

**PINBALLS:
THE EXPERIENCES OF THREE CHILDREN IN ONE PUBLIC
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN AN INNER CITY SETTING**

by

Janice Clark

PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the Faculty
of
Education

© Janice Clark 1994
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
November 1994

All rights reserved. This work may not be
reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy
or other means, without permission of the author.

APPROVAL

Name: Janice Clark
Degree: Master of Education
Title of Project: Pinballs: The Experiences of Three Children
in One Public Elementary School in an
Inner City Setting

Examining Committee:

Stephen Smith
Senior Supervisor

~~Mike Manley-Casimir~~
Professor

Meguido Zola
Associate Professor
External Examiner

Date Approved November 14th, 1994.

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

**Pinballs: The Experiences of Three Children in One Public Elementary
School in an Inner City Setting**

Author:

(Signature)

Janice Clark

(Name)

(Date)

ABSTRACT

Pinballs:

**The Experiences of Three Children in One Public Elementary School
in an Inner City Setting**

In this study I explore the day to day school experiences of three elementary children in an inclusive inner city school environment. As an educator within the school, I describe each of the three students' school experiences, explore how the school is providing support for the three, look at their unmet needs, and make some suggestions regarding how student support services could be adapted to meet their needs more effectively. Each student has been selected because of his unique needs. Rob is a student with severe learning disabilities. Britten exhibits some extreme behaviors. Kris faces learning problems because his speech and language development is very delayed.

Through anecdotal narrative and dialogue I explore the feelings, thoughts and behaviors of the three students. The ideas of associated professionals and parents are also added to the discussion. Juxtaposed against these are theoretical perspectives, logistical considerations and Ministerial and legal limitations. Because I am dealing with the life experiences and stories of three children, I have used appropriate children's literature to mirror each

chapter of the study. Thus, each chapter reflects a different children's book.

My project focusses primarily on the lives of three unique children. However, the frustrations and concerns both they and those who educate them face pertain to other children as well. By describing some of the strategies that we have implemented for our trio, and providing suggestions for our future directions, I hope to offer some alternatives for educators elsewhere who work with other Robs, Krises and Brittens.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the encouragement, guidance and patience given to me by my senior supervisor, Stephen Smith. From my jumbled and confused first thoughts he was able to read my mind (short story!) and zero in on the essence of my project. Every time I wandered off the path, he brought me back to the heart of the study, the kids.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and freedom given to me by my other supervisor, Michael Manley-Casimir. He helped me to verbalize the key concepts of my topic and to "funnel down" my focus. He also helped mold the non-standard approach to my project.

Thanks are also due to the students, parents and staff of the studied school who took time to tell me their tales and who provided refreshing opinions on every topic discussed.

Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Approval Page	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
Foreword	ix
1 PINBALLS	1
The Background	1
The Problem	4
The Approach	10
Focus	13
Organization	18
2 AUNT ISABEL TELLS A GOOD ONE	22
The Structure of Our Story	22
The Telling of a Story	23
Setting	29
Characters	33
Plot Problems	35
The Action	42
Story Ending	43
3 WHO CAME DOWN THAT ROAD?	45
The History	45
Building the Road to Inclusion	49
Geography - The Site	49

Architecture - Planning and Dreaming	52
Excavations and Foundations - The Execution	
of the Plan	54
Cracks in the Road - Ongoing Concerns	67
Finishing Touches - Painting Lines	68
Creating Additional Lanes - Where We Went	
Next	69
The Road Now - Where We Are	73
The Closing of Nearby Highways Means More	
Traffic for Us - Concerns	75
4 THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW	77
Examining Our Examining	80
That Was Then	86
This Is Now	91
5 THE BATTLE OF BRITTEN	103
Typical Skirmish	103
Battle Plan - Strategic Plan	117
Tactics	119
Offence	125
Employing the new Tactics	126
Battle Lines	127
6 AMAZING GRACE AND TIMID KRIS	130
Meeting the Characters	130
Kris' Initial Screening	132
Findings and Follow Up	142
Why Are Speech and Language so Important?	151

7 COVERED BRIDGE - REFLECTIONS AND DREAMS	156
Where Have We Been?	156
Where We Need to Go	161
At the Ministry Level	161
At the School Level	166
Back to Our Trio	177
Why Covered Bridge?	179
The Last Word	183
8 APPENDICES	187
Appendix 1	187
Appendix 2	193
Appendix 3	197
9 BIBLIOGRAPHY	235

Foreword

The pinballs of an arcade game are bounced around on their journey from start to finish. They have no control over their own destiny and are slapped around the board in unceasing motion.

The pinballs in Betsy Byars' novel of the same name are three children who are bounced into a foster home. Like the balls, they have no control of their destiny and have been battered by life. "One summer two boys and a girl went to a foster home to live together.

One of the boys was Harvey. He had two broken legs. He got them when he was run over by his father's Grand Am.....

The second boy was Thomas J. He didn't know whom he belonged to. When he was two years old someone had left him in front of a farmhouse like he was an unwanted puppy.....

The girl was Carlie. She was as hard to crack as a coconut. She never said anything polite. When anyone asked how she was, she answered 'What's it to you?' or 'Bug off.'

Carlie describes their position eloquently.

"Harvey and me and Thomas J. are just like pinballs. Somebody put in a dime and punched a button and out we came, ready or not, and settled in the same groove. That's all..... Now, you

don't see pinballs helping each other, do you?'

'Carlie -'

'They can't. They're just things. They hit this bumper, they go over there. They hit that light, they go over there.'

'Carlie -'

'And soon as they get settled, somebody comes along and puts in another dime and off they go again Take a good look at a pinball machine sometime,' Carlie said. 'You might learn something about life.'"

Too often children are treated like pinballs. They may have been bounced from school to school, they may have a constantly changing family structure, they may be bounced from specialist to specialist within the school. What these children, like Carlie, Harvey and Thomas J. need, is consistency, routine and the chance to build strong, lasting and meaningful relationships. Schools face increasing numbers of pinball children, who need, and sometimes demand, attention. We must adapt much of what we have traditionally done in schools if we are to serve the needs of this growing population adequately.

This project is dedicated to our pinballs.

CHAPTER ONE

PINBALLS

The Background

"A tennis shoe in a laundry dryer. Probably no image captures so fully for me the life of an adult working in an elementary, middle or high school. For educators schoolwork much of the time is turbulent, heated, confused, disoriented, congested, and full of recurring bumps." (Barth, 1990, p. 1). Barth goes on to describe "ten months of uninterrupted work, orchestrating the disparate needs of 400 students, twice as many parents, thirty teachers, legions of central office people, and nine school board persons," (p. 3). In his role of school Principal, Barth speaks of his "preoccupation with the nagging discomfort, fear, and anger that accompany setting limits on adults and children, and that precede and follow known violation of what others want, expect, and demand," (p. 3).

