specific action” (Brown & DeLoache, 1978). With the DL he
practices using strategies to problem solve to read text and learns that there are times when he needs to assemble multiple strategies and tailor those to the new reading situation. He learns to be strategic in selecting those strategies, methods and knowledge and assembling those that are most appropriate to read the passage. A student learns that what he does in making meaning of the print depends on a rich repertoire of strategies to draw upon in approaching text of greater complexity. He must learn to “attend to” the text because there is no formula. A teacher knows this and the students need to know this too. Each DL creates an ill-structured domain of reading practice. Each DL is a new reading experience.

What is required is a different kind of knowledge structure, one that works with the jagged, and messy contours of situations in the world rather than smoothing them out-open structures to think with, rather than closed structures that dictate thought (Spiro et al., 1987,1992a,1992b,1994).

A Hard Daily Letter: Winnie the Pooh Comes to Canada (Appendix B page 244)

This teacher made DL is a newspaper article. The text is hard to read (small font) for the grade threes. This kind of a DL challenges students to explain their repertoire of strategies to work with difficult text. For some students engagement is high when there is motivation associated with doing something this challenging. This DL is a useful tool for bridging the need for some kind of systematic approach to these kinds of difficult reading situations. I moderate the talk about text of this DL using a lot of self talk to model strategy use. Many of the readers who cannot easily read this are reassured that they can effectively participate in the discussion of meta-cognitive awareness and strategy use, to enhance their ability to use these strategies independently.
Table 28 Learning Outcomes of Talk About Text of the DL

| ✔ Students become committed to their own learning. |
| ✔ Students become intentional in their pursuit of strategic reading and writing. |
| ✔ Students learn to be systematic about their practice and learn from experiences. |
| ✔ Students are responsible to manage/monitor student learning of the large group. |

Kevin and a Text Analysis Chart

An important step in Kevin becoming a proficient writer is his ability to edit and proofread his own writing. A Text Analyst Chart assists Kevin as he learns to search for specifics of good text design:

Table 29 A Stretch Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Analyst Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find a part of the text that indicates:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ showing not telling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ details that matter, interesting details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ details that don’t matter (need to get rid of these)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ words that don’t have purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ words that have a purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ is authentic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ looking inward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ convincing, visceral feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ appeal to the senses, brings it alive through the senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ implicative stance, implies things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ motion, examples of movement or lack of movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ emotional flooding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ something specific: something universal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a young writer Kevin needs concrete knowledge of what good writers do if he is to translate what good writers do into his own writing practice. Deliberate use of special actions to guide his own writing needs, a plan to check components, a need to edit and proofread to repair writing problems or an action to reread or rewrite for clarity, are outlined on the Text Analyst Stretch Chart. Kevin’s effort to be a competent writer is expanded with each writing goal set before him on the chart.

A developing writer may fail to allocate effort or generate plans for his writing, often only writing a draft, not checking, editing or rereading or rewriting his text. He often says he is finished without rereading or studying his piece. Kevin is learning to detect errors in passages that he has written. He is aware of the importance of intentionally looking for difficulties and to correct errors in his own text. He is aware of the need to monitor his writing, a kind of mental pulse taking that is important for strategic literacy. The collaborative sharing of writing and talking about writing strategies brings forth the understanding of the need for specific writing repair actions and fix-up strategies.

RECONDITIONING GENRE: CRITICAL SUCCESS FEATURE SIX, COLLABORATION

A student of the DL does not have to “navigate the literate terrain alone” (O’Flahavan & SeiDL, 1997) to reach the goals of learning genre and becoming literate. With the DL, students have daily opportunities for meaningful collaboration. Students spend time actively sharing their ideas in the production of the DL and in the collaborative action of talking about text at the DL sharing. Collaboration is an important condition of the DL and of research.

Research studies inform educators that a student learns primarily in two ways: from individual experience and collaborative, social experiences. The deep study of genre and the DL takes place in a collaborative discourse community. This collaborative
network, for the exchange of information on genre, about genre and through genre, operates during the writing and sharing of the DL. The DL sharing, ideally, becomes a collaborative student-led process approach with numerous mentor and apprentice roles.

Collaborative groups often grow out of a student's presentation, talents, abilities, friendships and common interests. If a student shares a DL about dogs, then other students tend to be motivated to collaborate and produce DLs about dogs. This exposure to a variety of about 20-23 DLs each month (one per school day) is a rich source of writing topics and genres for students in the class. Some ideas become contagious. “The impact of the social aspects of teaching and learning indicate the paramount importance of the contexts for facilitating learning to read and the role of the teacher in organizing such contexts” (Goodman cited in Flippo, 2001).

Collaboration (see Appendix B page 245)

Collaboration in the classroom has not been scripted by me as the teacher. The students pick up on opportunities to engage and interact with each other for a variety of reasons. Students work alone, in partners, trios, dyads and triads of their choice for the preparation and performance of the DL. Stanley is enlisted to help Christina with her sketches of her dog. Steven and Kelvin help Bryan locate a Shel Silverstein poem about flying for his DL. Jacquie and Angela find the “Banana Boat Song” to go with her Travel DL on her trip to Jamaica. Heather and Vanessa head to the office to make photocopies of their DL and an overhead transparency in preparation for their DL sharing for the next day. I sit at a writing table with five students who have come over to sit around the table and write.

Patrick, Arjan and Craig, are fascinated with owls. Although very different in their language development, organizational skills and knowledge of graphics and format, these three work diligently with everyone engaged in the production of the common
interest “Owls DL”. Patrick reads out the text as Arjan and Craig make notes. All three boys help in the decision of what phrases they want to put down on their research grid.

Craig is an at-risk, low progress reader/writer who remains engaged and focused with the mentorship of Patrick and Arjan for the writing of the “Owl” text and production of the graphics and other components they will share at the DL. Their collaboration is meaningful and productive.

Craig is poised and ready to lead the DL. His flawless reading of the text leads to a round of applause from his classmates. They know he struggles in reading and this open and honest acknowledgement of his success is a wonderful expression of a supportive community of literacy learners. There are a number of collaborative partnerships working in the room, which are successfully bringing low progress apprentices along. At-risk students receive support from a teaching assistant and more capable students when I am busy. There is a rich tapestry of collaboration blanketing those students who need the warmth and comfort of more able learners around them to succeed.

Friends (See Appendix B page 246)

Angela and Jacquie collaborate on a Valentines DL. These two share a strong mentoring role in the classroom. Their “Friends” DL is a summary of what they think friends should do, and never do. It is an instrumental genre for the teaching of social responsibility. Angela and Jacquie share the responsibility for this learning to get along. They spend their DL sharing time having the students make personal connections. With the ritual of the DL, the responsibility for learning many things is shared. This approach is not one sided with all the responsibility for learning with me, the teacher. This is truly a community of learners where the responsibility for the learning comes from the students as well as the teacher. I no longer concern myself with controlling the class. It is no
longer necessary. The DL, given that it is custom written by, with, and for a particular audience, is typically interesting enough to motivate peers to give effort, attention and be persistence in the learning of it. Having students write and present together eliminates the teacher’s individual responsibility to try to match their instruction to the student’s own preferences for genre and content. With the collaborative nature of the DL students can contribute their own talents to the production goals of a DL genre. This collaboration commonly generates high motivation and achievement during the DL sharing, especially for the many students with a vested interest in its production. The engagement and increased chance for cognitive expertise of some features of the DL, such as word studies, may result from this instructional plan to value student-generated text. This is supported by research which posits that “using interesting text, furthermore, is compatible with focussed instruction on word recognition and word fluency development (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997).

Collaboration Through A Socioculturally Responsive Approach

For it is in the formation of individuals’ identities and dispositions that through their collaborative engagement with others in worthwhile and intrinsically motivating activities carried out thoughtfully and with commitment to the quality of the artifacts that are produced and used, that we can most effectively make these the values of the wider society (Wells, 1999, p. 82).

This sociocultural approach to literacy instruction is situated, blending individual and sociocultural processes. The DL is concerned with the cultivation of both the properties of a literate individual and a situated apprentice grounding himself in thinking and participation in the world (Alvermann & Guthrie, 1993; cf. Rogoff, 1990; cited in O’ Flahavan & SeiDL, 1997). They match the research for teaching genre as a cognitive, social, cultural, act.
The DL cultivates two powerful learning contexts, the home and the school. "Infusing the elements of home learning into language and literacy instructional spheres of activity, bring home and school contexts closer together" (Neuman & Roskos, 1994). Most of the time the literacy practices of the home prepare a student in the structuring of the DL developing a cultural congruency between the home and the school. The DL helps students utilize what they know and do as the writer, reader and teacher of a genre, and continued to expand their competencies "while affirming their cultural identity and capabilities" (Neuman & Roskos, 1994).

**Kelvin and Steven: A Paper Folding Daily Letter**

Kelvin, though English is his second language, is able to share a wealth of creative talents in the classroom and is a valued member of the DL community. Steven and Kelvin prepare a set of visual directions on how to paper fold a man's shirt. Steven and Kelvin practice the steps in teaching the paper folding in English.

Kelvin and Steven share the moderating over the DL. The boys have put a tremendous effort into preparing and organizing the materials for the DL. Kelvin leads the instructions taking the children though one step in the paper folding and then going around and helping individuals. The students are appreciative of Kelvin's efforts to speak English and attentive to his soft-spoken voice. Everyone ends up with a paper folded shirt and respect for the talents of one of their members. With this DL comes the recognition of some social and cultural variations. During this DD the students explore a DL which recognizes the social background and culture that Kelvin brings with him to this class. This was shown in the choice of his DL and the way Kelvin contributed. The DL shares a value for social and cultural variation and encourages a genuine partnership between the students and families.
The DL is reciprocal in nature, sharing the school in the home and the home in the school, matching the research of Au who suggests: "This requires a departure from familiar patterns of instruction grounded in transmission models of instruction to more adaptive, interactive and reciprocal models" (cf. Au, 1993). Patterns of instruction are adapted and adjusted to be more congruent with those of a child’s home and community. Families share their funds of knowledge on the DL such as gardening, medicine, mechanics, cooking, carpentry etc. The essential function of these networks (households) is to exchange: "the essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead and thrive" (Moll, 1990, p. 21). They also share a student’s literate funds of knowledge.

The DL as a Genre as the Sharing of Cultural Heritage

The DL is a tool flexible enough to be culturally responsive to reducing the disparity between school and home literacy experiences and broaden a student’s abilities to participate in a variety of literate communities. The DL learning community acknowledges and appreciates the home cultures of the students and build upon their familiar language and literacy practises. The DL ritual facilitates collaboration among students so they learn through social interaction where cultural and individual differences become unified as a student makes an effort to share their cultural perspectives. Students can reach a common ground through a range of multicultural literacy experiences celebrated through the DL. Through collaboration, a student from a different cultural background engages in the construction of new knowledge and enhances the learning of each participant (Miller, 1987). Students begin to make connections with a wide variety of genres, friends and cultures through their DL sharing. The DL is designed to embrace what O' Flahavan & Seidl describe as a crossroad of the students' funds of knowledge and the school's curriculum goals (1997).
The DL is a culturally responsive approach for supporting the belief that the standard of achievement for a student of a diverse background and for those of the mainstream is equal. If "privileged" tasks and modes of discourse are those that are the least familiar to our increasing numbers of non-mainstream children, a situation may result in which these children become educationally disadvantaged (O' Flahaven & Seidl, 1997). The DL builds bridges to engage all students in obtaining an equal educational standard. Instructional practises can be monitored and adjusted to have a student achieve the same “knowing” as everyone else. The methods of achieving the goal may be significantly different for those of non-mainstream cultures involving intensive preteaching prior to the large group sharing and one on one instruction (of the DL) by more expert teachers or mentors.

The collaborative enterprise of the DL meets the needs of those children whose literacy experiences do not reflect the school’s culture’s literate forms and functions. The DL engages the diversity of learners by building upon their own sense of identity while still extending their emerging literacy abilities through immersion in shared reading and writing. The instructional pattern of the DL is designed to meet the challenge of creating a classroom community that unites diverse purposes and practices.

**When I was Young In the Mountains**

This DL is one of my teacher-produced DLs to invite students to write. This exquisite first person narrative When I Was Young in the Mountains by Cynthia Rylant introduces students to sharing the stories of their own lives. It is a frame for students to become conscious of their precious childhood moments and memories. The Complaining poem on the back of the DL also models a way to focus their attention to the special events of their lives.
Heather and Vanessa proudly use the DL to share Heather’s robust sense of Scottish heritage. The DL sharing is a place for readers and writers to grow and create relationships that bind members of the community together through cultural sharing and understanding. Heather and Vanessa interview Heather’s mom to share the stories of when Heather’s mom was young (after our class discussion from Cynthia Rylant’s book *When I Was Young in the Mountains*). The DL is composed of a list of what you can cook in Glasgow and a list of preserved Victorian locations in Glasgow. There is a series of sentences about Scottish places and things.

Heather and Vanessa pair as moderators to discuss the Glasgow DL as expository text. The girls foster connections with genre in a brief discussion of why this is indeed, expository text. After the shared reading and talk about text the girls use the Glasgow word list to draw attention to words that have an “o”. Heather engages the class in a discussion of all the sounds of ‘o’ from the ‘ow’ in Glasgow, to go, to, tomato, who, London and Scotty. The girls provide a list of Scottish words on the back of the DL instead of a poem, song or chant for the students to try saying with a Scottish accent. The students especially enjoy this talk about accents. These moderators complete their DL with the sharing of Scottish Mars Cake and shortbread they had made with Heather’s mom the night before. This is a situated DL that cements a strong bond between home and school.

**Kelvin and the DL in His First Language (see Appendix B page 247)**

Kelvin speaks Mandarin as his first language and English as his second. He is learning to read and write in English through the DL during the day. He takes his DL home and reviews it with his father in Mandarin. They write the Mandarin translation above the English words on the DL. These oral and written language experiences are regarded as an additive process at home, ensuring that Kelvin is able to maintain his first
language while also learning to speak and read English. (Wong Fillmore, 1991). Kelvin and his Dad work with non-English materials and resources to support Kelvin’s first language learning while he acquires proficiency in English at school. Kelvin’s Mother is also learning to speak English, attending the nightly DL review sessions with Kelvin and her husband. Kelvin returns each day and reads his DL for me in both English and Mandarin and demonstrates some of the Mandarin writing as well. Allan, another ESL student also participates in reading in both languages. By the end of the year, Kelvin’s mother has made tremendous progress in learning to read alongside her son. Kelvin’s parents are grateful for the connection they have had with her son in both languages. They are grateful for my expectation that Kelvin maintain his first language.

Family Daily Letters.

A Family DL is a chance for Patrick to share an important story about his father and a guest appearance by the honoured person. Angela reads Patrick’s DL. It makes her think of her grandma and write her own family DL. Angela shares her Greek heritage with her DL about her grandma. It recognizes and values social and cultural variation and encourages a genuine partnership between the class, their family and the community as well.