The wants, expectations and demands placed upon schools have certainly increased over the last few years. The new Intermediate Program (1993) and the Primary Program (1990) explicitly shifted educational directions from largely intellectual goals, to include social and emotional areas. These seem to be an addition to the

school's task as a recent Ministry of Education document states that academic standards will be maintained (Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia, 1993).

With the inclusion movement, schools also face an increasingly diverse population; special needs students are integrated into regular classrooms (School Act, 1989), there are increasing numbers of at-risk students, there are an increasing number of dysfunctional families, and values seemed to have shifted towards violence and dropping out - be it from school through truancy, or refusal to work and the accessing of welfare as a conscious choice. (B. C. T. F. Task Force on Violence in Schools - Interim Report, 1993). Schools also face decreasing dollars (in real buying power), an increase in bureaucracy and a growing number of legal restrictions. Individuals also have an increasing awareness of their rights. These may exist through contract negotiations, for example, some teacher contracts specify a maximum assigned playground supervision time of fifteen minutes per teacher per week, or be upheld through legislation like the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms(1982).

Barth explains this trend of adding to the educational burden through the analogy of a boy carrying his pet calf up a mountain to the best grazing pastures; because the calf grows gradually, the boy is able

to carry him far longer than one would expect or would be reasonable. This seems to be happening in education in B.C. The job keeps expanding but unlike the growing boy, the supports, educational resources, are shrinking.

How we support students and facilitate their learning within the school system is a topical issue in education today. B.C. has a 1/3 drop out rate, employers are demanding graduates who are flexible, motivated and have good interpersonal skills, and parents are calling for academic standards. The Ministry seems to be re-emphasizing academics through its new initiatives on standards and several school districts seem to be making moves in this direction, for example, Langley's Graduate Profile. This Profile is an umbrella document which outlines the attributes expected in Langley's graduating students. From this, specific curriculum outcomes by grade level have been developed. The outcomes build sequentially towards the graduate attributes and provide grade level benchmarks or expected standards of achievement. At the same time teachers are expected to teach the newly mandated (1993-4) Learning for Living curriculum, (now altered to Personal Planning) social and emotional development and be learner focussed. Some of these aims seem to be somewhat contradictory; yet every teacher knows that teaching and learning cannot occur until appropriate social, emotional and behavioral conditions are in place.

The issues of academic standards and of children exhibiting social and emotional difficulties affect all schools in varying degrees. However, in the inner city environment, schools tend to face these challenges in increased numbers and often have cases of increased severity. Whereas in many schools at-risk students are balanced and influenced by large numbers of emotionally and behaviourally stable students, in the inner city environment this may not be the case and positive role models may be rare (Swanson, 1991). The Ministry of Education has, to a degree, recognized the increased needs in inner city schools through its Inner City Schools Grant program, initiated in September 1993.

The Problem

Sadly, the challenges that inner city schools face today tend to become issues for all schools tomorrow. Given this background, my project is designed to examine the experiences of three children in one public elementary school in an inner city setting. I intend to describe the students' conditions, explore how the school serves the students, determine what needs are left unmet and so suggest direction for the evolution of the student support services within the school. Clearly how we support student needs is important to me because, as Principal, I am ultimately responsible for

programming, student learning and school climate. "In a white water world, what can I do to help my students learn faster, learn more and remember longer?" asks Jensen (1992). But the academic problems are no longer simple mastery and memory, and there are other whole realms of problems. Although this study focuses on the three specific students, some of the scenarios, resources and conclusions may have wider applicability.

Because I am dealing with the stories of three children, like Byars' novel, it seems appropriate to me that their tales be told in a narrative manner that reflects children's literature. Unlike extended narrative or case study, anecdotal narrative allows me to focus on vignettes that typify each child's problem. Through interspersed commentaries, I am able to ensure that the tone and atmosphere of each exchange has been preserved. My intent is that through anecdotal narrative the students' voices and experiences can be captured and at the same time the influence of adults on that experience can be vividly portrayed. Each chapter title is named after an appropriate and relevant children's book. An additional appeal in this approach is that one characteristic of children's literature is that stories always have happy endings (Huck, Hepler and Hickman, 1987).

The first student story belongs to Rob. Rob is like Harvey in Byars' novel. Superficially, Harvey's problem is clear cut. He has two broken legs and has been placed in foster care until they heal. Superficially, Rob's problem is clear cut. He has severe learning disabilities. In 1990 Rob was in a segregated primary class for the Severely Learning Disabled. He had been there two years. Rob's Mom had been convinced by test results and educational experts that the best place for Rob was in this separate class. This was in line with much of the educational thinking of the time. "It was nice to know who my teacher would be each year ahead of all the other kids. My classroom felt like home. But lots of the others in my class came by bus so I never played with them outside of school," commented Rob.

He didn't know it but 1990 was to be a transition year for Rob, and the following year he would be placed in a regular class and receive Resource Program support. Rob's story follows his thoughts and feelings about this change in service model, with a view to possible improvement in what we do and how we support him. Woven into Rob's tale are the thoughts and observations of his Mom, classroom teacher and the support staff working with him. Given the nature of Rob's story, his section is named after S. E. Hinton's novel, That Was Then, This Is Now.

When schools changed to the inclusive model, resource personnel expected to work with students like Rob. The second story is centred around Britten. "Why is it always me?"

Britten is like Carlie in The Pinballs. Carlie has learned to survive by fighting those around her. Her philosophy seems to be to lash out before someone else lashes out at her. She keeps the world at arm's length to prevent herself from being hurt and is very self centred. Britten is a child whose behavior makes it difficult for him to work, play or make friends with other students either in a group or individually. His conduct frequently disturbs the class and disrupts learning. The resource staff weren't quite so prepared to deal with the Brittens of the school and Brittens seem to be our fastest growing population.

The purpose of focussing on Britten's experiences is to examine how we can improve service to him. It is especially important that we keep long range plans in place for Britten; when he misbehaves, it is easiest to deal with the immediate problem with immediacy and not necessarily with the long term desired goals in mind. With the struggles we have all had in adjusting to Britten's needs and given his name, it seems apt to title his story, The Battle of Britten after the children's non-fiction book of the same name but different spelling.

The third part of our trilogy belongs to Kris. Kris is akin to Thomas J. in Byars' book. Thomas J. never had a fair start in life and Kris has arrived disadvantaged for his school life. Kris is a Kindergarten student who, with all of our other six year olds, has been screened by our Speech and Language Therapist, Marcia. Kris showed significant communication difficulty with vocabulary, syntax, listening, storytelling, conversation management, reading readiness skills such as letter names and sound/symbol relationships, articulation and direction following.

It had been a staff decision that part of our Inner City School grant money should go towards screening our Kindergarten population. Our early primary teachers were becoming increasingly alarmed by the number of children arriving at school unable to speak in sentences, convey a message, follow directions and articulate accurately. Increasing numbers of children had never been exposed to traditional stories, fairy tales and books in general. One result was that these children seemed severely delayed in reading and writing readiness skills as evidenced by the following conversation between our Speech Therapist, Marcia, and Kris.

Marcia: Kris, can you tell me what this is? (Points to a picture of a piece of chicken)

Kris: Foob (Food)

Marcia: What kind of food?

Kris: Ickey (Chicken)

Marcia: What sound does the word chicken start with?

Kris: K

If Kris is mispronouncing this word it is going to be extremely difficult for him to associate the concept of "chicken" with a word that starts with a "ch" sound. Learning reading sound correlations and sounding out words are clearly going to be more difficult for Kris than for a child who articulates accurately and clearly.

35% of our Kindergarten population missed significant items on the screening test. By exploring Kris's story, I hope to raise our awareness at school and to generate some options and solutions to address these problems. Hopefully, Kris and those who have needs similar to Kris's, will have a smoother and more thorough preparation for early literacy skills than would otherwise be the case.

Kris' story is told by contrasting his predicament to that of Amazing Grace, whose tale is told by author Mary Hoffman.

The Approach

"The easier the access, the more complicated the research," (Seidman, 1991, p.31) and, "it is wise to avoid interviewing participants whom you supervise" (p. 32). Well, I've always relished a challenge and no-one has ever accused me of being wise! Given that I am examining children in a holistic way, that is, looking at their social interaction, their behavior, asking them about their emotions as well as their learning, a qualitative approach seems appropriate. Information is collected through observation, informal discussion, interviews and through my personal journal notes.

I had to be thoughtful and sensitive in my information gathering; it is most important that I go back after an observation and talk to the child about a response or a reaction. Am I interpreting their actions accurately or are other motives involved? For example, did Rob become angry in class because the assigned work was too challenging, because he was not given an alternate method of output or extra support or time, or was he in a bad mood already and the work just happened to be a convenient catalyst? Was a reaction I observed typical or uncharacteristic? By going back over an interview or talk, children and adults often clarify their thoughts, have further insights and clear up misleading phrases. Sometimes a differently worded question on the same theme can elicit a far

deeper and more revealing reply. Thus, reflecting on observations, talks and interviews, providing "incubation" time and then returning to the subject are important strategies.

Children often find that they do not have the vocabulary to describe their emotions adequately. I used our Counsellor's emotion chart which shows pictures of an emotion and then has an appropriate word beside it to help the students. Otherwise, all unpleasant sensations tend to be generalized as "sad" or "bad," while positive feelings are all "awesome" or "good." For example, when talking to Trevor about throwing rocks, I asked him how he would feel if he had hit another child in the eye, causing loss of sight. His reply was, "bad." When I pushed him for a more precise response, he was unable to give it himself, although he could relate to "guilty" and "unhappy" when I provided the words. Similarly, when I asked William how he felt when he won a raffle, he responded, "good," although again he could relate to more precise vocabulary when it was provided - "lucky," "excited," "exhilarated," "proud." I had to guard against providing the vocabulary for the students, as this would be leading them and they may concur with a suggestion, either to please me or because of an incomplete understanding of the meaning of the word. In all respects the emotion chart seems safest as the students are able to match for themselves how they feel with the picture and then give me the label or word for it.

By focussing on three specific students, I am limiting my information gathering to the actual children, their parents where appropriate, some peers and the professionals who work with them. Because of these limitations, some may question the applicability of any insights gained to the broader population of special needs students. I have no intention of producing general propositional findings or of describing unchanging conditions (Seidman, 1991). The three students were selected partly because their problems are symptomatic of three broader issues in education today, namely the inclusion of S. L. D. children in regular classes, behaviorally disordered students and the increasing numbers of Kindergarteners who are unable to listen and speak at a level appropriate for school entry. Nonetheless, they are in reality three unique children. Indeed, part of my premise is that although there may be similarities with other cases, each child and situation should be viewed in a learner focussed way because specific human needs are complex and unique. Just as a child can simultaneously suffer from measles and a broken arm, so a child can have a learning problem and difficulty getting on with peers. Norman Kunc speaks of dealing with each "whole child and not just one of his diseases." (1993). One problem at a time would be nice!

I am also accessing relevant quantitative data, such as test information, and discipline referrals, as they are needed.

Traditionally schools have "treated" students without their knowledge, input or active participation. Through this study I hope to hear the students' thoughts and opinions, understand their perceptions and have their active participation in initiatives taken for their own good. As an educator, I am aware that I bring my own preconceived ideas to this project as well as a number of thoughts from recent readings and courses, and that these are likely to be reflected in what and how I observe and deduce. Thus, these two elements, the students' voices and my own perceptions, will co-exist and hopefully - much like Bedard who wore two different skis during her 7 1/2 Km Olympic gold medal biathlon run - draw on the strengths of each for the benefit of the students.

Focus

Within any school setting a vast number of issues are always present. Student support services is currently a political hotbed and issues, real and imaginary, abound.

For this project I do not intend to address specific funding issues, the effects of mainstreaming, English as a Second Language students, or any of the Ministry identified special needs population per se. Whether or not a child is labelled is of no interest to me

aside from the inherent contractual obligations. What is important to me is how we meet the various needs that children have. Rob happens to be labelled. Britten and Kris are not. Rob's label isn't the reason for his inclusion here. The fact that Rob has had the unusual experience of both types of service model makes him a candidate. He has been in a segregated class. He is now in a regular class receiving resource program support.

I do not intend to focus on the possible causes of the individual student's needs, or factors existing outside the school's control. As Lady Macbeth succinctly puts it, worrying about every detail and potential repercussion paves the way to insanity, "So, it will make us mad." Macbeth Act 2 Scene 3. One can theorize ad nauseam about whether Joan's behavior is caused by genetics or the environment, but there is no definitive answer. There are cases where children succeed despite horrific environments and cases where incredible support is given from home and still the child rebels. Even stronger evidence is provided by Jeckyll and Hyde siblings; where do genetics and environmental influences figure here?

The focus of this study is the school lives of the three children themselves; their frustrations, concerns, successes and accomplishments. I want to portray what school is like for them, how they experience day to day events, how they deal with change

around them, and how they face obstacles and difficulties. In doing so, my intent is to examine how they are currently helped, and explore what further supports can and should be provided. Support within the school has traditionally included in class or pull out academic assistance, counselling, and E. S. L. in addition to the help provided by the classroom teacher. We have begun to expand on these services, offering behavior management incentives and the support of a Child Care Worker, but my sense is that we need to develop new and different types of supports to be successful in the future. This may include having to access services available within the community on a far more frequent basis.