The students carry their DL collection home each night to share the family stories of their peers, and the instructional activities from each day that are important to fostering connections to the culture and genres, with the parents or caregivers. This convenient genre builds a strong connection between the home and school by providing a ready-made, at-home, evening, ritual for parents to revisit some of the school day with their child. It shares the passing on of the words and the worlds of the student.
Reconditioning Genre: Teacher as Strategic Teacher

Research supports the view of the child as an active constructor of his or her own learning, while at the same time, studies emphasise the critical role of supportive, engaged adults who provided scaffolding for the child's development of greater skill and understanding (Mason & Sinha, 1993; Riley, 1996). Many important literacy learning specialists believe that it is the teacher, not the method, that makes the difference. They posit the critical importance of a high regard for the roles of teachers and their understanding of their work (Goodman, 1996)

Being a Strategic Teacher with the Daily Letter

The DL is an instructional tool that helps me with this extremely complex task of teaching early literacy. I can respond to the multitude of never-ending classroom demands given the routine of shared responsibility for the teaching and learning of genre. If I am going to make a difference to the students, as the teacher, I am not going to do it through the day-to-day direct teaching of genre to a large group.

I am not creating one learning environment for twenty-five students. I am constructing twenty-five learning environments. I am working with students who have different strengths when working in different domains. I am working with students who have a myriad of preferences for how they learn. I am also working with students who have different life experiences, cultures, genres. I am also working with disabled and gifted students. Each one of them needs time to talk, and varying amounts of time to learn. Each one of them needs time to make meaningful connections with what is being learned.

As the teacher, I deal with the merger of all these class variables. The DL is a learning environment that assists me in the complex task of constructing genre literacy learning environment for twenty-five students. As the person responsible for designing
this environment, and the person responsible for the supporting twenty-five individuals, I find the DL an invaluable tool to assist me with the complexity of the literacy teaching and learning process.

**Kidwatching and the Daily Letter**

One thing the DL learning environment affords me is time. I need time to watch and make thoughtful analysis of my students, I need time to “kid watch” (Goodman, 1978; Goodman & Wilds, 1996). I cannot effectively “kidwatch” if I am teaching to the larger group. Instead of sitting the students up into different routines and activities each day that requires lots of teacher direction and action to explain the routine of the DL is set for the whole year thus freeing me to do countless things. The topics, moderators and mode of presentations of the DL change regularly, but the basic routine or ritual remains constant throughout the school year. I like the routine of the DL because it eventually runs itself, giving me time to “kid watch”. I have time to make notes about a student’s efforts and achievements through the process of handing over of the teaching/learning of the DL to the students. As a “kidwatcher” I use a kit of useful evaluative tools to diagnose strengths and become aware of students’ weaknesses. I use the assessment data I collect to evaluate the instructional practices and make decisions about ways to organize the context to facilitate new learning. I may choose also to work on a one-on-one knowing I have the flexibility to work with a student of my choice for as long as I need to. Sometimes I just stand back and watch the whole complex DL event unfold.

Occasionally I provide explicit instruction about strategies, skills and concepts and the mechanics of learning to read and write with one student. I usually have one student from time-to-time who does not pick up literacy even with the routine experience. If he does not learn from his own experience and the support of the community of learners, he may need to be taught explicitly on a one-on-one with me as
the most expert literacy person. I have the option of doing this. Research and experience suggests that slow progress or at risk students benefit from modelling, scaffolding and guidance that teachers and other more capable peers can provide (Flippo, 2001). A small group collaborative time is manageable for the teacher with the framework of the DL. I can turn the responsibility of the learning over to the larger group and form individual small collaborative groups or rearrange students into more cohesive pairs for strategic intervention. The DL sharing has a goodness of fit with the “community of learners” model (Rogoff et al, 1996) that is neither adult-run nor child-run, but involves truly collaborative acts of learning (Cambourne et al, 1999) and values the importance of the role of the teacher in the complex process of learning literacy.

**Relevant Daily Letter**

Literacy is a practice we as teachers value. Some young students, however, do not and may resist literacy. Taylor is one of these students. Taylor has come to me with the belief that writing is producing conventional forms. Because she can't yet produce full conventional forms she believes she cannot write. She is used to doing what she is easily able to do and avoiding what she is unable to do. She had come to believe that she cannot read and write because it is hard and she is completely discouraged from reading and writing.

Taylor is treatment resistant and needs to be actively engaged in literacy practices relevant to her world. After three years of disorientation through pullout-remediation in reading and writing I make the decision to create an attachment to Taylor and hold her close to me (no pull outs) by supporting her within the classroom for all her literacy learning. I immerse her in the same literacy practices that are relevant to the other literacy learners in the class with an additional routine for preteaching her daily myself. As the most expert literacy instructor, I am not sending her off with a teaching
assistant who is the least trained, least expert, teacher. I include her in the sharing of the
DL with the belief that is her last, best chance to develop her emergent literacy.

I want Taylor to participate in the incredibly complex business of both cognitively
and socially preparing to carry out her literacy learning in the everyday interactions with
the physical and social world of her workplace, the classroom. For Taylor, I will not strip
down the text into an attempt to make it less difficult. She needs the full meaningful
context of the DL to be helpful and useful in her acquisition of literacy. She also needs
regular strategic teaching by me, with numerous follow-ups with others, typically working
with the most expert person early in the day, to the less-expert mentor such as a peer
tutor later in the day, followed up by the parents at home each night.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FEATURE SEVEN: MENTORS AND APPRENTICES

Whoever we are, privileged or disadvantaged, gifted or special or ordinary, we
all, sometime or another, need someone—a parent, a teacher, a mentor to pass on the
words and, just as important, the love of words (Zola, 1998).

Vygotsky’s theory of human development emphasises the co-construction of
knowledge by more mature and less mature participants engaging in activity together.
Higher psychological processes unique to humans can be acquired only through
interaction with others, that is, through inter-psychological processes that only later can
be carried out independently by the individual. This is also an important construct of
research on literacy learning and the DL apprenticeship approach.
Although the processing takes place in our students’ individual brains, their learning is
enhanced when an environment provides them with an opportunity to discuss their
thinking out loud, to bounce their ideas of their peers, and to produce collaborative work
Mentoring and Apprenticing (See Appendix B page 248)

Kevin and Chantelle have discovered a mutual passionate about the works of Leonardo Da Vinci. They form a partnership to explore a genre in genre, a story about his life and a fact sheet about his paintings.

Kevin has a sophisticated understanding of genre for an eight year old. Chantelle has less knowledge of genre and is less skilled as a writer, but contributes fairly to the construction of their DL on this artist. The partnership between them is a fascinating study in the mentor and apprentice relationship. This is a complex relationship between two very different kinds of learners going through the process of interpreting text together. This literacy learning works. It is situated, social and active learning at its best. Kevin and Chantelle absorb each other’s knowledge about Da Vinci and absorb information of one text into another to build a DL of intersecting genres with some narrative, storyline, and facts. With this DL, we have the social construction of an informative text on Da Vinci, and the first duel leadership role between two moderators for the DL sharing.

Transformation of Participation

The DL had numerous designated mentor and apprentice roles. Vygotsky reminds us that in a learning situation the less-able partner can accomplish some of the learning independently but that some aspects require guidance from more capable peers or adult. The DL, in practice, has a goodness of fit with theory that suggests the need to empower more able learners to assist those not able to accomplish an aspect of the task. This level of participation provides instruction that can be of greatest benefit to the learner (Vygotsky, 1978).

At the DL sharing both novice (apprentice) and expert (mentor) focus together on productive learning. The breath and depth of skills of the novice in guided by the more
able partner who moves the learner from assisted to autonomous performance. The students are supported by the moderator roving teacher and two students demonstrating on the overhead projector. Students help one each other without doing the work for them. “The learner assumes as much responsibility for the task as is practical and developmentally appropriate” (O’Flahavan & Seidl 1997).

The DL design incorporates the principles of direct instruction and minilessons with teacher explanations and demonstrations at the beginning of the year followed by the gradual release of responsibilities to the students-as-teachers. At the beginning of the year the teacher gives a class high levels of support to maintain their engagement in the DL sharing scaffolding students as apprentices when they cannot be expected to lead like professionals. The teacher supports both individual and the learning community of fledgling authors as they progress closer to the actual leadership roles produced in adult related disciplines that are complex, highly developed, organized, cultural communications. By the end of the year, the students are leading the DL independently.

Bruner describes this process as a “handover” (1986), where the once observer becomes a participant as a fundamental aspect of learning. Rogoff’s term for this kind of shift toward independent learning as a “transformation of participation” (Rogoff, Matusov & White, 1996; Rogoff & Toma, 1997). Over the course of the school year there is a “transformation of participation” as students grow in their independence of instruction and conduct more and more of their sharing of the DL independent of the teacher. A key condition of this learning community, and those identified in the research, is the sharing of the power between the teacher, the student and the text, with both the teacher and the students taking responsibility for their learning and contributing to the learning of the others as well. Rogoff calls this ‘handover’ of the responsibility of instruction and learning as a critical step in leading a student to believe he is not dependent on instruction that he can be an independent, confident, problem solver. Over time a student of the DL
becomes less dependent on instruction sharing his thinking and problem solving with peers. This shared joint decision making is part of a teacher’s plan to respond contingently (1996), and an important concept in research and the design of the DL. There is no predetermined time line for this sharing of responsibility. When the more competent students are in a position to be responsive to others, the sharing of the role begins. This “handing over” or “transformation of participation” of the DL has benefits for both the students and the teacher. It allows a teacher to be strategic in her role with an at-risk student so that he may have the benefit of the teacher’s expertise to maximize his learning. Active, strategic teaching is available for those who have been pushed past their independent learning level. Typically all students have a collaborative context for optimal learning.

Jacquie’s Daily Letter: Transformation of Participation (Appendix B page 249)

Jacquie has made a “first” with this DL. She is the first moderator to share her DL unassisted by the use of the Stretch Charts. This worldly eight year old has very clear ideas on how she wants to share her DL about Michael. She has very specific ideas on how she will approach the talk about text with her own version of stretch chart prompts. Along with prompts such as “Michael words”, and “fun words”, Jacquie uses questions as her tool to facilitate the learning about the text. She asks the students some questions about the text such as what is the similar about them and Michael and what is different between them and Michael. She concludes her talk about text with an open-ended prompt asking them to find a word, sentence, or phrase that they think is important and worth talking about. Jacquie successfully facilitates the talk about text without the support of the Stretch Charts, teacher or partner.

Not many other students will choose to conduct the talk about text without the scaffolding of the Stretch Charts as easily as Jacquie does. Only a handful of students
have been so skilled in leading the *DL* with abilities that would surpass student teachers and teachers I have taught with. The value of the *DL* lies in allowing students to function in a way to exceed the performance standard set for them as situated, social, active leaders.

Bruner devised this concept of scaffolding whereby the teacher helps students by doing what the child cannot do at first, and allowing the student to slowly take over parts as they are able to do so (1986). Jacquie no longer needs the scaffolding of the stretch charts to facilitate talk about text. This task of independently leading the *DL* is well within this eight year old's level of development.

Jacquie's *DL* is a prime example of what Barbara Rogoff (1990) describes in the research as the shared responsibility for the learning through "transformation of participation." Jacquie's sharing of Michael's *DL* is an exquisite literacy event with the responsibility for the learning in the hands of a capable student-as-teacher, sharing with an attentive group of literacy learners. I have successfully transferred the responsibility for the learning from the me to Jacquie and the community of learners with Michael's *DL*.

Collaborative participation in a discourse community with roles of students as apprentices and mentors to share talk about text are important, critical success factors of the *DL*, and clearly identified as important in the research for fostering connections with genre.

**Findings about the Conditions of Learning of the Daily Letter**

These nine critical success factors match genre research of the importance of conditions of learning that are engaging, support inquiry and exploration and promote meaning-making and exploring personal connections with text. The critical success factors of the *DL* match what research says with a "goodness of fit" about the need for collaboration or organization of the group as a social community participating in
discourse about text to cultivate genre. Students foster strong connections with genre through mentor and apprentice roles and through the shared responsibility between the teacher and the students.

The DL instructional tool fosters connections with genre through the coherence of a complex coordination of these nine critical success factors revitalizing the role of genre in the classroom to deepening and enriching literacy learning of my grade two/three student.
CHAPTER FIVE

QUESTIONS

Questions on Learning A Variety of Genres

More research needs to be done on ways to examine genres such as literary genres or power genres or other nontraditional genres for their role in school and society. Research concerning overall genre acquisition is limited to the work of Donovan (1997), Chapman (1999), Bazerman (1997) and a few others. Certainly with the broadened definition and reconceptualization of genre as "learning how to participate in the actions of the community" (Himley, 1986), learning with this perspective is highly social and collaborative. Can we now use this broader definition to examine the specific optimum learning conditions that foster strong connections with literary genres or power genres or nontraditional genres? Is there a grade level where this practice of fostering connections to particular genres is more appropriate and if so how do we determine it and create contexts to support it? How much time needs to be devoted to each kind of genre such as impersonal, factual genres and personal genres at these levels?

Questions Concerning Conditions of Learning of Genre

Many more questions need to be asked and answered, and more research needs to explore the conditions of successful genre cultivation in the classes specifically in early and late primary, and intermediate grades. Can teachers, during a time of increasing political pressure, shift their focus from a concern of practicalities of their large group teaching to making detailed observations of children as learners and the most effective and powerful conditions for each child to cultivate genre at each of these levels (i.e., grade one or grade seven?). Can a classroom teacher develop a reflective stance necessary so that she can reconstruct her own theoretical explanations underlying her
practice of genre teaching and learning for emergent, developing and expert genrists?

Questions About Literacy In Collaboration With Support Staff

More research is needed to explore the nature of most effective collaborative models involving regular classroom teachers and special education teachers in the planning of programs that support primary and midDLe grade students and teachers to improve genre learning. Research needs to further examine other catalysts that could successfully bring regular and special education teachers and assistants together to implement comprehensive plans for those students who continue to struggle and are at-risk for failure in the acquisition of literacy?

Attitudes of students are drastically affected by their segregation into learning assistance centers for their literacy learning. We tell them we believe they can read and write, but we don’t include them with the readers and writers. How can we make this an inclusive collaborative model for all students and empower them, by telling them they are good enough to do what everyone else does, to include them with the readers and writers?

Classroom teachers need to see themselves as experts, since they have the responsibility and the most time spent with the children. If experts in programs such as Reading Recovery work with early intervention grade ones and 10-30% are returned to the classroom partly through grade one or grade two, what can classroom teachers do to ensure that those early identified students, who return to the regular program, continue to progress? How can classroom teachers continue to assist these previously at-risk students to continue the “spiralling up” effects of their early intervention successes, if indeed they were successful.
Questions About Tools to Support Genre Learning

I have questions about the effectiveness of using the DL and Stretch Charts as tools to specifically support the creation and management of the special second chance at-risk literacy learners that is effective for other learners too. I have questions about the use of the DL and stretch charts to scaffold beginning teachers as they learn to take responsibility to improve the engagement, achievement and attitudes of all their students.