An obvious concern with my observations is my perceived position of power within the school. At all times I had to be sensitive to this and as far as possible explicitly separate my role as pedagogical observer from my role as Principal. But in the final analysis, I cannot alter or control the perceptions of others. Perhaps the effect of my position within the school was less influential than might normally be the case due to my time management and style. I informally visit every class each day, I teach regular classes 20% of my time and I do before and after school, recess and noon supervision, which gives me contact with every child each day. Students visit my office frequently, I am invited to class sharing times and I'm not above pushing and being

pushed on the swings at recess!

The students and most of the staff are used to my presence. Most of the teachers and students hardly notice my drop in appearances and don't pay me much attention, except as another pair of hands if needed. This may make it easier for me to observe rather than if I were a stranger arriving on the scene. "I often don't even notice you've come into the class until you start helping someone," said Tina. Paul, a resource teacher, stated, "I don't have any reservation talking to you," and when I asked Emma, a grade one student, about an observation, "Was it scary because I was watching?" she promptly replied, "Oh no, not at all." So much for my intimidating presence! After this comment, I noted in my journal that I'd better quit reading "The Secret Leadership Qualities of Atilla the Hun" - they obviously aren't working.

But different children felt differently about my observing them and I had to keep this issue in mind. Sean had reservations that students "can get into more trouble with you," but when I asked how he felt at the end of the group interview, he replied with a laugh, "Oh, this was fine ... it was fun."

Steven, a teacher, indicated that although I was his supervisor, he was comfortable talking to me. He said, "We talk and splash things

backwards and forwards all the time." Nevertheless, a little voice in the back of my head asks how else these people could have responded. It would take a great deal of confidence to say face to face that my position had affected their responses; and what would a response like that do to our future working relationship? So I had better keep listening to that voice; I can't change my role in the school, but I can follow my intuition about how much my position has influenced information. Glaser and Strauss (1967) allow that using one's intuition is important in analysing data, so I had better be ready to use it.

I also face the problem of observing a familiar situation (LeCompte and Goertz, 1982); it is important that I do not make assumptions and take actions for granted because I am used to seeing them. This was brought home to me on my first observation when I had assumed that I was observing academic student support. I certainly did witness social and emotional support, but it was in the context of low key academic evaluation.

Matt agreed, "you have to go back and check information real careful. It's so easy to get it ... wrong, 'specially if you both only know a bit about it. Sean and I both knew a little about Egyptians and we both had the wrong idea about .. er.. natron in embalming. When I checked with him, he told me I was right ... NOT, it wasn't 'til my paper was in Mr. Green told me I'd got it

wrong. I learned you've got to check with lots o' people, or a teacher ... or at least someone with more smarts than Sean!
(laughs)"

"It's best to get it from an adult... kids... they may not be .. serious."

Checking assumptions may be difficult; when I carefully did this and asked a grade seven student, Brian, how he got help at school, he suspiciously shot back, "Why are you asking that? You already know the answer." I must try to see things with fresh eyes and, despite Brian, question assumptions and terms used. Happily, I think I may have learned my lesson as I spent some time in a later interview with Paul defining terms even though we have a common understanding of these and use them regularly. In addition, I also face the problems of all reflective practitioners, those of perspective, analysis, selection and interpretation.

Organization

In Chapter One, The Pinballs, I give an overview of the issue to be explored. The flavour of the school setting is hinted at and the three main characters are introduced. The purpose of the project and its rationale are discussed, as well as some of the difficulties

that need to be faced in undertaking this study.

Chapter Two is called Aunt Isabel Tells a Good One. Just as a good children's tale includes certain story grammar components such as unity of literary style, setting, characters, plot, story problem, climax and a happy ending, so a structure is necessary for my project. Chapter two provides that scaffold and background.

The culture and structure of the present school is a direct reflection of its individual and institutional history. Chapter three, Who Came Down That Road? relates the history that has shaped how this school serves its students. The chapter outlines the move within the school from segregated classes for special needs students, to inclusion and mainstreaming, covering the preparation, the transition, and on-going evolution of this change.

Chapter Four is Rob's story. Rob is a Severely Learning Disabled student who had been in a segregated class and has now been mainstreamed for three years. This section looks at the identification process, compares his experiences and thoughts on the two systems and examines how we can improve support for him and others like him. That Was Then, This Is Now is a story that mirrors the 180 degree shift from what happened in the past to what happens in the present.

Britten's story starts with a diary entry of a typical morning. It also covers how the school plans for Britten and then carries out its strategies..... and then re-plans and re-implements then..... This is Chapter Five - The Battle of Britten.

Chapter Six - Amazing Grace and Timid Kris - focusses on some of the problems a student faces in Kindergarten if he has poor speech and language skills. It also examines what can be done in that first year and beyond, and looks at methods of preventing this growing problem so that Timid Kris can become Konfident Kris!

The final chapter, The Covered Bridge - Reflections and Dreams - suggests some of the changes that need to take place at the Ministry and school levels so that we can justify the claim that we are indeed serving our whole school population and doing so in an effective and meaningful way.

Given the hectic nature of the school environment (the laundry metaphor again), educators rarely get the opportunity to examine how, why and what we do when we act we're too busy acting. This project provides the chance to reflect, celebrate and redesign. Current research is extremely valuable in providing a variety of approaches and strategies for dealing with specific problems. The challenge in the schools is to match effectively the appropriate

strategy with the particular need, for the benefit of the child and to keep matching, because humans are ever changing; a remedy or program that worked for Jane on Monday, may not be effective by Wednesday. The bottom line is that no human organization is perfect or static; by examining three students in depth, getting in touch with their school life experiences, better understanding what motivates and moves them, looking at how we are currently helping them, analysing what needs are being ignored or overlooked, and refining and redesigning future support, this work provides a focus for where to go next in improving the school's student support services.

CHAPTER TWO

The Structure of Our Story - Aunt Isabel Tells A Good One

"All truths are in a sense fictions - they are stories we choose to believe" (Lawson, 1988 p. 17).

As I will be "telling a story" of one elementary school's selected experiences with site based student support services, it seems appropriate that I structure this section in literary terms. The child's picture book Aunt Isabel Tells A Good One becomes a perfect title for the chapter. In this, Aunt Isabel tells her niece a bedtime story while describing the inherent grammatical structure of any story; that is, time, setting, characters, plot problem and ending. This story grammar provides a useful structure for this section on the method of my study.