Learning Genre Through Stretch Charts

Facilitating talk about text is clearly identified in research as one of the most important conditions for students to cultivate literacy learning (Wells, 1999). The DL Stretch Charts have proved useful to scaffold participation in talk about text during the DL. I have a myriad of questions about the effectiveness of each chart to foster connections with various aspects of literacy knowledge with both DL text and other sources such as journals, trade books and reading anthologies. I also wonder about how effectively the Stretch Charts support various kinds of learners in their involvement in the text and the ability of this knowledge to transfer into other literacy actions. I wonder which Stretch Charts are most useful for beginning, developing and competent readers and writers.

Learning Genre through Cross Class Mentoring Programs

Can a mentoring and apprenticing DL programs between classes assist at-risk genre learners as well as facilitate the extension of capable literate students so they have regular opportunities to exceed expectations in genre acquisition? Little research is available related to either individual or small group or in-class intervention mentor and apprenticing programs for middle grade elementary students (Hoien & Santa, 1994), specifically for genre cultivation.
Conclusions

I have questions about what genres we should teach and who should teach them. I have questions about the tools such as the $DL$ and Stretch Charts for teachers in fostering connections to genre and questions about the role of other students in mentoring genre apprentices. These are a few of the questions I have that are suitable for further research into the role of genre in the classroom to deepen and enrich literacy learning:

What genres should we teach?
Who should teach them? How do we support teachers in teaching genre?
What role does the Remedial Support Staff of a school have in genre acquisition?
What role do the $DL$ and Stretch Charts play in supporting at-risk literacy learners?
Would cross grade mentoring programs be effective genre learning programs for different kinds of genre learners?
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

Research Summary

With this thesis I have examined “the goodness of fit” between genre theory and practice of the DL to engage students in fostering connections with genre. I have found the DL to be an effective translation of contemporary genre theory into practice. I have found a wealth of agreements between the redefinition and reconception of genre and the design and practice of the DL to cultivate genre learning. The tenants of recent genre theory match well with the design and practice of the DL “as a way of being” (Bazerman, 1987) or as a more of a purposeful learning context than just a format of text. Rather than genres of the DL being defined as structures and conceptualized in teaching practice as models to be imitated or rules to be followed these genres clearly meet the research definition of genre as cultural resources on which readers and writers draw on the process of writing for particular purposes and situations and the research conceptualization of genre in teaching practice as situated, social and active learning (Chapman, 1999).

From the review of the literature and the examination of theory in practice illustrated in the vignettes of my classroom, I have determined “a goodness of fit” between research on effective genre learning conditions and the set of nine critical success factors or conditions of the DL except for some aspects of talk about text. Students continue to have fewer and briefer conversations with the DL than the research indicates is necessary to actively foster connections with genre.

There is, however, a “goodness of fit” with each of the other conditions of learning the research identifies as necessary for students to foster connections with genre. Students have daily exposure to an authentic, social, and collaborative, literacy event where the group has high levels of engagement in-depth inquiry, personal connection
and meaning making and participation in a discourse community to making sense genre, taking hold of print, getting into it, relating to it, using it and acting on it in whole class collaboration. A student comes to know that he can connect with a wide variety of genres as part of his authentic literacy learning experiences. These rigorous DL demonstrations foster the optimal conditions for a student to approximate a variety of genres naturally and spontaneously as tools in the classroom in preparation for their use beyond the classroom.

Specific Summaries of Goodness of Fit of Literacy/Genre Theory in Practice

Theory in Practice (definition): Situated, Social Action

The genre theories of Bakhtin (1986), Bazerman (1997) and Chapman (1999) inform teachers of the need for the shift of emphasis in the classroom from the teaching of formatting of written text to the construction of genre knowing through a forum of situated, social, active learning to foster connections with genre. The DL, like the modern research definition of genre, is not simply an instructional model but a learning situation. This daily class ritual represents “a goodness of fit” with a broader approach to literacy instruction that is not teacher-directed or student-centered but one of shared responsibility for the teaching and learning that takes place in the class. The DL instructional tool is consistent with the research that supports the study of a broad variety and number of genres in the classroom through situated, social, active learning.

Students thrive in a classroom that is social and active. They are empowered as active learners through the experience of creating and demonstrating their DLs. Every DL engenders high levels of engagement. Students have a strong sense of awareness of how their DL is to be constructed and demonstrated.

Students are challenged to experiment in the task of actively creating and leading a literacy event, not just watching others do it or listening to explanations of how it could
be done. Time is used efficiently because they are not being taught countless new
routines to go with new learning activities. Students have new learning experience each
day embedded in a ritual that gives some students the welcomed security that comes
with a set routine.

Through the repeated experience of the DL students learn habits of mind about
each of the components of a comprehensive literacy learning process. Students also
learn genre, about genre and through genre. Through this situated social action they
become empowered thinkers, problem solvers and thus confident literate students. Each
year I have some old students return and tell me how they miss being able to lead the
class in actions of their choice, the stories from their lives. Some offer to come back and
lead the DL out of a longing for the empowerment of student-led action.

Theory in Practice (conceptualization of teaching practice): Social/Collaborative
Learning

The research of the late 1980's and the 1990's teaches us the importance of the
social, collaborative dimension of literacy. It tells us to pay close attention to the details of
how knowledge of genre, about genre and through genre is socially constructed,
cultivated through people relating to each other. Dyson (1993) sums up a large body of
work of the 1990's, when he frames literacy learners as "social negotiators". Vygotsky
learning theory into practice as social negotiation.

The DL is about social negotiation with genre being learned through mentors and
apprentices participating in collaborative whole class talk about text. I am very impressed
with how these students are empathetic toward each other, willingly providing support
and assistance for each other. My students never want me to lead a DL once they take
over the role. Even students as young as Grade One are empowered social negotiators
determined to lead a complex highly collaborative talk about text. I have not had one
student who did not want to lead the DL sharing, not even Steven, my autistic, ESL, language learning disabled student!

I appreciate the last few months of the school year when the literacy learning of the DL operates completely through the social/collaborative actions of the students. I am completely out of the role of leading the whole group literacy learning of these students. I have large blocks of time to pick and choose whom I need to work with. Substitute teachers leave wonderful notes about how the class runs itself. There is “a goodness of fit” between theory and practice of the DL as social/collaborative learning.

Theory in Practice: Sociocultural Practice

The design and practice of the DL is well grounded in the works of theorists Vygotsky (1978), Wells (1999), Bakhtin (1986), Rogoff et al (1996), Chapman (1999), and those other theorists who see literacy learning as “individual development intersecting with culture” (O’Flahavan & SeiDL, 1997). There is “a goodness of fit” between sociocultural theory and the DL as literacy practice that is imbedded in the culture of the community and family. A student of the DL learns literacy through an apprenticeship in the use of specific intellectual strategies to serve particular purposes in culturally valued situations. The DL matches the research belief that all children will not learn simply as a result of being immersed in a community of readers and writers, but that efforts need to be made with these events to assist those children whose literacy behaviours do not reflect the school’s literacy forms and functions. There is a “goodness of fit” between the practice of the DL and sociocultural theory in fostering connections with genre.

Once my students get their mind around the idea that they have choice over what they share on their DL, the classroom becomes a swarm of active learners sharing a wealth of diverse aspects of their own funds of knowledge. The parents also become highly involved, helping their children present their cultural heritage, traditions, special interests and households. Students recognize the DL as their chance to share the special
events, thoughts feelings and stories of their families and friends. They embrace this idea of selecting that which is most important to them and go to great lengths to exact an informative presentation. This leads to a rich fabric of cultural knowledge nestled snugly over the community in a blanket of respect, empathy and understanding. The students become sensitive to the needs of each another as they come to know each other so well. Networks of students arise out of the knowledge of whom to go to when in need of particular expertise or understanding. This is a powerful culturally sensitive context for such a young group of students.

Theory in Practice: Engagement

The work of Cambourne (2001), Calkins (1994), Wells (1999), Guthrie & Wigfield (1999) inform us of the value of engagement for motivating students to learn. Cambourne describes engagement in literacy as a "merger of multiple qualities" (1995; cited in Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999). Consistent with theory on engagement there is the coherence, or the "merger", between a number of qualities in the design and practise of the DL. Students of the DL share a focussed sense of purpose, intention, ownership through choice of open-ended learning experiences to cultivate their engagement in literacy learning on a daily basis not as a once in a while enrichment activity. Students share exposure to a wide selection of genre, set learning goals, desires and intentions and develop these through measurable praise and self-evaluation. Students also participate in a situation that makes them aware of their achievement and allows them to enjoy language and literacy play. The same qualities of engagement of the DL have a durable representation in the research on genre.

My students have developed a very strong sense of respect from me that also strengthens their own self-respect and engagement in their own learning. The students are proud to be recognized for the sharing of themselves, who they are and what they do and know. They are proud to make decisions that affect the way their school day is spent;
they are proud to have their feelings, interests and knowledge valued.

By the time the school year nears an end students become so skilled at producing interesting and informative DLs that I begin to worry that we may not have time to share all of them. In June we decide to run two DLs sharing groups to facilitate prolific amounts of text to be shared due to their engagement with genre.

**Theory in Practice: Inquiry/Exploration, Personal Connections/meaning Making**

The research of O' Flahavan & Seidl (1997), Harste (1989), Bakhtin (1986), Calkins (1994) and Rogoff et al (1996) inform teachers about literacy as a complex practice of inquiry and exploration, personal connections and meaning making. The DL is consistent with the research belief that a child learns most readily in environments wherein the activity is of value to him or has a specific purpose for him and is designed to adapt to his abilities to participate in the meaning-making. There is “a goodness of fit” of theory in practice with the design of the DL to facilitate the learning needs, interests, aspirations and genuine questions of each of the students. The learning is not viewed as an outcome of instruction; it is a means, not an end. The DL cultivates risk taking among students in their learning to be independent inquirers and explorers, to make personal connections and to make sense of their learning and their lives. These practices of the DL have “a goodness of fit” with modern genre theory.

My students relish opportunities to engage in choices that challenge their thinking. They are keen to carry on investigations, to ask why? Many sophisticated inquiries begin with this question “Why?” They learn habits of thinking as they test their hypothesis and interpret their data. They also generate ideas for new investigations with the sharing of their engagement in activities that challenge their thinking.

The quest for knowledge is so great with these apprentice literacy learners that a common conversation I have with students at conferences is how they can go about choosing which particular inquiry they wish to pursue. They have so many ideas! I feel
excited about this classroom being filled with students having important questions.

I am also excited that some students request to have several days to work, that they are busy and do not want to be interrupted because they have important things to do with the preparation of their DLs. They need time to work! They suggest that they have several days a week of completely uninterrupted time to work on their DLs! When students have the whole day to work on DLs (other than the DL sharing time), they work steadily with little need for me to direct students to be on task. The students have a host of different things they need to do, with each child being in a different part of the production phase of the DL. It is an amazing day.

**Theory in Practice: Roles of Apprenticeship and Mentoring**

The research of Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1986), Wells (1999) and Rogoff et al (1996) specify the importance of the relationships and roles of the membership of learners, specifically, the relationship between the less-skilled apprentices, and the more-skilled mentors to cultivate genre. The DL is designed with specific apprentice and mentor roles of the class. It matches the formal research model of the classroom as a "community of learners" (Rogoff, 1994) with students having shared responsibility in the learning of genre through taking the lead in the teaching and learning as moderator over the sharing of the DL text. The DL matches the research construct of the role of transformation of participation as an important way to have students foster connections with genre. The DL matches the research belief that more knowledgeable students assist in the learning of genre by supplying demonstrations and explanations of the DL, and when necessary scaffold a student's talk about text through the use of Stretch Charts.

My students thrive on making choices of how they will mentor the community of literacy learners. They love to run the show, to decide how they should do their DL and control the entire learning operation of the DL for an hour or more! They respond to having opportunities to lead the sharing of the DL, to see themselves as leaders and as
persons of worth to the larger group. Some students choose to form partnerships so that they can have more opportunities to moderate over more DLs. They see the DL sharing as a genuine opportunity to lead their peers and become highly empowered to be responsible for a complex array of decisions they must make.

My at-risk students appreciate the idea that they are included in the literacy event (not pulled out of the class to be given deferential treatment in isolation from the situated social actions of their own literacy community). They still have their need for lengthier and more in-depth explanations, but these are honoured in the classroom by highly effective mentors keen to support them in any way they can. At-risk students have a number of volunteers keen to spend time with them, when they need it most, without being hurried. They know which students to go to for help, and they look forward to solving problems with their peers.

I have a great sense of pride in being able to get closer to meeting the needs of my at-risk kids. They get the help they need from myself and some students who through leading the DL have had many experiences working with other apprentice learners and have developed a whole repertoire of understandings about literacy that they can effectively share in peer tutoring these students.

There is a calm tone in a classroom that is owned and led by the students in partnership with one another and myself. It is quiet with a diligent productive hum around little pockets of contented students. Each of the students seems focussed and relaxed. I am focussed and relaxed not being challenged to monitor to many students’ behaviour. I spend my time in authentic conversations with serious readers, writers, speakers and listeners about their lives and learning, my life and learning and our communal life and learning.

Theory in Practice: Participation In a Discourse Community

The research of Halliday (1985), Bakhtin (1986), Chapman (1999), and
Bazerman (1997) informs us of the importance of the relationship of language learning and literacy being cultivated through people acting and reacting to one another. Literacy is cultivated through communication where language is a tool of thought, and thinking is fostered through rich language programming. The practice of the DL is consistent with research on the need to foster connections with genre with the daily ritual of whole class participation in a discourse community where the DL is a tool of thought, and thinking is fostered through this rich multi-language programming. The students act and react together to learn genre, learn about genre and through genre (Chapman, 1999), and learn language, about language and through language (Halliday, 1982).

Stretch Charts work well to help students learn all the different kinds of things to talk about when we discuss a piece of text. Their experiences using the Stretch Charts have systematically trained the students to carry around much more information about what they can talk about in a literacy event.

Participating in a discourse community has been a painstaking learning process for many students who would not otherwise talk in school. The students are now much more comfortable talking about text with the support of cues to center or situate them in their thinking and talking.

The Stretch Charts are invaluable tools designed to help students learn to share their opinions and ideas and know that others will listen. The students have a sense that they have the time and an audience that will listen to them as they actually talk about something with thought and care. The use of Stretch Charts, to focus the community to participate in the discourse about literacy, has "a goodness of fit" with the research (Wells, 1999) which calls for dialogic inquiry as a condition of learning that would be almost impossible for me to facilitate in my classroom without the scaffolding these charts provide.
Theory in Practice: Talk About Text

The research of Rosenblatt (1985) and Goodman (1996) has taught us about the complex meaning based process of transactive theory, about how text is comprehended, about where the meaning is located among the teacher, student and text. In theory, literacy is cultivated through a complex meaning-based process between text, reader and teacher. Students also cultivated literacy through the daily complex meaning-based process between text, reader, teacher and moderator with the DL.

The Stretch Charts are important teacher-devised tools to ensure that the participation in the community discourse is focussed and effective. The design and implementation of these charts came about to ensure that discussion of the complex meaning based process between text, reader, and teacher or student-as-teacher can be cultivated. If it were not for these charts, the talk about text in practice would not have “a goodness of fit” with the present rich research-based understandings of this important dialogic inquiry around text in the learning of literacy.