In addition to citing traditional references to support the points made, I also quote from a group interview with some grade seven students who had just completed a research project at school. These students had some strong opinions on gathering and using data, and when possible in this study, I want to provide the opportunity for students' voices to be heard.

"Tell me a story," said Penelope one night after supper.

"What kind of a story?" asked Aunt Isabel.

"A good story," said Penelope.

"All right," said Aunt Isabel. "A good story is the hardest kind to tell, though. We must put it together carefully, with just the right ingredients."

The Telling of a Story: Deciding Upon Literary Style

It is with great caution that I start this section on method. Barthes (1986, p. 318) warns that there is "no surer way to kill a piece of research and send it to join the great scrap heap of abandoned projects than Method." Van Manen argues that "the object of human research is essentially a linguistic project: to make some aspect of our lived world, of our lived experience, reflectively understandable and intelligible" (p. 237). From this point it is a logical step for Barthes to state, "Research is the work of writing" (p. 316) and for Satre (1977, p. 5) to state succinctly, "Writing is the method." Although I do not want to minimize the importance of the writing process, and for me insights, innovations and applications come to mind best during writing, I do still need to have a direction in mind for my written reflections.

Qualitative research has a long history and seems to be particularly relevant and appropriate for certain types of study. Positivist researchers tend to deal with facts, rules and quantities. Given the nature of my study, I do not think that this approach will give me what I want. Lofland (1974, p.101) states, "Qualitative field research seems distinct in the degree to which its practitioners lack a public, shared and codified conception of how what they do is done, and how what they report should be formulated." This provides for greater freedom in accessing and reflecting upon information, and more creativity in identifying trends and categories from the data; both of these I see as being assets for the work I am undertaking. Lacey (1976) warns that information from this type of research is site specific and will not necessarily apply to other situations. Seidman (1991) also reminds us that data are collected within a very specific context, within a specific period of the institution's history and includes specific details. Qualitative research does not necessarily produce universal truths or describe unchanging conditions. Nonetheless, some common, if not universal, ideas and trends can be indicated through the specific instances that are described.

Although "among authors, the notion of anecdote generally receives low status," (van Manen, 1989, p. 232), it is really this type of narrative that I am undertaking. "Anecdotes recreate experience but

in a transcended (focused, condensed, intensified, oriented and narrative) form. Thus the act of anecdoting as concrete reflecting prepares the space for reflection and understanding," (also p. 232).

To this point I have spoken of the students' "stories," but van Manen's more precise term "anecdote" is really more apt. Van Manen parallels the use of anecdote with the term metaphor (Bogdan and Biklan, 1982), explaining that anecdote is used specifically in the human sciences and he and Fadiman (1985) say it can be used to describe something indirectly that would otherwise defy description. He adds that while metaphor may remain abstract, "anecdote turns the attention more naturally to the level of the concrete" (p. 243). Although he writes that "story means narrative" (p. 243), he expands: "anecdotes are a special kind of story; they resemble mini-stories possessing a rhetorical quality" (p. 243). Anecdotal narrative seems to be an ideal literary approach for my study as I will be recounting mini stories that are concrete in nature, which focus on individuals and the educational supports they already have in place and, after reflection, I hope to have some insights as to what supports still need to be accessed or created. In addition, anecdotal narrative is a natural output for reflective pedagogical practice - which is what this study is all about.

Merriam (1988) speaks of anecdotes as providing a snapshot. I see it as more than that; I see it as a series of snapshots that will hopefully provide insight into the larger picture. School atmosphere and morale are nebulous and delicate animals and as a result, observations and responses may be different on different days and at different times. Sean, a grade seven student spoke to this during our talk. "It really messes you up when people say different things on different days. Then you don't know what to write because you've got a different point of view from the same person. When that happened I just went and asked someone totally different and started over again, but it was a real pain!"

Broader temporal considerations need also to be taken into account; for example, pre-report cards going home, the students are always edgy and exhibit aggression and anxiety and this would obviously affect observations and conversations. My snapshots take place within a specified time frame, and can be thought of somewhat like stills that form a movie. Here, I am hoping that like the movie maker, my selections or editing tools maintain the integrity of the original story and that no vital element lies discarded on the editing room floor.

I am trying to approach this broad issue as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) recommend. I start with a wide range of

observations and interviews and gradually "funnel down" my focus. Tina, a grade seven student, endorsed this initial approach, "You've got to go in with an open mind. If you go in already thinking something, you might not get the other points of view." Qualitative researchers advocate a dialectic process, so it is important to be open minded and prepared to adapt as information emerges and student needs and foci change.

Both Seidman and Lather (1991) stress that research should involve a degree of reciprocity. As a result of this study I will clearly benefit in a variety of ways. Most immediately, I hope it will satisfy the requirements of my Masters project. More importantly, I hope to gain insights into the students' conditions as a result of being more closely in touch with their school experiences; this will help me to clarify my vision for the support services required and will help formulate ideas and guiding principles for future directions.

The students should also benefit. Some will be given the opportunity to verbalize their own stories; by listening, I hope to demonstrate that someone cares about them, their feelings and their thoughts. This in turn should enhance their self esteem and promote their sense of self value. Future directions taken by our support services should more closely match their needs and therefore help

them directly within the school setting.

The staff should also benefit as this study will give them the opportunity to reflect on what we do, it should provide a sense of common direction and should improve student services, which in turn should make their jobs more satisfying. When I asked the students about reciprocity, Matt frowned,

"it would be nice but ... er.. I don't see how you can do it all the time. My project was on endangered species. I got to learn stuff I didn't know, but I don't see how my little project is going to help any animals."

"Will it change you when you're camping or walking the trails?" asked Tina.

"... Maybe for a bit."

"Then it's done some good, hasn't it?"

"Yeah, but tons more than that needs to happen."

"(sigh) Yeah."

I smile at the analogy of supporting students. How often have I heard this conversation from my colleagues:

"It's done some good, hasn't it?"

"Yeah, but tons more than that needs to happen."

"(sigh) Yeah."

Setting

"Let's start by giving it a When and a Where. When does this story begin?"

"Long, long ago," said Penelope.

"And Where does it begin?" asked Aunt Isabel. "Think of a place where exciting things can happen."

The school in question is an older building surrounded by newer schools with luxurious facilities, modern technology and more effective and aesthetic designs. We struggle with ancient structures, dinosaur computers and counter tops in classrooms fondly referred to as "vomit green" in colour. The staff look enviously upon our neighbours and the extra funding capital projects generate. The school is in a small city core that includes two other elementary schools, one high school and two alternate public schools. The time is the present.

The school day starts at 8:55 a.m. and despite legalistic cautions in newsletters not to arrive earlier than 8:45 a.m., as supervision begins then, students are often hanging out around the school when the Vice Principal arrives at 7:15 a.m. Lunch is from 12-12:40 and although nearly all the students live within easy walking distance, the vast majority stay at school for lunch. About one third of the

school take part in the Ministry funded lunch program. Classes end at 2:45 but many students stay to work, play or be involved in after school activities. It is quite usual to have students in school until 6:00 p.m. Many students are latchkey kids and many more go to before and after school daycare. Daycare is an issue for many parents; spaces in registered facilities are very limited locally and are expensive, even allowing for subsidies. In reality, many parents are forced to use unlicensed daycares and do not claim benefits as they have great difficulty in figuring the various scales and rates of support. Help may be available through the local Ministry of Housing and Social Services, but many are afraid to become involved with Ministry personnel and others cannot or do not schedule an appointment.

Many of our children come from single parent families and many families are flexible in their structure. Although most parents are extremely supportive of the school, they are struggling to survive and have little time to help within the school or follow up on their child's progress. Many are also struggling with parenting and although they try to do their best, are frequently frustrated and stressed out at the end of the day.

"My Dad hasn't got time to help me with my homework. He doesn't get in 'til 10 and then he's tired," commented Steven.

"My Mom can't even do the math we do. She says she didn't

learn it when she was at school," added Nancy.

Geographically the area around the school is changing. It used to be an area of older housing with many rental properties. With the downtown revitalization project, many of the older houses have been knocked down to make way for adult-oriented condominiums.

Strangely this has not reduced the enrolment numbers at the school, and in fact, during the last term, numbers rose. There are still rental suites within the region and despite the new homes, the school's transiency rate is still extremely high.

Nevertheless, exciting things do happen. The students have created their own garden. This has been dug, weeded, planted, watered and harvested by the students. Our first home grown vegetable soup was quite the event, even if we did cheat a bit by adding Oxo flavouring. Those students who live closest to the school volunteer to water our plants over the course of the summer and although we lose plants to vandals, we've yet to lose them to thirst. Each year we celebrate Earth Day and as part of the day each class plants a tree along our fenceline. This beautifies our grounds and helps block out traffic noise from the two four-lane roads that bound the school property.

We have a student art gallery where especially wonderful works are displayed. The students rotate the work using our twelve picture

frames which they mat and frame. We have a Gotcha Board where acts of kindness and special events are captured in photos taken, mounted and captioned by our more senior students. We have a morning hot chocolate program where a group of students prepare and serve drinks to children and parents alike before school. Once a week, a group of students also cook breakfast for those students who have been invited by their teacher. An invite may be earned for good work, hard work, manners, helping out, an improvement or any other reason determined by the teacher. A student committee works on the school newspaper sponsored by our Librarian.

The recent arrival of a dilapidated portable to house our overcrowded students could well have been seen as a disaster by the teacher designated to move into it. However, he has already planned how he will take time with the class in September to paint the outside of the portable and use this to bring the class together.

Exciting things can happen.

Characters

"We'll put something cheerful in our story, too, then," said Aunt Isabel. "Think of a Who. Who shall be in this story? How about a handsome Prince named Augustus, who lives on a sunny hill high above the gloomy forest?"

..... "Now let's add someone else, someone talented and charming. Shall we name this darling animal Penelope?"

"**Lady Penelope,**" said Penelope.

The main characters are the four hundred ten K-7 students, the over forty full-/ part-time staff and the families of all of these. The Ministry of Education, personnel from the School District, the community services available and members of the general community also affect life at the school but to a lesser direct degree. The three protagonists have already been introduced - Britten, Rob and Kris - and my perspectives and voice will undoubtedly permeate the stories.

Although we certainly have the "critical mass" of at-risk students that the Ministry identifies as being the main criterion for Inner City funding, most of our students are bright and engaging in one on one settings. However, many lack social skills, fail to "read" social cues such as a frown as a warning to stay off a certain topic of

conversation, do not have a sense of their place in the school organization, and have little idea how to behave when in a group such as in a classroom, and how this differs from a one on one and small group setting. Many students have difficulty seeing an issue from another's perspective and tend to be egocentric and materialistic. In reality, this self-centred, short term attitude may be just what is needed for the child to survive outside the controlled school environment.

Some students are extremely needy in academic, social, emotional and physical terms and require totally individualized approaches. There are also children with compound problems; Casper is an E. S. L. student who has a speech impediment, a fluctuating hearing loss, is aggressive and dishonest, has no friends and may have a learning disability. Jason is autistic and after two years we still don't really know what to expect from him as he can be perceptive one minute and then can perseverate, self mutilate and close out the world the next. And these are the students who reveal themselves to us. Many more must be struggling in private, and although we may have an inkling that something is not right, we may never know what their needs really are.

The staff are wonderful. We have a range of experienced and new professionals and many have made a conscious decision to teach in

this inner city setting. As a group they take unforeseen changes in their stride, are flexible, willing to help out and are strong child advocates. They see the good in each child and collaborate to help out a student. An example of this was when a grade three child showed an aptitude for art and was allowed to join the grade sevens for art classes with the school's art specialist. On another occasion, a student went home with a teacher to work on his car as the child had indicated an interest in mechanics and we feared he was in danger of dropping out of school. Examples abound. The vast majority of the staff are child focussed, dedicated and motivated to help. Knowing our latchkey population, in his first letter home to parents about his class and its routines, one teacher invited students to phone him at home any night until 8:00 p.m. for help with homework. This was an offer that was well used by the students and yet never once abused.

Plot Problems

"Too much niceness can be dull, though," said Aunt Isabel.

"We'll add a Problem. Listen:"

Working with young children presents a series of problems.

Frequently, young students cannot articulate and don't know what

help or support they need. They often don't know the options available to them; this can be an asset and a difficulty. It is difficult when a child struggles and comes up with a suggestion way beyond the means (physical, financial, legal) of the school system. By not implementing the suggestion, the child may feel betrayed or devalued. However, children's ideas, because they are not bounded by adult limitations and logic, are sometimes creative beyond the scope of an adult and therefore a great asset. An additional difficulty is that children generally tend to be very trusting of adults; Sean said, "if I have a choice I get help from a grown up, especially teachers because older people know more stuff," and Tina added, "if my teacher thought that was the best way, it is. He would know that. Why would I think about what he has already decided? It would be a waste of time." Given that these children are some of the most creative and profound thinkers in the school, this attitude is a little frightening; it puts teachers and adults in a very powerful position.