My students now love to talk and love to have interactions that are attended to thoughtfully. I am amazed how the DL facilitates students focussing on what they have to say as a writer. These learners like being given daily opportunities to work through and attempt to understand what others write without the teacher doing all the talking. These interactions are genuine communications of respect for each other as writers. During the talk about text I marvel at how different everyone approaches the sharing of text. Some students lead with great precision in studying words and patterns, while others are completely consumed by personal connections they are making to the text and others make systematic explorations of the conventions of the text. It is most interesting to see students leading the talk about text with such clear ideas on how they intend to explore the writing. These students are empowered to lead a comprehensive look at a piece of text.
There is one aspect of the DL that does not have "a goodness of fit" with recent research. Although the Stretch Charts support a rich and varied talk about the three dimensions of learning genre: learning genre, learning about genre and learning through genre, the notion of having a balanced conversation among the members of the discourse community is not possible with the large, whole class sharing time. Students have fewer and briefer conversations with the group given the fact that about twenty students are taking turns to talk about text. This participation in the discourse of the DL could be improved if the class is broken up into two groups of ten to twelve students, or four groups of six students to share the DL. This would allow an increased number of students to contribute more often and for extended periods with smaller DL sharing groups. I have yet to determine the optimum size of group that is small enough to ensure a balance of conversation that better resembles that of the home yet is large enough to provide a richness of a variety of ideas and understandings. There is not "a goodness of fit" about the balancing of the conversation as one aspect of the talk about text of the DL and the research (see Tizard and Hughes, 1984; Wells, 1986/1999).

It was purely for reasons of squeezing in so many DLs into so little time near the end of the year that I discovered the value of having the students working in two groups of twelve with two different moderators sharing their DLs. I could double the conversation among students, increasing the amount of active participation in the discourse of the DL with the sharing of two DLs. I am concerned about ways to balance the conversation between the moderator and the students, to increase the talking to a level more like the conversations between a mother and child in the home. A group of twelve seems to be large enough to share different ideas in the discussion and small enough that many more voices can be heard. Each group seems to be able to work with everyone being involved and heard. Students are arranged close enough that the voices of their group do not interfere with the functioning of the other group talking. I will continue to search for ways
to improve the learning conditions for fostering connections with genre and making the DL have a better "goodness of fit" with the conversation aspect of recent revised genre theory!

The DL is a context for a broader approach to the exploration of literacy that matches most of what the latest research tells us best fosters connections with genre (Table 30).

**Table 30**“Goodness of Fit” Between Modern Genre Theory and Practice of the DL

| • stress genre as purposeful communication with flexible features rather than format |
| • genres learned may, or may not be literary, formal |
| • genres seen as flexible format not set, genres within genre, a multitude of possibilities |
| • multiple representations of ideas, combined language processes (reading/writing/speaking/listening) |
| • genres as 3-D location for meaning construction, learning: genre, about/through genre |
| • genres as multiple representations of ideas, visuals, actions |
| • genres as having a variety of forms (traditional/non-traditional, primary/secondary, simple/complex) |
| • genre learned through community of learners with shared responsibility for learning |
| • genre learned through process learning and some explicit teaching by mentors |
| • rules of genres arise out of action, criteria discovered |
| • genres conceptualized as social, community actions with many formats taught |
| • invented in collaborative experience, students act/react to one another |
| • discover, make analogies between genres |
| • individual needs met by teachers, assistants and students in mentoring/apprenticing roles |
| • social, collaborative work, students offer ideas, have them evaluated/extended by peers |
• genres seen as part of process writing as actions of approximations of adult texts
• learning situated, genres arises out of student's activities, sociocultural design
• awareness of learning conditions, of critical success factors to learn genre
• conditions to foster connections with genre: engagement, inquiry/exploration, personal connections/meaning making, participation in a discourse community, collaboration, talk about text, mentoring/apprenticing

IMPLICATIONS

Implication for Students

The major implication of this study is that the design and practice of the DL as redefined, reconceptualized and reconditioned genre revitalizes the role of genre in my classroom cultivating strong connections with genre for my students and clearly deepening and enriching their literacy learning.

Implication for Educators

Translating contemporary revised genre theory into practice with the DL deepens and enriches literacy learning thus having the potential to makes significant contributions to elementary school literacy education, which in turn may significantly improve the contributions that school makes to the well being of the individual members and the society as a whole.

Implication for Teachers

An important implication of this study is that a teacher is capable of translating contemporary genre theory into practice in the classroom with "a goodness of fit". I have made specific recommendations from my insights and reflections on the role of genre in my classroom on those contexts and practices that support teachers when fostering connections with genre in their classrooms through the practice of the DL (Table 31).
### Table 31 IMPLICATIONS OF GOODNESS OF FIT BETWEEN GENRE THEORY AND DL

#### Contexts and Practices that Foster Connections With Genre Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPLICATIONS: Combine Genre Learning With Multiple Language Processes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The DL genre learning tool is designed to:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• integrate learning from various subject areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• combine reading writing, talking, listening and speaking and computer use so that each assists in the acquisition of the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• engage a student in activities that are purposeful, meaningful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• engage a student in inventing multiple representations of his ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>• engage a student in daily talk about genre and the sharing of analogies among genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• engage a student in collaboration to integrate his reading/writing ideas and interests</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPLICATIONS: Contexts, Purposes for Genre Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The DL genre learning tool is designed to:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• focus discussions on genre as a way of thinking and communicating ideas with a particular context (Chapman 1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• focus discussions on noticing a genre’s features and how they function</td>
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<tr>
<td>• create a web or list of criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td>• create a context for social action (Chapman, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• create a context in which a student is an active learner (Chapman, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• create a situated context in which a student becomes convinced that reading furthers the purposes of his life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• focus as an organizing tool for learning to make sense of the world (Bruner, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make combined reading and writing functional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• integrate curriculum daily (Flippo, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• immerse a student in connecting language processes with opportunities to read/write/talk/listen about a wide variety of types of genres and share these (Bakhtin, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• immerse a student in genre incorporate genre specific techniques and strategies as part of process writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provide large blocks of time and opportunities to write for a purpose and as a creative process (Calkins, 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• encourage students to talk about and share the different kinds of reading/writing genres with others emphasizing ideas not form in the early stages (Chapman, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• inviting purpose, intentions, ownership of the learning (Cambourne, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• inviting open-ended learning activities (Chapman, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• inviting choice on the design and practise of the DL (Calkins, 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• providing exposure to a wide selection of genres (Wells, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• cultivating self-efficacy, attitudes, stance (Freebody, 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• setting learning goals, desires, intentions (Guthrie &amp; Wigfield, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• developing measurable praise and rewards (Guthrie, &amp; Wigfield, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• developing an awareness of achievement (Guthrie, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• fostering enjoyment with language (Wells, 1988).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMPLICATIONS: Things You Should Not Do in Genre Learning:
only make some students imitate a format
isolate subject areas, reading separate from writing
require a child to study every genre he comes across, and to imitate each format
make a student do it all correctly, use a process to develop a product each and every time
correct a student as he reads, writes, shares at a literary event
make a student learn and keep genres in categories, not mixing them
correct a student’s writing as failed adult text, or failed conventional genres

IMPLICATIONS: Developing Perceptions and Expectations
The DL genre learning tool is designed to:
• develop a student’s positive self-perceptions and expectations
• create a context in which children become convinced that reading/writing furthers the purposes of their lives
• create a context in which students become convinced of the value of both the individual and group to diversify abilities

IMPLICATIONS: Things not to do:
• essen expectations for some at-risk students when learning genres, isolate them from other literacy learners
• give a student so much work that he does not have time to just enjoy reading a number of genres
• remove the freedom of choice for reading and writing/genre making

IMPLICATIONS: Materials
The DL as a genre learning tool is designed to:
• use a broad spectrum of sources for reading/writing/sharing materials (personnel, professional)
• expose students to a variety of types of print materials with a variety of functions daily
• set large blocks of time to read real books/write a variety of purposeful genres

IMPLICATIONS: Things not to do:
• follow a textbook
• assign worksheets to remedy reading, writing and genre problems
• have only teacher selected stories for read aloud, topics and genres for writing
**IMPLICATIONS: Instruction**
The DL as a genre learning tool is designed to:
- provide daily, repeated demonstrations of how reading/writing/speaking/listening/reflecting is done/used
- deliberately combine reading and writing, speaking and listening activities
- deliberately provide opportunities for students to make analogies among genres
- deliberately provide “in process” learning complemented with some strategic genre teaching
- deliberately expose students to a wide variety of genres (i.e., from simple to complex, primary to secondary)
- use oral reading to develop fluency, and fluency to develop understanding
- teach a variety of genre, including non-traditional genres
- provide daily opportunities for demonstrations, literary events to share genres
- widen the repertoire of known genres (learn genres)
- be a cognitive tool to construct thinking and learning (learn through genres)
- foster generic awareness (learn about genres)

**IMPLICATIONS: Things not to do:**
- just use the DL and forget about sharing/reading/writing full length stories/other genres
- emphasis genre structure over purpose
- hold a student in levelled DL, controlling their exposure to some unknown words
- teach one genre at a time without drawing analogies between them
- teach only traditional genres, not non-traditional genres
- emphasis one kind of instruction, rule bound transmission of knowledge from teacher to student
- make a student do corrections all the time
- teach just reading or writing without talking and situated demonstrations, teach with one method
- teach variety of genres such as complex genres without adapting it to the needs of the students
- group students according to ability for genre learning
- have students do unrehearsed oral reading of the genre they are sharing
- drill students in traditional, secondary genres
- work a genre to death
- think there is one perfect method to learn genre
- make student learn a wide variety of genres with the deeper meaning of each Pearson emphasized, teachers must be able to understand literacy and learning well enough to adapt teaching and learning environments, materials and methods to particular situations/students (p. 96).

Appendix A  School and Parent Permission Form

STUDY AND WORK SAMPLE PERMISSION FORM

In accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Delta School District requires both school and parental consent to use personal information for purposes unrelated to specific educational programs, in this case for the documentation of names of students and samples of their written work in Mrs. Buiss's classroom.

Mrs. Buiss would like to include students' names and samples of their Daily Letters in her thesis: The Daily Letter: Redefining, Reconceptualizing and Reconditioning Genre in the Elementary Classroom.

As such, the School District requires permission to publish student’s names, and writing samples of their work for those students participating in the Daily Letter activities in Mrs. Buiss' classroom. This information will be only used in her thesis for the purposes of this study to examine the “goodness of fit” between recent research insights into the teaching and learning of genre and the design and practice of the Daily Letter to foster connections with genre in an elementary classroom.

I permit both this study to take place and for the publication of the first names and samples of written work of her students for the purposes consistent with the above.

Sincerely,

Ms. N. Brennan
Principal,
Sunshine Hills Elementary School

Parent Permission

[ ] Yes, I permit the publication of the first name and samples of written work of my child for the purposes consistent with the above.

[ ] No, I do not wish to permit the publication of the first name and samples of written work for purposes consistent with the above.

Child’s Name: __________________________

Parent or Guardian Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________
December 10, 2002

Ms. Kellie Buis
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University

Dear Ms. Buis:

Re: The Daily Letter: Redefining, Reconceptualizing and Reconditioning Genre in the Elementary Classroom

I am pleased to inform you that the above referenced Request for Ethical Approval of Research has been approved on behalf of the Research Ethics Board. This approval is in effect for twenty-four months from the above date. Any changes in the procedures affecting interaction with human subjects should be reported to the Research Ethics Board. Significant changes will require the submission of a revised Request for Ethical Approval of Research. This approval is in effect only while you are a registered SFU student.

Your application has been categorized as 'minimal risk' and approved by the Director, Office of Research Ethics, on behalf of the Research Ethics Board in accordance with University policy R20.0, http://www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20-01.htm. The Board reviews and may amend decisions made independently by the Director, Chair or Deputy Chair at its regular monthly meetings.

"Minimal risk" occurs when potential subjects can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms incurred by participating in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research.

Best wishes for success in this research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director
Office of Research Ethics

c: Dr. Meguido Zola, Supervisor
/jmy
Appendix B Collection of Daily Letters
My Cats
by Adam

One year ago I got my cats. I got my cat one day and my brother got his the next day. My cat's name is Luke after Luke in Star Wars. The other cat's name is Licorice. They are both less than a year old.

Luke is a calico cat. He is orange, white and black. The other cat's color is black. They both love to wrestle with each other. They love to cuddle. They are all over the place. They eat in the laundry room. They also have a special place to lay down. Luke's favorite spot is a chair, he loves that. Licorice's favorite spot is a couch. It is a really comfy and warm place.

They love to come when you whistle like a bird. "Wooosh!" They like people a lot and they like to meow! They are really nice and I like them because they are so nice!

Luke white place like nice name love mice.
If you are scared of mummies.......... that's too bad because we're taking you back 2000/3000 years ago. In the Valley of Kings there were great Pyramids. There lie the mummies. This is where the story begins.

A long time ago in ancient Egypt there were Pharaohs like Tutankhamen and Ramses. There were queens as well. In the Valley of the Kings there are Pyramids and the sphinks. That is where the mummies are put when they have died. First the mummies have to be readied. The priests dry him/her out. Then they take out the liver, lungs, stomach, intestines and the brain. Then they put his/her bracelets, earrings, necklaces and other after life items in the tomb. Then they wrap him/her in linen and bandages. Last but not least, they would put him/her in a coffin. Sometimes they would put him/her in several coffins: Inside the Pyramids it was a maze!!

By Heather, Emily and Chantelle

pyramids coffins sometimes kings queens pharaohs

Word Study:

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<tr>
<th>scared</th>
<th>years</th>
<th>pharaohs</th>
<th>teeth</th>
<th>died</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>readied</td>
<td>liver</td>
<td>here</td>
<td>sphinks</td>
<td>intestines</td>
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</table>
Armadillo Rodeo  By: Jan Brett

I recommend this book to intermediate students because the vocabulary is more difficult.

Bo, the armadillo was picking the flowers when he saw a lizard. He became separated from his mother when he saw Harmony Jean wearing red boots. Bo thought these boots were red armadillo. He followed the boots into the water, then to the Curly H ranch where the rodeo was taking place. Then he found bright-green jalapeno pepper and it was so hot he drank some lemonade. After The Dance, Harmony took out her boots and the Armadillo talk to the boots. The boots said, "Nothing. Armadillo said, Armadillooooooo!

This is a fiction book because Armadillos do not talk, Armadillos do not pick flowers, Armadillos do not ride a horse.

This connects to my life because I got lost once. I was very little when it happened.

The best part for me was when Bo found a bright green jalapeno pepper and drinking the lemonade. It is very hot I know.

Vocabulary; there are some rodeo words such as boots, Curly H, ( ranch ) pardner, fiddle and cowhands.
My brothers full name is Michael Buddy Robinson. He was diagnosed with leukemia, which is blood cancer. Michael went to Children's Hospital where Taylor's Mom was his nurse. Michael Cuccovia was one of his best friends, he was in the band together.