As adults we constantly try to "normalize" children; but as children they are unaware that their condition is not the norm. They lack the wide experience to know what society considers to be acceptable and standard and this may limit their responses. How often in dealing with students who have had some kind of temper tantrum have I used the line that life is not a soap opera? The first time I

used the line, I did so flippantly, until I saw that the child I was speaking to was confused. For today's children, the life they see on T.V. reflects what they think of as normal. When Bart Simpson makes a smart-mouthed and disrespectful retort and a T.V. series kid stomps off in a huff in the middle of a discussion with Mom or Dad, these are seen as normal ways to behave. The child sees no gap between the T.V. fiction and reality; there may be little or no family interaction at home and then what else is there for a child to model on except T.V.?

The fact many students expect adults to have all the right answers and that they may be unaware that their particular background is unusual certainly makes discussions difficult. The relationship with the student during interviews may also be problematic. I find the line (if there is one) between "leading" a child with questions (which Seidman warns strongly against) and clarifying an issue, to be very fine. This is especially dangerous when the child wants to please or appease the adult, which is frequently the case. I fell into the leading question trap in my interview with Paul, a resource program teacher, "I don't want to lead you, but..." and then I proceeded to do just that! I am also aware that the interview is an arena where children may make disclosures. Immediately I am legally bound to take certain actions to deal with the situation, for example, call the Ministry of Housing and Social Services and

terminate the discussion. I am sure this would exclude future interviews with the child and would probably render the data collected confidential and unusable.

There are on-going concerns with techniques of data collection. I constantly walked a tightrope between socially comfortable interaction, including Minister's (1991) nods and mms, and affecting responses by my feedback as warned against by Seidman. I fell into this trap when interviewing Paul. The tone of voice in my, "O.K." had implied doubt or criticism and he immediately modified his response. I was also hindered by Ottenberg's headnotes (quoted in Sanjek, 1990) while trying to be flexible enough to know when to abort an interview schedule and follow a direction the participant initiated (Merriam, 1988).

I must be aware when I ask people to reflect on past systems, such as segregated classes versus the inclusion model, that straight comparisons would be false and misleading as the problems and situations have changed since that time. Also, Caine (1991) reminds us that memories fade and distort over time, so past recollections must be viewed in that light; supporting information and triangulation by talking to other sources will be most important in these situations.

Lather writes that checking responses is important in order to verify accuracy and refine the data collected. I also found verifying to be useful in providing further information; the students, staff and parents all used this opportunity to add and reflect upon what was originally said. Matt remarked on the importance of checking back and having a variety of sources for information. Van Manen claims that the use of anecdote answers some of the questions that might be raised about reliability and validity in qualitative research (Agar, 1980): "The paradoxical thing about anecdotal narrative is that it tells something particular while really addressing the general or the universal" (p. 247). Although my purpose here is site and subject specific, I believe there is applicability to other individuals, situations and locations now and in the future.

Finally there is the whole issue of voice. In line with my literary allegory, this can be thought of in terms of characterization within a story. Bakhtin (1981) cautions the researcher to be aware of the numerous voices present at any one time. Students in talking to me, expect me to be one character - that of Principal - but for the purposes of this study, I will be talking to them from different roles; Bakhtin's concept of ventriloquation. If the students are trying to please me in my traditional role, there will be a mismatch in communication. I must be aware that I will be taking on the role of student as well as educator when I am observing, interviewing

and analysing. It is as a student that I hope to gain insights and learn from the students' experiences, and it will be as a more empathetic educator that I want to improve how we support them.

I will be bringing all my personal perspectives to the study. I cannot eliminate these but I must be aware of them and of the effects they are likely to have. My personal history and present condition and the personal histories and present conditions of my participants will also affect the perceptions received and transmitted. My background is one where academic achievement and competition were stressed. Balancing that, my teacher training emphasized the work of John Dewey and the development of the whole child. I certainly have a set of middle class values, some of them probably a little outdated, and middle class communication modes - body language, manners and mannerisms, vocabulary. On the other end of the scale, I believe I am practical (hence the topic of this study), down to earth and I value people and not their material possessions or talents.

I bring to the study certain character traits. I am stubborn. I dislike narrow thinkers, although I am sometimes guilty of being one. I dislike confrontation. I am a perfectionist in some areas of my life, including at work, although I do not expect the same standards from those around me, especially the children. The

perceptions of those I respect are very important to me. This is my first assignment as a Principal and I want to do well. I also like bringing things to conclusion, so it has been good for me to struggle with an issue like this which will always be evolving.

Given my job, I am also very aware of the limited resources available to support the students. I know the dollars the school will receive. I know the number of needy children involved and I know the personnel involved. It would be easy to make a number of "pie in the sky" recommendations that cannot possibly be carried out but that doesn't help the reality at the school, which is the purpose of this study. It also makes for a fantasy novel and I'm writing in the contemporary realism genre.

These are some of the perspectives of which I'm aware. I am certain that I also have ideas that I am unaware of and that are separate from known historical and environmental influences. I believe these exist in us all, cannot be guarded against, but need to be acknowledged.

I am aware of the danger in speaking for others. Alcoff (1991) says that someone can only speak from his or her own perspective. My perspective is far removed from those of the students at the school.

It was difficult for me to "hear" what students said as their experience is different from my own semi-middle class, semi-academic background. The age difference was also a problematic issue; I can try to recall my own youth, but as Hammersley and Atkinson and Caine point out, long term memories can be quite distorted. Add to this the fact that times and society have changed quite considerably since my youth, plus that my childhood was spent in England, and I am removed one more step from a Canadian child's perspective today. Alcott claims that speaking for others can disempower them. For these students, they already feel powerless and that their social location is a helpless one, so in Alcott's terms, being an advocate may be justified. As she suggests, I have tried to use their own words as much as possible. It could be argued that some of the children's behavior could be interpreted as asking for help and requesting someone to speak on their behalf. Alcott states, "sometimes we need a "messenger" to advocate for our needs."

The Action

Agar (1980, p. 112) states, "In my opinion, fieldnotes are the most overrated thing since the Edsel." Despite this, I have started a journal of incidental comments that are made at school and of my

own observations and anecdotes. This approach may not work for Agar, but it seems to help me.

Merriam (1988) warns that observations are only a useful tool when research has a clear purpose, when it is planned and recorded systematically and if it is subject to checks regarding reliability and validity. Even then, she cautions that observations should only occur when they are done first hand and where one can see actions taking place. Given the practical nature of the study, and despite the fact that none of my observations ended up being as clear-cut and precise as Merriam advocates, I think observations were justified. After my first error, I planned them carefully and I verified from a variety of sources and mediums, thus addressing Patton's (1989) call for "maximum variation." I have let categories emerge (LeCompte and Goetz); some came from the participants, as mentioned by Patton (1980); indeed, Paul categorized his whole interview for me.

Story Ending

"Is that the end?" asked Penelope.

"It's the Happy Ending every good story should have," Aunt Isabel replied.