Michael then went to Canuck Place, which is a place where people go when they know they are going to die. When he passed away he was 14 years old. It was the year 1997.

When Michael went to the Relay For A Friend he raised over 16 thousand dollars for cancer research. This run has been done for ten years to help cancer research. Every year people make teams and run in this twelve hour relay run. This run is on June 2nd, 2001. It takes place in Coquitlam Center. People walk around the track with lit candles at the end of the relay to remember their friends and loved ones who have passed away.

Michael's favourite type of food was Greek food. His favorite sports were baseball and soccer. His favorite ride at Disneyland was the Matterhorn.
unity partners share learn’ community love guidance

Unity

I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there
The clay they used was a young child's mind
And they fashioned it with care.
One was a teacher - the tools she used
Were books, music and art.
The other a parent, worked with a guiding hand
And a gentle, loving heart.
Day after day, the teacher worked with touch
That was deft and sure.
While the parent standing by her side
Polished and smoothed it o'er.
And when at last the task was done
They were proud of what they had wrought.
For the things they had molded into the child
Could neither be sold nor bought.
And each agreed they would have failed
If each had worked alone.
For behind the parent stood the school
And behind the teacher, the home.

Author Unknown

Ask me to tell you about the importance of a partnership between school and home.
Peter Pan is a musical adventure into the magical world of Never Land where 'you never ever have to grow up.' Big sister Wendy, telling the bedtime story of Peter Pan to her younger brothers John and Michael, enters into a world of magical escapades with Peter and his pixie dusting pal, Tinkerbell. Together they meet Peter's friends - the Lost Boys, and the peace-loving Hippies; as well as the not-so-friendly, rather nasty, Captain Hook, his gang of Pirates, and the always-not-so-far-away Tic Toc Croc. Wendy, John, and Michael quickly learn that the wonderful world of Neverland is filled with wild rousing adventures that keep you laughing from beginning to end. The infamous Captain Hook and his cohorts are determined to end the 'flight' of Peter Pan, but to no avail. Hook's evil ways are no match for the courageous actions of Peter and his loyal friends, the Lost Boys. Peter's quick thinking and fast footwork wins the day and Hook is forever banished. Hooray!!!

Peter Pan, a book written by J. M. Barrie, was first performed on stage in London, England in 1904. Since then Peter Pan has flown to the far corners of the globe, delighting 'children of all ages'. Semiahmoo Trail Elementary School continues this tradition by bringing Peter Pan into the new millennium. Peter Pan will soon be 100 years 'young', continuing to give to each of us, young and old, the opportunity to never grow up, 'making life an awfully big adventure'. Welcome to the year 2000 and to Never Land.

This stage production is adapted and directed by Semiahmoo Trail's very own Captain Hook; Mr. Scoot Sayer, Peter Pan; Ms. Sandra Campbell and produced by Tinkerbell; Mrs. Selina Millar.

Isaac Hampson-Thorpe - a.k.a. Slightly L.B.
Daily Letter By: Heather

Burnaby Village

Most of the houses in Burnaby are small, I'm going to tell you about the biggest house then the second biggest house.

Jessie and Martha Love were farmers. Mr. and Mrs. Love had a small house, they had to make it bigger when they had 11 children. They had they had no TV. The kids had to do chores they didn't get an allowance. Some of the kids are still alive. Now I'll tell you about the Bateman family.

Mr. Bateman's name is Edwin, Mrs. Bateman's name is Mary, the son's name is Warren and the daughter's name is May. The Eldworth house was built in 1922. Mr. and Mrs. Bateman were very, very, very wealthy. They had electricity. In their parlor they had their most expensive furniture. There were no children aloud in their parlor. They tried to show off.

Lots of people had to berry their food to keep it cold. It takes 45 min. to churn butter. Now I'll tell you about a bachelor.

We visited a bachelor's house. His name was Tom Irvine. Tom Irvine died when he was 100 years old. He died in 1964. Tom Irvine was very generous. He made toys for children. He made 3'd Masters and dancing men. Tom's house was built in 1911. He lived in his house until 1958. He was a gold digger. Now I'll tell you about Mr. and Mrs. Bell.

Mrs. Bell's name was Flora, Mr. Bell's name was William. Mr. and Mrs. Bell lived in their store. It was called Bell's Dry Goods. The shop was built in 1921, they had no children. They sold patches, hats, buttons, lace, baby clothes, ties, shoes, ribbon, collars, glass dolls, pants, wool, linen, thread, boxes for hats, fabric, purses, fancy trim and string. They had a cash machine, knitting tools, sewing machine, thimbles, pins, tape measure and electricity.

Now I'll tell you the best part. The Carousel makes people very happy. The Carousel in Burnaby is number 199. It was made in Kansas.

The Cantel

On the Cantel there was fish, corn, a bell with a lily on it, roses, dogs, brown corn, the American flag, leaves, foxes, flowers, rabbits, cats, and Indians.

Burnaby saved the number 115. People were going to tear it down, but they saved it.

It is 100 lbs per horse. There are 848 lights on the Carousel. There are 36 horses on it. This Carousel was made by Colonel Parker in 1912. This Carousel is faster than most I've been on.

Have you ever heard of a romance side? Well listen and you'll learn. The romance side is the side with all the jewels and details. The other side is plain.

Here are some horse's names, Mr. Ed, Tommy D, Fire, FAR Lap, Champion, Vivian, Vanessa, Scampering Dawn and my favorite Treasure. Now I'll tell you about the most famous one. Old Paint is one of the horses from the old 119 Carousel. He has a brown mane and tail, brown eyes and his body is yellow.
HOCKEY WITH MY FRIENDS

At hockey all my friend’s were on my team, they were Cameron, Taylor, Craig, and Matthew. The coach’s were Grant and Dave. They are good coaches.

I had seventeen goals and fifteen assists last season. Craig had ten goals and seven assists last season.

I was the third best goalie on the team. Grant said, you’re an awesome goalie.

We have two tournaments in Richmond. The other team was really hard...Taylor couldn’t handle these guys. We lost 9-1, the second game we won7-5.

This year I’m same team but the coaches are not the same, they are Ron, John, and Susan.

Last years team was called the Predators. This year’s teams called the Devils!

I am on Craig’s team, Taylor’s team, Cameron’s team, and Matthew’s team.

We finished our utility groups, where we get skilled. Our utility groups name was the Canucks. My friends Connor is head for the late registration in hockey.

Last year Bryan came to one of our games because his Dad was at his Brothers soccer also in Richmond. Bryan’s Dad picked him up at North Delta Recreation center beside the outdoor pool and the new Police and Fire station.

Taylor’s Brother Jordan announces the goals, assists, and injuries.

When people are not goalies and theirs an open net they slide across the ice. When the puck is in the air the glove they have catches the puck. Sometimes people don’t have to stick the puck so they get in a open spot. When the puck is in the air people put their stick in the air so the puck bounces back down.

THE END

Word Study: BY ARJAN
July 1st, 1999 featuring Desperate Dan, the creation cartoonist Dudley Watkins, the comic currently has a fan club of over 350,000 members.

Most Syndicated Comic Strip

Peanuts by Charles Shultz was first published in October 1950 in the U.S. The comic strip, which features the characters Charlie Brown and Snoopy, currently appears in 2,620 different newspapers in 75 countries.

Longest Running Comic Strip

The longest running newspaper comic strip is the Katzenjammer Kids which was first published in the New York Journal in December 1897 and is still running. Created by Rudolph Dirks, the cartoonist Hy Eisman and is syndicated to 50 newspapers by King Features Syndicated.

Most Dominoes Stacked

Edwin Sirko (US) stacked 545 dominoes on top of a single vertical domino on April 11th, 1998 in Irvine California. The stack remained standing for 1 hour. Could you do better?

Animal Attacks

Biggest Fish

The largest predatory fish is the rare Great White Shark. Adults average 14 feet 9 inches and weigh about 1,433 pounds. Can you believe it? There is evidence that to suggest that some Great Whites grow to more than 20 feet in length. Wow!

Soji Shirai from Akiti, City, Japan, grew a pumpkin weighing 970 pounds. AN average pumpkin weighs between 2 pounds and 4 pounds. The world's largest ever pumpkin was grown by Gary Burke of Simcoe, Ontario, Canada. It weighed 1092 pounds on October 3, 1998. THAT IS BIG. HOW MUCH DO YOU WAG?
Arctic foxes turn white in the winter to camouflage against the snow, to catch their food. They turn dark brown or bluish in the summer.

Camouflage

Their Looks
They have very sharp teeth, fuzzy short ears, small black and wet noses, brown and black eyes and a long bushy tail.

Enemy
Arctic foxes' predators or enemies are Golden Eagles, Grizzly Bears and Wolves.

How They Live
Arctic foxes may grow a bit each year. They live in huge holes and under ground tunnels.

Babies
They have about twenty cubs. The cubs are born between April and July. The young do not live more than six months. The young are very playful, they spend hours romping with each other.
I love horses. Their legs are strong and shiny. These Exmoor ponies are very white. Their fur is grey or brown. The color of their nose is white. They are gentle with kids. They are great for jumping. Stay with the caverman. Don't eat their food. The Exmoor pony always worries.
grand, petit, bleu, orange, rouge, violet, beaux, belle, large, rapide, joli, lent, maigre, rond, gentil.

C'est l'halloween

C'est le 31 octobre. C'est l'halloween. Martin a préparé une belle citrouille. Dans la rue, il y a des squelettes et des fantômes.
Quand il sort de sa maison, Martin voit un chat noir. Martin a peur des chats noirs. Mais il n'a pas peur des sorcières! Vive l'halloween!

Voici un monstre


Ask me what I know about adjectives in French.
Friendly Giant personified Canada

STEVE BURGESS
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

The name of the song was Early One Morning, but of course we didn’t know that. We just knew when we heard it that the drawbridge was in motion — coming down to welcome us or moving up as we said “goodbye.”

Long before Balloon was prescribed to control youthful hyperactivity, The Friendly Giant theme song was a calming magic. Young heart rates slowed and attention spans lengthened as the Giant’s soothing baritone guided us into the castle and gently commanded: “Look up... look way up... and I’ll call Rusty.” Now the song is playing again, but this time as an elegy. Bob Homme, the Friendly Giant, died of prostate cancer this week in Grafton, Ont. He was 87.

Many years have passed since I was first treated to his voice. While I can only recall the melody, I do recall that it was a special thing.

The show provided us with Condybear, the voice of puppet regular Jerome and Rusty. There was a feeling of comfort and familiarity in the gentle push that went on at the castle window, particularly between the Giant and Jerome.

“We happened to have the same sort of attitude, a kind of obstinate, deadpan sense of duty that we both appreciated in each other,” said Condybear recently. “I think Bob Homme was one of a kind, and it was my great good fortune and pleasure to have been able to share in his show with him.”

For the Friendly Giant, the desire to set a good example did not stop at the castle walls. No Giant merchandise was ever sold; no illusion-smashing public appearances were ever made at gas-station or department-store openings. In this, too, Homme was presenting a Canadian ideal, epitomizing the “original mission” of the CBC — uniquely Canadian public broadcasting, done with an eye not to maximum revenue but to the public good.

Intentionally or otherwise, the Friendly Giant also introduced some of us to the principles of obsessive fandom. The crowds who flocked to midnight viewings of The Rocky Horror Picture Show to perform nightly rituals — wearing costumes, throwing toast at the screen when a toast is proposed — may well have begun their careers waiting breathlessly for that special moment at the end of Friendly Giant, the very, very end, after the credits had rolled, when at last the cow jumped over the moon.

There were other constants — the Giant’s recorder, the little orchestra down the hall. Rusty’s stocking home, and the closing benediction around the fireplace as the Giant arranged the little chairs for our next visit.

There was always a sweet melancholy attached to The Friendly Giant, perhaps because of the gentle theme song, perhaps because the little chairs were always empty.

It’s tempting now to think that Bob Homme has found a big armchair to curl up in. But it seems more likely that he’s keeping it ready, expecting guests.

Ask me to talk about some strategies for developing a “friendly” community.
Easter And More
Bunnies and Rabbits
Rabbits live in groups in grassy places. They build underground burrows which are called warrens. They use warrens to hide from their enemies.

Rabbits use their strong hind legs to help them hop along. When rabbits are frightened they stamp their feet to warn the others of danger!

Female rabbits can have up to 24 babies every year! Baby bunnies are born blind and with no ears. They start growing their fur a few weeks later, it depends on what type of bunny.

Rabbits have long ears which help them hear well, and a thick coat of fur to keep them warm at night.

Easter Goodies
Easter is a time for springtime festivals, a time to welcome back the Tulips, the Crocuses and the Daffodils too, Cherry Blossoms, Blue Bells, hyacinths and Irises. Its a time for new suits, new dresses and new shoes, and a time for chocolate bunnies, ice cream, marshmellow chicks, caremel mini eggs, colored eggs, Hurshys hugs and kisses too!

The Time of Easter
This year's Easter will be celebrated on Sunday April 15, 2001. Orthodox Easter will also be celebrated on April the 15.
We have a prickle fort. We made it by hand and clippers and sticks. I got scratched by a prickle. We made a fort that is made out of prickles. I made it with my Brother Kevin and Jordy. Kevin is the tree climber, Jordy is the prickle crusher and I'm the prickle waker. Prickles are really poisonous because Kevin stabbed in the hand and he went to the doctor and he gotten it taken out. Prickles are really dangerous. I like prickles. By Craig
MY ADVENTURES AT DRUMHELLER

In the summer of 2000 my family went on a long trip in our van. The first day we went to Grand Forks and we went fishing in a river. I made my own fishing rod out of a long stick and long pieces of grass. We caught nothing, but we had fun. Then we went to Cranbrook. Our hotel had a pool and we went swimming. Then we went to Fort Steele and saw the old village and we went up in the big lookout tower. The next day we headed through the Rocky Mountains and went to Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump where the Indians used to drive the buffalo off the cliff to make food for the Indians. Then we got to the museum. We saw lots of stuffed buffalo and prey.

The next day we headed to Drumheller through lots of very dry farm fields. There was nothing green, and we saw more antelope than people or cars. We went past a field that had an old abandoned farm house. We saw an antelope right in front of the barn.

At the Royal Tyrell Dinosaur Museum we saw many models and fossils of dinosaurs. There was a dinosaur that was bigger than T-Rex. It was called the Giganotosaurus. My brother and I went on a dinosaur dig where we pretended to be paleontologists and learned about fossils and dinosaur digging. We played lots of games before we did the dig. On the way
My Grandma

My grandma is 65 years old. She was born in 1934 and came to Canada in 1957. She has brown hair and brown eyes. She works very hard and she is very happy and honest. She also is fun to be with and likes to make people happy. Her name is Angela and I was named after her. She came from Greece and went to school in Greece. She spoke some French when she came to Canada. She knows way more Greek than English. Her mother's name is Taraskezi and her father's name is Nickolaos. She married a man named Vagn so he is my grandpa. My grandma had three kids and their names are Nick, Tom and Dag. Nick is my dad and Tom and Dag are my uncles. My grandma loves sewing. I'll can tell you some numbers in Greek. One-ena two-deo three-reis four-tessara five-tenta six-ex seven-epta eight-okto nine-ennya ten-deka. I love my grandma and grandpa very much.

by Angela
December 7th, 2000

Ms. Buis's Grade Three Class
Sunshine Hills Elementary School
11285 Bond Boulevard
Delta BC V4E 1N3

Dear Ms. Buis and Students,

My congratulations to you all for participating in the 2000 Delta Christmas Tree Program.

I look forward to seeing the creative and unique ways that these trees will be decorated. And everyone who visits our Municipal Hall this Christmas season will be able to enjoy your special tree.

"Thanks for helping making this Christmas brighter for so many, and a very happy holiday to you all!"

Sincerely yours,

Valerie Roddick, MLA
Delta South
Undiscovered
Pokemon

OT: Corry
HP: 50000

OT: Con
70000

Rarity: ★

LV. 100 Thunderizer
100 LBS
Height: 3 feet

Powerful, can destroy armor, can destroy steel tank with diamond armor.

Weakness: Water, Fire

LV. 100 Devilizer
5aio LBS
Height: 4 feet

Attack: Steel, Fire

Rarity: ★★

No. 259

Devilizer is very sharp, dangerous, don't use it around little kids.

Attack: Devils wand, slash, punch, death arrow

No. 260

St. A. T. S.

Attack: 600000
Defense: 600000
Steel: 600000

Description: Weak in Water, Fire.
When I Crushed My Finger
by Vanessa

When I was eight I went to Hornbey Island. On the second last day of my vacation I was having a rock throwing contest with my friend Graham. I picked up a heavy rock and I fell on another pile of rocks. When I fell I crushed my finger! I screamed so loud the other side of the beach could hear me! My mom rushed me to my mom's friends moms cabin. My mom's friend called the clinic right away. My mom's friend drove me to the clinic. The Doctor cleaned my finger and then he froze it. I was wide awake when he stitched it. I got about thirteen stitches. I didn't look so I don't know exactly how many stitches. It was hurting and my Mom told me a story about our cat Casey to distract me while the doctor was stitching my finger. I didn't scream but I cried because it hurt a lot! The next day I left and we caught the B.C. Ferry to go to the emergency at Children's Hospital because they couldn't x-ray it on Hornbey. I went straight to the hospital in Vancouver. My dad met us there. They took x-rays of it. It was broken and I was sad. I had to have two operations. After my first operation I had a cast on for a week. They put me to sleep with happy gas. It smelled really bad. I counted, and got to twelve. Then the surgeon worked on it. They couldn't save so in the second operation they amputated it. After I had my operation I went to my Grammas house for dinner. Then after dinner I went to the ice cream store. Then I went home. THE END.
When I Cracked my Head
by David

It was a dark cold night when I was 7. My babysitter said we have to go to bed. Me and my cousin and my brother did not want to go, so we got to stay up.

I had to go pick up something. When I went to move my head up, I looked in the mirror. When I went to my cousin and I touched my head I could see there was blood on my hands. My head was bleeding.

I went to my babysitter. My babysitter looked at it. It was bleeding everywhere so she got a kleenex and put it on my head. Then my brother came in and said, "gross!" This made me feel sick and then I fainted.

Three minutes later I woke up and I was feeling very sick. I just about fell asleep. The babysitter phoned 911. The ambulance came in seven minutes. They took my blood pressure.

My babysitter phoned my Mom and she said that I needed to go to the hospital. Then I went to Surrus Memorial Hospital. An ambulance came and took me on a gurney to the ambulance. My babysitter came with me.

When we were at the hospital they took my blood pressure again. Then a nurse pushed me on a cart to the room. There were two babies in the room. On the wall were paintings of fish. My babysitter came in and talked to me. Then my mom came in. I was happy when she came in. Then the nurse came in and made me do jumping jacks. Then I went home. When I came home it was 12:00.

I had to go to bed. My Mom checked my head. There was a scar on my head. I was happy to finally go to bed.

blood room took gross mom and fish again nurse home
Once upon a time, there was a vampire. There was a GREAT BIG SIZED papa vampire, a medium-sized mama vampire, and a teeny-weeny baby vampire. When they went out to scare all the children on a cold Halloween night, they accidentally left their door open and a little ghost named Ghostly Joe flew in the haunted house that belonged to the three vampires. When she got in the there were three bowls of bat soup with green slime on them. Ghostly Joe said, "Yum, I can't believe these leaves in this stew!" She tasted a little bit of each bowl and she liked the last bowl the best so she ate it all up. Ghostly Joe felt tired so she flew to the coffee. She sat in the first coffin and the lid was too heavy to lift up so she flew to the next coffin and she said, "This is still too heavy to lift up," so she flew to the last coffin and she said, "This one is just right," and it was so comfortable that she fell asleep in it. After hours the vampires came home to their house from scaring all the children on Halloween night. When they came in they saw that someone had been tasting their bat soup. Papa vampire said, "Someone has been tasting my bat soup!" in a mad voice. Then mama vampire said, "Someone has been tasting my bat soup and it's almost gone." Then baby vampire said, "Someone has been tasting my bat soup and it's all gone!" The three vampires were so tired they went upstairs to go to bed. But when they got there, they saw that someone had been sleeping in their coffins. Papa vampire said, "Someone has been sleeping in my coffin," said Papa in a mad voice. Then mama vampire said, "Someone has been sleeping in my coffin and there it is!" Ghostly Joe heard the vampires and got scared so she flew out of the open window in the room.

The End.

We have done the Daily Letter together.
Messages: _____________________________
Compliments: ____________________________
Writing Word Study:
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Blessed Books:
Author: ____________________________
Illustrator: ________________________

Poems, Songs and Chants
BY STEVEN

1. I like candy
2. I like jackolaterams
3. I like vampires
4. I like ghosts
5. I like eating candy

PASS I REMEMBERED SOME BAD THINGS: PEOPLES SMASHING YOU WOLFS

HAULING FIRECRACKERS RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOUR HOUSE AND PEOPLES TRICKING YOU.
In a dark universe,
there was a bright world. In the bright world there was a dry continent. In the dry continent there was a hot beach. By the hot beach there was a beautiful house. In the beautiful house there was a heat and tidy cage. In the heat and tidy cage was a praying mantis!!

by Keenan
TWENTY-FIVE WACKY CRAZY 100 JOKES
by Jacques and Angela

Where does the witch keep her spaceship?
In the broom closet.

What happened when the principal fell into the copying machine?
She was be-hold-en herself.

What lesson does well in school:
the spelling bee.

What subject do snakes like?
Hisstory.

What do mosquitoes like?
An itchy neck.

What subject do witches like?
Sorcery.

What is the hardest thing about taking a test?
The answer.

Why do werewolves do well in school?
They give snappy answers.

In what school do you learn to great people?
Art school.

Where do snake yo-yos go to school?
Snake school.

How do you tell if a school is haunted?
It has a school spirit.

Why did Ralph the teacher give him a D?
He had lice.

What do you get if you cross a telephone with a pair of pants?
Bell bottoms.

What did the big grapefruit say to the little grapefruit?
Come here you little squirt.

What is quicker than a fish?
The one that catches it.

Bee: MEMORY

Card Game:

PETER PIPER

PETER PIPER PICKED A PECK OF PICKLED PIPPINS.

IF PETER PIPER PICKED A PECK OF PICKLED PIPPINS,
WHO'S TO SAY IF PETER PIPER PICKED?

How many woodchucks would you need to carry a log across the river?

WORD STUDY:

oatom: school, history, spelling, bee, well

keep, happened, bottom, tall, wall

Daily Letter by Steven
Genre: Tongue Twisters

Jocaste and Kelvin

WORD JINGLE:

1: Trouncers 2: Epicked 3: Petter
4: Twisters 5: Tongue
6: Whimigig
The Second World War

The Second World War lasted six years! Millions of Canadians fought from 1939 to 1945! The Second World War began at dawn on September 1st, 1939. On September 10th King George the VI announced that Canada had declared war.

The war was officially over in Holland on May 5th 1945. Many people got sick and died the last year because there wasn't enough food. Food and clothing and heating were not available. People had to eat sugar beets and tulip bulbs. Many people got very hungry. On my Oma's 12th birthday Germany occupied Holland. It was May 10th 1940. It was a sad story but we are very glad it doesn't happen anymore. If this kept happening humans could be extinct.

Word Study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1945</th>
<th>12th</th>
<th>10th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
All about Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan is a province in Canada. It's the 5th largest in Canada, it is 655,350km². There are about 1,100,000 Canadians in Saskatchewan. Most Saskatchewan people live in the southern part of the province. Saskatchewan is home to many Mestis and Native people. Many Saskatchewan people came from Western Europe and Eastern Europe. People started moving from Europe to Saskatchewan in the 1870s. Saskatchewan became a province of Canada in 1905.

Saskatchewan is a Cree Indian word meaning “Swift Flowing.” The Indian gave that name to the big river that flows through the province. Regina is the capital city of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan once was called “Pile of Bones.” Long ago, Indians piled buffalo bones along the creek that runs through the city.

Manitoba is east of Saskatchewan, Alberta is west of Saskatchewan and the North West Territory is north of Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan’s flower is the Prairie Lily, their tree is called The White Birch and their bird is called The Sharp-Tailed Grouse. The Saskatchewan motto is “From many people’s strength.” The motto in Latin is “Musica et gentilis virtute.”

The main industry in Saskatchewan is farming. They farm wheat. Much of Saskatchewan is flat and there are also hills, valleys, and forests. There are also two rivers that are used for hydroelectric. Saskatchewan’s flag is colorful. The green section represents forests, the blue section represents grain fields. The provincial shield is in the top left corner and the Prairie Lily is on the right.

People who make the world a better place live in Saskatchewan. Famous Canadians are from the province of Saskatchewan. Heather Bishop was born in Regina, the capital city of Saskatchewan. She is a singer and a song-writer. She has recorded four children’s albums. Heather Bishop began to teach to play the piano when she was 5 years old. Today, she sings in concerts and on television, on shows like “Fred Penner’s Place.” Sometimes she sings a song in her own language when she sings. Her language helps children who can’t hear or understand her songs. Tom Jackson was born on the Arrow Reserve. He is a musician and an actor. When Tom Jackson was 15, he did not have a place to live. He learned to sing and play the guitar. He wrote songs about how he felt to be homeless. When he became famous he held concerts to raise money for food banks. In 1996 he was given an award for his work in helping others.

Canada has amazing people. Saskatchewan is an amazing province...
I'm going to tell you about some scary and dangerous water animals. They are the deep sea angler, great white shark, hammerhead shark, whale shark, and the swordfish.

The Deep Sea Angler
The Deep Sea Angler is one of the strangest fish in the world and one of the most dangerous! The Deep Sea Angler has a fishing rod that grows out of its head and is shaped like a hammer. It uses the light to attract small fish. Getting bitten by a Deep Sea Angler is like getting bitten by 100 vipers! The Deep Sea Angler lives in the bottom of the deep dark sea. It can grow up to three feet long. The male Deep Sea Angler is much smaller but can grow up to 3 inches long. It is almost right after the male is born, he looks for a mate, once the male finds a mate it sinks down to the females underbelly after a while their skin grows together so they'll never be apart. The male has no fishing rod because he doesn't need one. The female does all the fishing for him. I'm now going to tell you about an interesting man eating water animal.

The Great White Shark
Sharks are scary usually you only see them in the aquarium. Sharks are mean looking; some of them are as mean as they look. Great Whites sometimes eat people sometimes they will eat anything! Sharks' skin is really dangerous it's like a sharp knife coming out of its back! Swimmers sometimes get badly injured just by rubbing against their skin! Great White Sharks are humongous fish. Their has rows and rows of teeth. Great White Sharks are the worst man eating water animals. Now since I've told you about 2 water animals there are still three to go.

Hammerhead Sharks
The Hammerhead Shark is just as dangerous as the Great White. The Hammerhead Shark is really weird looking. It's got the strangest head of any fish. It's head is shaped like a hammer! It has one eye on each end of its head. A Hammerhead Eye's are about three feet apart. This next fish is not dangerous at all but it is still a shark.

Whale Sharks
The Whale Shark is the biggest fish. The Whale Shark eats small plants and fish. He doesn't eat people. Sometimes he may even let someone ride him! Now it is time for me to tell you about the last one.

Swordfish
Swordfish have the longest nose of any fish, but is really part of its jaw. The spear has two sharp edges and is flat. It uses its jaw like a sword. The Swordfish will actually swim into a school of fish and start slashing it's sword it slices the the fish and dinner is served. The Swordfish loves eating small fish. And we eat Swordfish. It's hard to catch Swordfish. If you grab, stab, if you use a net it will slash the net. If people use spears the fish will pierce the boat and the boat will sink to the bottom of the deep sea! But now people have learned to use hooks which is much safer! The Swordfish is not born with his sword it is born with teeth, as it gets older it loses its teeth and grows a sword.

Now I have told you about 5 different interesting water creatures.
MY DREAM ABOUT MY FAVORITE SINGERS

Just a few months ago I had an incredible dream that I was a singer like my favorite ones Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. It felt like it was real! but it wasn't. I wouldn't want to be like them because everyday you would have to get up so early to do rehearsals and you would have to go to some music stores to see if your songs were good enough to put on a c.d. because little kids all over the world would be listening to them on the radio or on a c.d. plus you would probably have to go to a lot of stores to get all the clothes that they have but I would like to travel around the world like they do because I would get to see a lot of things that I don't see here. If I got to see one of my favorite singers in real life I would go crazy.

By Angela
there once was a policeman who had one daughter. Her name was Megan. She loved magic. Christmas was coming up but the policeman didn’t know what to get her! Then Megan came to her father and said, "I want something to do with magic for Christmas!" So that is what her father did. He got her a magic set!

Later that day the policeman got a call that someone rich got robbed! The policeman was there at once.

"MY PEARL GOT STOLEN IT WAS THE SIZE OF A BASEBALL" said the woman.

The policeman looked throughout the house but he got no clues. The policeman told the woman that a lady would come to check for finger prints. She did. The lady found some finger prints.

The next day the police and the detectives searched. They searched in alleys, huts, houses, stores but they didn't find anything. After about five hours of searching they heard a yell from on a hill. It sort of sounded like I found it, they all rushed up the hill and there glimmering in the sunshine was the pearl and sitting on the ground was the thief with handcuffs on his arms and legs.

They took the thief to court and took the pearl back to the lady. The lady didn't want it back and said "You can have it because it's a magic pearl". The next night it was Christmas eve and in Megan's stocking was a round ball with wrapping paper on it. Megan took her stocking up to her room and opened the round package. In it was the pearl! Megan gasped at the sight. It had a piece of paper in the package it had a list on how to wish on the magic pearl. It said "gangansabagans". Megan wished that she had unlimited presents and then said, "agansansabagans" and it happened! They wished happily ever after.

The End

Word Study:

Megan  policeman  woman  agansansabagans  present
MT SAINT HELENS

When I was 5, my family and I went to MT. Saint Helens. We saw it explode in a movie we watched. Thousand of trees fell, but not much people died because they knew that it’s going to explode. It was a big destruction. The explosion was big, and it exploded five times. In 1981 there was the biggest explosion. It wiped out the lakes beside it. Now the lakes are covered with ashes. Now on top of MT Saint Helens there is a museum that you could visit. A lot of people were there, they have some experiments. MT. Saint Helens is an amazing volcano. People were learning about how hot MT Saint Helens even after a week! Lava is more than 127 degrees. It’s maybe even more than 250 degrees! All the lakes turned black and dirty around the volcano but some of the creatures still lived even though the popularity went down.

eplode
experiment
explosion
exploded

popularity
dirty
family
learning
Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone
Author J.K. Rowling
Response by Jimmy McGillivray

I recommend J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone to all ages, because I read it with my Mom and Dad at night, and my sister likes hearing about it.

In Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone, one year old Harry is sent to live with his mean Aunt and Uncle and their son Dudley, because his Mom and Dad were killed by an evil wizard, Lord Voldemort. He starts getting letters from someone. So the Dursleys get out of their house and go to an island with a big house on the night before his Birthday. In the night a big guy named Hagrid comes, takes him to Hogwarts, he meets some friends and enemies. Battles in a Duel, finds a mirror of Erised, plays Quidditch, searches for the Philosophers Stone and gets in a lot of trouble.

This story connects to my life because I had to change schools and when I got to my new school I met a lot of friends and a few enemies.

This is a fiction book because people can't fly on brooms and because there is no such thing as a flying motorcycle.

I think this book is so exciting and sometimes scary, I want to read the whole book at once!

Other Books by J.K. Rowling

Harry Potter and The Chamber of secrets

Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban
I remember a frozen, windswept Arctic afternoon when I was bundled up into a Jeep and hustled out on a special top-secret mission. I figured I was finally going to be let in on the reason for this high-security Arctic base.

I was exactly right.

We drove slowly through and past the buildings, all of them very grey and windy. We rounded a corner and came upon a red one. We stopped. I got out of the Jeep and started to crunch across towards the front door. I was told, no, to the window.

So I clambered over the snowbank, was boosted up to the window, rubbed my sleeve against the frosty glass to see inside and as my eyes adjusted to the gloom, I saw a figure, hunched over one of many work tables that seemed very cluttered. He was wearing a red suit with that fury white trim.
WINNIE THE POOH COMES HOME TO CANADA

For $274,000, Winnipeg buys painting of world's top bear

BY KEVIN WARD

LONDON — The children of Winnipeg raided their piggy banks to help buy Winnie the Pooh's only known original portrait so the painting can be displayed at the Canadian home of A.A. Milne's famous bear.

The picture painted by Pooh illustrator E.H. Shepard, was sold Thursday at Sotheby's for $274,000 CDN — seven times its pre-auction estimate — to the Pavilion Gallery Museum in Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park.

"It just captured people's imagination like you wouldn't believe," said David Loch, who bought the painting on behalf of the museum, bidding by telephone from Toronto.

"There were kids coming in.

"Funny, there were grandmothers coming with $10 bills. I mean the stories have been heartwrenching, because people have got the spirit of this thing already. The whole city has gone Winnie the Pooh crazy over the last two weeks."

The oil painting, about a metre high and a little over half a metre wide, depicts Pooh standing outside his house holding a large pot of honey. It was painted in the 1930s for the Pooh Corner teashop in Bristol, England.

But its origins go back to the years before the First World War, when Lieutenant Harry Colebourn, a Canadian army veterinary officer, was on a train at White River, in northwestern Ontario.

"He saw a tanner feeding a little bear cub on a pole," Loch recounted Thursday. The tanner had killed the mother and Colebourn paid him about 20 for the cub. He called it Winnie after Winnipeg, where the regiment was based, and it became the regimental mascot.

"When Colebourn and his regiment were posted overseas at the outbreak of war, Winnie came too," Loch said. "But it was impractical to keep the bear and it was housed in London Zoo. A.A. Milne visited Winnie in the zoo with his son, Christopher Robin. We're convinced that our bear was the inspiration for Winnie the Pooh."
Owls are interesting. Owls have sharp toes and round heads. Owls have big, bright eyes, not so long beaks. Most owls have short tails and they have short wings. Their feathers are mixed with gray, tan, and brown. They are nocturnal, eat insects, and other small animals. They will either hunt, or steal food. They spend their time hunting.

Word Study:

Vultures, Condor, Arjan, Crazy, Beak, Parrots, Swimmer, Collectors, Bird, Odd
Being nice to people is important because you can never have too many friends.

Friends should...

- Help each other and be nice so that they will be best friends, for a long time. Playing, sharing, helping, talking and reading is what most friends should do! Friends help you when your feeling lonely and when your mad or sad but mostly when your hurt. They talk to you and calm you down when something happens.

- Friends never ever talk behind your back, friends don't dump you because of your looks, like your hair, skin color, your voice and definitely not your culture. Friends never say "who cares" or "whatever."

By Jacqui+Angela

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>friends</td>
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MY ADVENTURES AT DRUMHELLER

In the summer of 2000 my family went on a long trip in our van. The first day we went to Grand Forks and we went fishing in a river. I made my own fishing rod out of a long stick and long pieces of grass. We caught nothing, but we had fun. Then we went to Cranbrook. Our hotel had a pool and we went swimming. Then we went to Fort Steele and saw the old village and we went up in the big look out tower. The next day we headed through the Rocky Mountains and went to Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump where the Indians used to drive the buffalo off the cliff to make food for the Indians. Then we got to the museum. We saw lots of stuffed buffalo and prey.

The next day we headed to Drumheller through lots of very dry farm fields. There was nothing green, and we saw more antelope than people or cars. We went past a field that had an old abandoned farm house. We saw an antelope right in front of the barn.

At the Royal Tyrell Dinosaur Museum we saw many models and fossils of dinosaurs. There was a dinosaur that was bigger than T-Rex. It was called the Giganotosaurus. My brother and I went on a dinosaur dig where we pretended to be paleontologists and learned about fossils and dinosaur digging. We played lots of games before we did the dig. On the way.
Leonardo da Vinci

We are going to tell you about Leonardo Da Vinci. He was an artist in the 1400 and 2001. He was one of the most famous artists in the world! He painted the Mona Lisa. We will tell you the story of Leonardo Da Vinci and about his paintings.

The Story Of Leonardo Da Vinci

When Leonardo Da Vinci was 12 years old he always carried his notebook everywhere. Now let's get on with the real story. It all started on a warm summer day in 1464. Leonardo was sketching a bird because he liked to sketch natural things. Leonardo Da Vinci had a name that was named after a place he lived in which was Vinci. His father told him that he was going to Florence with him. Leonardo's father was so amazed with his sketches he put him in an art class with the best artist in town. He became very talented in almost everything. He could play music, write poetry. He was a genius and master at art and very kind to other people. Leonardo Da Vinci usually liked being alone. Leonardo Da Vinci liked to sketch parts of the city and ugly men and women with big teeth. By the time Leonardo and his father got to Florence an evil man was ruling the city. His name was Lorenzo De Medici. One morning when Lorenzo and his brother were worshipping the cathedral a man named Barozcelli came in and tried to assassinate them. Lorenzo got away but not his brother. About one month later they found Lorenzo and hanged them from the palace window. Leonardo walked through the crowd and took a sketch of the dead figure hanging through the window and wrote down the clothes he was wearing backwards and then at the corner of the page he sketched the face of the person who burst into the cathedral. Now you have heard part of the story of Leonardo Da Vinci. We will now tell you some facts about some of his paintings.

Knight On Horseback
This is a painting of a prince. He is holding a jousting stick and wearing a gratitude helmet.

Mona Lisa
The Mona Lisa is one of the most famous Leonardo Da Vinci paintings. It took him thirty-five years to paint Mona Lisa's mouth. The Mona Lisa is a painting of a young lady with her hands crossing and her eyes looking in the corner.

Flight
Leonardo Da Vinci was probably the first person to invent flight. The propeller was also invented by Leonardo Da Vinci.

Doluge
This painting is in the Windsor collection from England. It is a picture of a castle on a flood.

Self Portrait
Da Vinci painted a self portrait in 1510. This painting is in the Turin Royal Library.

Plant Studies
This is a painting in the Windsor collection from England. It is a picture of plants and flowers.

Now you have learned a lot about Leonardo Da Vinci and this is the end of our Daily Letter.

P.S. The ink is running out so...
The Event

Join thousands of walkers, runners, joggers and wheelchair participants as we raise funds for cancer research, prevention, advocacy and patient support initiatives in support of the Canadian Cancer Society. The relay is open to all ages and abilities.

The 2nd annual 12-hour Relay for a Friend presented by Industrial Alliance Pacific Life Insurance will be held on:

Saturday
June 2nd / 2001
10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Coquitlam Town Centre Stadium

On Site Schedule

9:00 - 10:30
Light breakfast

9:30
Opening with Survivors’ Lap

10:00
Relay commences

10:30
Celebrating Children of Courage 5K Timed Run

11:30
Celebrating Children of Courage 1M for kids

both a dedicated partnership with IGA Marketplace

12:00
Sponsor Recognition Ceremony

12:00 - 2:00
Lunch

2:00 - 7:00
Dinner

10:00
Candlelight Ceremony

The day will feature entertainment, music, great prizes and buffet meals. ‘Survivor activities include: Volleyball Tournament, Children’s Activities, clown, games, crafts, face painting, Angela Silva’s drum circle and hair cutting by donation, 18 hole miniature golf, fun bouncey and much, much more!

Watch the kids run!

In 1998 to celebrate the courage of Michael B. Robinson, who lost his battle with leukaemia in 1997, our 5K run and 1M kids Run were introduced in his memory. Michael still inspires us all today. We wish to honour all children that have been affected by cancer. These runs are a dedicated partnership with IGA Marketplace in honour of children that have succumbed to cancer, are battling cancer and are survivors of cancer.

Word Study:

turn  unable battle noble special
Kirby was a Border Collie and a Belgian Shepherd. He was black, brown and white. His nose was all black, and the tips of his ears were black, oh, also part of his back and part of his tail were black. His whole body was brown, and his eyes were also brown. Now for the last color, Kirby had a white strip down his belly, and the tips of his paws and tail were white. Kirby was very very cute. Kirby was born on October 10, 2001.

The Big Story

At the beginning of April I took Kirby for a walk to the hostel. I saw my friend Victoria there. Then she came up to me and Kirby dove at her. He did it to protect me. He also did it because he was a bad mix. After that we got a phone call from our neighbors, so a couple of days later we had to put him down.

Another Story

When Kirby was about 4 months old, he would come up the stairs and come in the kitchen and sniff around the kitchen and then he would start to eat the cat food. I'm not sure why he did it, but I think he did it because he liked it more than his own food. After my Mom sometimes put him outside. Sometimes when Kirby was outside he would scratch and whine on the door and
Appendix C Collection of Stretch Charts
1. STRETCHING AS A TEXT PARTICIPANT
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Participate in the Text
Taking a Stance On Predicting and Connecting to Prior Knowledge
This stretching chart calls for the DL to be hidden from the student. Given the topic they can then explore the Stretch Chart and then be given a copy of the DL.

   What do you already know about?_______?
   Think of a word, phrase or a sentence. Say something about _______.
   Have you seen _______ before?
   Draw a picture of what you know about?
   Think about this Title.... What do you think the text will be about? (Prediction can go in the mini lesson section of the Daily Letter)
   Think what the D.L. is about. Pair and share what you think it is about.
   Before I thought.......now I think.
   Give a title to the Daily Letter.

2. STRETCHING AS A TEXT PARTICIPANT
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Participate in the Text
Taking a Stance On Context Clues
The value of using context clues with a piece of text can be examined by highlighting parts of the text and conversing about these.
Find a word:
   that makes the blank make sense with a Cloze Procedure
   that was hard to read, and now is easy to read
   that you didn't know before
   that adds detail to the text
3. STRETCHING AS A TEXT PARTICIPANT
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Participate in the Text
Taking a Stance on Meaning
The meaning of the text can be examined by highlighting meanings in the text and conversing about these.
Find a word, phrase, or sentence that:
- tells what the story is about
- tells what you think might happen
- you can make a guess and check the think/pair and share with a shoulder partner
- what it might be about
- tells what the writer is saying
- tells what the illustrator is saying
- is like another word you know
- has a word within a word
- is the main idea
details
tells the "message" of the story, or the moral of the story
that you can web the meaning of
that could happen to you
tells us what is going on
you can say in your own words
tells what is going to happen next
tells about something that has already happened
could happen to you
you can add a word to without changing the meaning
you can paraphrase
you have a question about
could happen to you, could not happen to you
you could change to make more interesting
you think tells the moral of the story
you question

4. STRETCHING AS A TEXT PARTICIPANT
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Participate in the Text
Taking a Stance On Personal Response
The aesthetic values of the text can be examined by highlighting certain parts of the text and conversing about them.
Find a word, phrase, or sentence that helps you respond to:
- a person word, proper name, improper
- a person that reminds you of someone you know
- reminds you of yourself
who seems real or life like to you
who is unreal or does not seem real to you
something important to you
something that happened to you
something that made you think of something that happened to you
you find interesting
you felt the same about
you did not react the same way
you would like to be
you would not like to be
that you feel strongly about
that pleases you
offends you
confuses you
you do not agree with (you disagree)
you agree strongly with
you do not understand
you do not find interesting
makes you laugh
makes you cry
makes you remember something
you would like to share with your shoulder partner
is boring to you
you would like to draw
you would like to share with someone who is not in this class
makes you think of a special food
makes you think of a special color

5. STRETCHING AS A TEXT PARTICIPANT
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Participate in the Text
Taking A Stance On Aesthetic Response (Intermediate)
The aesthetic values of the text can be examined by highlighting certain parts of the text and conversing about these.
Find a word, phrase or sentence that:
  you like
  interests you
  is a favourite
  you admire
  that is a problem
  reminds you of something
  reminds you of someone
  concerns you
  confuses you
  you wish to comment on
you have a strong opinion on
you have a question about
you would like to remember
is your least favourite
you will think about again
you want to find out more about

6. STRETCHING AS A TEXT PARTICIPANT
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Participate in the Text
Taking A Stance On Comprehension (Intermediate)
The efferent or informational values of the text can be examined by highlighting certain parts of the text and conversing about them.
Find a word, phrase or sentence:
that you have prior knowledge of
you can paraphrase information
things you can see
things you could not see
that shows cause and effect
that compares
that contrasts
that integrates with information you already know
denotation
connotation
metaphor
you will remember
represents something significant in the story
you associate with warm colours
you associate with cold colours
you associate with a square shape
you associate with a wavy lines

7. STRETCHING AS A TEXT PARTICIPANT
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Participate in the Text
Taking A Stance On Meta-cognition
Find a word, phrase or sentence:
that you have prior knowledge of, or you knew right away
you figured out from the word clues around the difficult word
you predicted or guessed about
you jumped over and came back to
that gave you a clue about what was coming next in the text
that helped you learn a new word
you actively solved, is tricky to solve
Tell about:
- a strategy a good speller would use
- part of the text you did not understand
- a strategy you used to figure a word you didn't know
- a word that stands out for you and why
- a part that drew you in as a reader
- a part that gives a clear and vivid picture in your mind
- that you had to break apart and put back together in order to read it
- seems irrelevant
- when you had to look at the words around it to figure it out
- a part that makes you want to read on

8. STRETCHING AS A TEXT PARTICIPANT
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Participate in the Text
Taking A Stance On Phonological Awareness
Phonological awareness can be examined by highlighting rhymes, blends, initial sounds, medial and final sounds of the text and conversing about these.

Find words (or letters) that:
- (letters) consonants that are the good guys - they talk
- (letters) consonants that are the tough guys - they won't talk
- (letters) that are called vowels
- rhyme (log, cat, toy, girl, lamp, look, desk, mutt, drink, red, green, bike, mouse, ball, socks, shirt) (taken from partial list from Rosner, 1979)
- find two words that end in a ____ sound (say the sound) and one that does not have this sound
- find two words that begin with the same sound as ____ and one that does not begin with this sound
- you can take the first letter off of (say the word with the first letter, say the word without the first letter)
- blend together to make a new word (bed = bedroom, pen = pencil)
- have this sound at the beginning of the word
- you can take some of it off the beginning and you still have a word
- has two letters at the beginning that makes one sound
- has three letters at the beginning that makes one sound
- has a little word in the bigger word (neat = eat, pink = ink, soften = often)
- you can add a letter to the beginning to make a new word
- you can add a new letter to make a new word
9. STRETCHING AS A TEXT PARTICIPANT
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Participate in the Text
Taking A Stance On Comprehension (Intermediate)
The efferent or informational values of the text can be examined by highlighting certain parts of the text and conversing about them.
Find a word, phrase or sentence:
Knowledge
  you can recall
  you can recognize
  you can identify
  who, what, where, when
Comprehension
  a word you can describe
  a word you can make a comparison with
  a word you can interpret
  a phrase you can rephrase
  a word you can contrast
  a word you can explain
  a word that gives the main idea
Application
  you can apply to your own life
  you can classify
  you will use

10. STRETCHING AS A TEXT PARTICIPANT
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Participate in the Text
Taking A Stance On Critical Literacy
The efferent or informational values of the text can be examined by highlighting certain parts of the text and conversing about them.
What do you think....
  should be the title of the story
  should have happened, or should be different
Find a word, phrase or sentence:
Analysis
  you can analyze Why?
  you can draw a conclusion from
  you can infer
  you can determine evidence
  a generalization you can make (supporting evidence)
Synthesis
Stretch Charts: Stretching as a Text User

1. Taking a Stance on Graphic Layout
2. Taking a Stance on Grammar
3. Taking a Stance on Expression
4. Taking a Stance on Genre

1. STRETCHING AS A TEXT USER
   Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Use Text

Taking a Stance on Graphic Layout

The graphic values of the text can be examined by highlighting certain parts of the text layout and conversing about these.

Find some of these text features:
- layout: paragraphs, lines, columns, boxes
- headings and subheadings
- titles
- shape of type (mood, emphasis, attitude)
- position of type
- size of type
- indented quotations
- entry points to the text: headings, leaders, cross references, arrows, bullets
- graph: picture, line, bar, column etc.
- simple diagram, tree or web diagram
2. STRETCHING AS A TEXT USER
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Use Text
Taking a Stance on Grammar
Research tells us that children learn about language by using it, and then by noticing how it was used. It is useful for students to examine language, detecting differences in their own oral and written language forms, as well as observing the language used by authors. Children may benefit from knowing about how language works.
Find a:
- person word
- place word
- thing word
- action word
- descriptive word
- something you can touch
- something you cannot touch
- add a noun
- change a noun
- preposition
- conjunction
- compound sentence
- add a verb (i.e. find word: snake, write word: slither)
- change a verb
- add an adjective (i.e. find word: snake, write word: scaly long)
- change an adjective
- add a plural ending
- (n) irregular verb
- possessive noun

3. STRETCHING AS A TEXT USER
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Use Text
Taking a Stance On Expression
The sound of the text can be examined by highlighting parts of the text and conversing about the expression of these.

Say a word, phrase or sentence:
that should be read quietly
that needs an excited voice
with a different voice (mysterious, musical, robotic)
with a changed speed
that has action in your voice
to make it sound more interesting
that is you favourite part to say
that the author might like to say
with a narrator’s voice
with some sound tracking (using sounds to create a mood/sense of place)

4. STRETCHING AS A TEXT USER
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Use Text

Taking A Stance On Genre

Genre can be examined by highlighting parts of the text and conversing about evidence of Genre.
Find:
  evidence of genre
  evidence that may not fit with this genre
  a word that fits with this genre
  a phrase that fits with this genre
  a sentence that fits this genre
  a confusing part
  a place where missing text could be placed
  conventions of print that fit with this genre
  a cultural reference
  specific genre characteristics
  a part that you like
  the main idea of this genre
  words closest to the theme
  words that connect to your own life
  a part that reminds you of another story
  words that invoke feelings
  words that are tied to the present, past or future
  words that you appreciate
  words that show how real the characters are
  gives you factual information
gives you fictional information
gives you information that may be fiction or nonfiction
you would change

Stretch Charts: Stretching as a Text Decoder

1. Taking a Stance on Words
2. Taking a Stance on Conventions
3. Taking a Stance on Emergent Letter/Shape/Sound Correspondence
4. Taking a Stance on Emergent Letter/Shape/Sound Correspondence
5. Taking a Stance on Words

1. STRETCHING AS A TEXT DECODER
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Decode Text
Taking a Stance on Words
Text can be examined by highlighting special words in the text, and conversing about these. Find a word that:

- has a letter you know
- you had to match to the print
- begins with sh, ph, ch, th
- you ear spell
- you eye spell
- has a silent letter (s)
- has the letter ____ at the beginning
- has the letter ____ at the end
- has the letter ____ in the middle
- has bl, cl, dr
- has au, ou, oo, oi
- rhymes
- has a letter in your name
- you had to fix it to make sense
- you had to make sound right
- is large
- you didn't know
- is important
- has one syllable, two syllables, three syllables, ______ syllables
- is a high frequency word
- has _____ letters
- has double letters
- has letter clusters (tion)
- has unusual letters
- has a little word in a big word
- a synonym, (little, tiny) same
- an antonym, (big, little) opposite
a homonym, (so, sew, sow) sound alike
is abbreviated
is small
is medium
is a joining word (and, but, how)
has an ending (suffix: ing, ed, er, est, ation, ture, ness, ment, ous)

is a contraction
is next in alphabetical order
is a root word
has a prefix (dis, re)
not often see
that is difficult to say

2. STRETCHING AS A TEXT DECODER AND USER
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Decode Text, Use Text
Taking a Stance On Conventions
The rules about how we proceed through the print are called conventions. The conventions in a piece of text can be examined by highlighting certain parts of the text and conversing about these
Find:

an upper case letter or capital letter
a lower case letter or small letter
your favourite letter
bold face
underlined word
emphasized text
quotation marks, talking marks
the beginning of an important word
the end of a sentence
the beginning of a sentence
first, last word in a paragraph
a space
a punctuation mark (., !, ?, @, $, ^, & , ( ), [], ""

punctuation you would change
shows where a paragraph starts
you would edit
is a proofreading mistake
is a joining word (and, but, how)

3. STRETCHING AS A TEXT DECODER
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Decode Text
Taking A Stance On Emergent Letter Shape Sound Correspondence
The relationship between letter shape, size and sound can be examined by highlighting certain letters and words of the text and conversing about these.

Find:

- a letter you have prior knowledge of
- a tall letter
- a short letter
- a letter with circles
- a letter with tunnels
- a letter with a tail
- a letter with a dot
- a letter with a cross through it
- a letter you see often
- a letter you don't see very often
- a double letter
- a letter with a capital
- a lowercase letter
- a consonant
- a vowel
- a favourite letter
- a word with a letter from your name
- a letter that you know
- a letter that is hard for you
- a letter that makes a sound you like
- a letter that makes several sounds
- a sound that different pairs of letters make
- letters that often go together
- a fun letter
- a tricky letter
- consonants (b c d f g h j k l M a l t a n p r s t v w z )
- ch sh th wh (digraphs)
- st sp sn sm sl sc sk sw bl cl
- fl gl pl British cr dr fr pr tr
- spl str spr scr squ
- ll ss ff ck
- _o oa o-e ow oe
- (go boat home snow toe)
- u-e oo ew ue ou ui (cube school new true soup fruit)
- ou ow (out how)
- oo (good look foot)
- oi oy (join boy)
- ar or er ir ur air are ear
- (car for her stir fur hair care earth)
- nk (bank honk pink sunk)
ng (hang song wing stung)
ck ke (quack quake)
dge ge (badge edge bridge
dodge fudge stage huge)

dege ge (badge edge bridge
dodge fudge stage huge)

4. STRETCHING AS A TEXT DECODER
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Decode Text
Taking A Stance On Emergent Letter Shape Sound Correspondence
The relationship between letter shape, size and sound can be examined by
highlighting certain letters and words of the text and conversing about these.
Find:
tch ch batch fetch oitch notch clutch rich each
age (village bandage advantage damage
tion (station mention fiction)
ture (picture nature adventure future)
ic (picnic)
le (rumble battle title)
silent letters mb (thumb) gh (night) (high) kn (knee) wr (write)
le
tch
dge
ture
age
a-e ai ay ei ea (cake rain play weight great)
_e ea ee y ey ie (me seat feet party hockey field receive)
y i-e igh ie (my kite night sigh)
ck ke nk ng
hard and soft c
hard and soft g
kn wr ight
ph gh

5. STRETCHING AS A TEXT DECODER
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Decode Text
Taking A Stance On Words
Find a word that:
is a compound word
is a contraction
has a prefix
has a suffix (s ed er ation ness ment ous ing est ic ish)
starts with a vowel and ends with a vowel
starts with a consonant and ends with a consonant
is borrowed from French
has a Latin root
has no meaning on its own
is abbreviated
is a high frequency word
has more than seven letters
has less than four words
a word that is the same spelled backwards

Stretch Charts: Stretching as a Text Analyst

1. Taking a Stance on Discovering Your Subject
2. Taking a Stance on Sensing Your Audience
3. Taking a Stance on Sensing Your Audience
4. Taking a Stance on Setting the Tone, Making it Reader Friendly
5. Taking a Stance on Searching for Specifics: Part One
   Taking a Stance on Searching for Specifics: Part Two

1. STRETCHING AS A TEXT ANALYST (Mamchure, 2001)

Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Become Strategic About Analysing Text

"The Whole of anything cannot be told; we can only take what groups together."

Henry James

Taking a Stance on Discovering Your Subject

Find a part of the text that:

- is the one important topic, worthwhile, one story?
- moves to action fast
- shows "what"
- gives the reader something
- shows the author knows, cares about it, looks inward, what they love
- exposes the author, shows them "with their skin off", vulnerable
- frames a beginning (situation, set up, clear, safe, tone, hint of a character, who, what, where)
- frames a middle (problem)
- frames an end (resolve)
- creates order
- shows a relationship, pattern, connections
- shows focus, focus, focus
- takes away from the focus
- is another possible topic, could be used for another piece, is there a mini-story?
- words really "get it right", are carefully crafted
- floods, gives a feel for the moment
- indicates a habit of observation
- shares a measure of disturbance, a need to be understood
- lead, topic sentence teaches us how to read the text, tells us what it is about
lead that starts with action, carefully sets up what will happen makes you feel safe about where you, the reader, are small specifics, that set the tone a hint of mystery a hint about a character, dialogue that develops the character

2. STRETCHING AS A TEXT ANALYST (Mamchure, 2001) Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Become Strategic About Analysing "a willing suspension of disbelief" (Coleridge), "will believe it if it is crafted right."

Sensing Your Audience
Find a part of the text that communicates:
- promises what the story is about, telling them what it is about
- gets to emotional truth
- brings themes to the universal
- is believable, rings true, you can buy it
- is not believable, does not ring true, you can't buy it
- brings you into the story as a reader

Find a part of the text that provides clarity and integrity:
- promises what the story is about, telling them what it is about
- discovers the topic
- is believable, rings true, you can buy it
- is not believable, does not ring true, you can't buy it
- brings you into the story as a reader

Find a part of the text that looks inward
- gives a belief of life
- indicates what the author is trying to do
- indicates a belief
- provides a real truth

3. STRETCHING AS A TEXT ANALYST (Mamchure, 2001) Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Become Strategic About Analysing "a willing suspension of disbelief" (Coleridge), will believe it if it crafted right.

Sensing Your Audience
Find a part of the text that communicates:
Find a part of the text that infers things:
- is not told, is inferred, doesn't spell things out, shows does not tell
- considers what audience knows
- has marketability to a (who)
what would a _________ (person you write about) say about what you said about them

Find a part of the text that has voice, tension, rhythm:
- gets the right voice, consistent overall impression
- voice rings true, recognize it
- slows things down: by writing more
- that moves the story along fast
- moves away from a strategic or dramatic point, for a moment
- presents a mystery (to be unravelled later)
- situation of jeopardy
- a short sentence
- a long sentence
- a sentence that saves the best for last, has significant info. at the end of it

4. STRETCHING AS A TEXT ANALYST (Mamchure, 2001)
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Become Strategic About Analysing "a willing suspension of disbelief" (Coleridge), will believe it if it crafted right.
Setting the Tone, Making it Reader Friendly
Find a part of the text that:
- is personable, has likeability
- makes the reader feel, think they are intelligent
- forges a relationship
- anticipates the readers needs
- is attentive
- provides modest humbleness
- asks a question, talks to the reader to make it friendly
- indicates sympathy or caring
- projects warmth and emotion, talks about how the author feels
- persuades with examples, not opinion

STRETCHING AS A TEXT ANALYST
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Become Strategic About Starting a Story.
Starting a Story
Find the start of the story that communicates through a:
- character
- setting
- plot (The cellar door slammed.)
- dialogue that moves the story forward
- flashback
- letter, newspaper
5. STRETCHING AS A TEXT ANALYST (Mamchure, 2001)
Strategic Teaching Reaching Everyone: Teaching Children How to Become
Strategic About Analysing the Specifics of a Story.
Searching for Specifics: Part One
Find a part of the text that indicates:
- research,
- shows doesn't tell
- detail that matter, interesting details
- details that don't matter (need to get rid of these)
- words that don't have purpose
- words that have a purpose
- is authentic
- looks inward
- convincing, visceral feeling
- appeal to the senses, brings it alive through the senses
- implicative stance, implies things
- is in motion, examples of movement or lack of movement
- sound
- something specific, something universal
- emotional flooding
- something reader needs to know
- something you think the reader didn't need to know
- overwriting
- characterization, or information too late in the story
- ineffective description
- effective description
- transitions

Searching for Specifics: Part Two
Find a part of the text that could be edited, through:
- tightening up (saying it in a phrase
- taking it out
- informs the goal
- does not inform the goal
- unnecessary sentence, clause
REFERENCES