Moving to the climax of the anecdotal stories, there are increased and more diverse needs of students being balanced precariously against dwindling resources, (financial ones in real buying terms) while more more restrictions (legal and contractual) are placed upon the school. As in an action novel, just when the hero needs to be most active in overcoming the villains and liberating the good guys, his hands are most tied by his enemies.

All children's literature, and this literature is involved with children, has a happy ending (Huck, Hepler and Hickman, 1987). If we are able to adapt our services to meet students' changing needs more effectively, then staff and students will have moved towards, "And they all lived happily ever after."

CHAPTER THREE

The History - Who Came Down That Road?

In George Ella Lyon's picture book, "Who Came Down That Road?" a boy and his mother see how "an old, old, old, old road" has been shaped by the "folks (who) have been traveling it thousands of years." The two travel backwards in time, describing the connection between the road and those who have created and travelled on it. The book's road may be seen to symbolize the pathway we are on where we mainstream all students with special needs in regular classes.

In response to the little boy's first question, "Who came down that road?" the mother replies,

"My grandma and grandpa, just married
and looking to farm."

If we parallel the book to the history of how we have dealt with special needs individuals, the newlyweds' dreams and hopes for their new life might symbolize the individual's dreams and hopes for inclusion within our education system.

The boy then repeats his question, "Who came before that, Mama?"

The mother replies,

"Soldiers in blue coats,
saddle high or marching,
they came down that road."

The soldiers, fighting to realise society's dream of freedom and equality, might represent our current society's belief that inclusion of special needs students in regular classes is philosophically desirable. Our belief is mandated through the School Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The boy asks who came before the soldiers and his mother answers,

"Pioneers and settlers, honey,
floating the Ohio
and clearing the wildwood."

These trailblazers mirror the educational pioneers who have conducted pilot schools and classes to foster inclusion.

The boy repeats his chant and his mother goes further back in history.

"Shawnee and Cherokee
Wyandot and Chippewa
in beads and feathers, following deer."

Perhaps this verse of the book reflects our past practices of

exclusion or a segregated model of education, mirroring the segregated reserves that we have created for First Nations people.

The boy probes deeper and his mother replies,

"Buffalo, bear, great-antlered elk,
to lick their fill at the flat salt lick,
they came down that road."

This may be interpreted as symbolizing the period in our history when people with mental or physical handicaps were treated like animals and incarcerated in asylums like Bedlam.

The boy persists, "Who came before the buffalo?"

"Mastodons and woolly mammoths
plunging through forests
trampling canebreaks
to get away from the breath of ice."

This can be seen to reflect a time of primitive hunters and gatherers, when those with special needs would not have survived because only the fittest and strongest did.

The chant continues.

"Fish swam in a sea so warm
and shallow you could have waded across."

This seems to represent the time before the evolution of Man, when

physical, social and intellectual handicaps had no meaning or relevance and all life existed together in the oceans.

The final question from the boy elicits the following response,

"Questions!

Questions crowded like a bed of stars

thick as that field of goldenrod-"

And the questions regarding inclusion continue: inclusion for whom, for how long, at what dollar expense, at what expense to the other children, how can we accommodate these needs successfully, how can we satisfy such diverse individual needs.

What we are as individuals and our perspectives on life are shaped, to some degree, by our past experiences. So with an institution, how it operates, its routines and rituals, its methods of communication, its values and priorities are influenced by all of the individuals within the organization, but also the evolution and history of that institution.

This section follows the school's pathway or history in its latest and most significant change - to site based student support services and inclusion for all children.

Building The Road To Inclusion

Geography - The Site

These notes from my journal describe the highlights during that first year of change.

It is September, 1991 and I have just arrived at the school. This is my first Principalship and I don't want to blow it! Our District works on a decentralized model where staffing levels, programming, priorities and budget use are all school based decisions made on the basis of the specific needs of the students and staff. Under the School Act, schools have been mandated to become inclusive. By June 1992 all District S. L. D. and E. M. H. classes are to be disbanded. My first job will be how to achieve this at the school.

The school has a transiency rate of 21.3%, has several Ministry identified high incidence students and has been designated a "special needs school" which qualifies it within the District for some additional funding. The Learning Assistance caseload is over eighty students and we also have 21 E. S. L. students and two spontaneously violent children who qualify for the District's Behaviorally Disordered Itinerant support. A .5 Counsellor works to prevent new problems from arising through programs such as

conflict resolution, provides direct therapy for some students and refers families to outside counselling agencies.

In the past the catchment area has been primarily low cost rental units; however, there has been some new construction and several new apartment blocks and houses are in the mid-price range. The school had been thought of as one where academic achievements were low. MAT 6 (Minnesota Achievement Test) and CTBS (Canadian Test of Basic Skills) standardized test results indicate that we do have many below average children, but also many above average ones, with few in the middle.

Parents fall into two categories; the first type want little to do with school, are reluctant to attend meetings and want teachers to deal with their children without disturbing the home. The second type are often those who have fought to have their children placed in a special class within the school and who are involved and supportive.

Although the school has a high percentage of families on income assistance and many children arrive inadequately clothed and unfed, this may be a somewhat misleading piece of information as many of the same families are able to pay for a package of four ski lessons and bring camcorders to assemblies and concerts. Financial

priorities are sometimes surprising in our community. Many of our students do exhibit a different set of values from those traditionally expressed at a school.

The school currently has two District S. L. D. (Severely Learning Disabled) classes comprised of 22 students, many of whom are bused in from outside of our catchment area. We also house two Slingerland classes for students who have dyslexic tendencies; these are not District special programs per se, but are alternate programs that use a specific methodology. These classes must be economically self sufficient each year. Placement in the S. L. D. classes is determined by the District and frequently students have been wait listed for long periods of time. Work inside the classes is highly structured and individualized with clear sequencing for skill acquisition. Usually the work has little or nothing to do with what goes on in the regular classes and, as a result, integration is limited to subjects like P.E. and art. Unfortunately these lessons tend to be less highly structured and instead of a smooth transition, S. L. D. students face a totally different environment. The amount of integration depends upon the student's readiness, but also on the S. L. D. teacher and the receiving teacher and their perspectives. Integration has been withdrawn for punitive reasons and the students usually have little or no Teacher Assistant support during integration times.

Architecture - Planning and Dreaming

For the mainstreaming of special needs students to be successful, the vested interest groups need to "buy in" to the underlying philosophy. Clearly, the staff at the school were very anxious about the whole process and so we started to meet as a group.

It is October, 1991 and we are spending a half Professional Development Day to brainstorm the types of students who could benefit from Resource support. These include E. S. L., B. D., S. L. D., learning assistance students, physically handicapped, gifted and at-risk students. We are also doing a carousel activity to find ways to address these students' needs. After much formal and informal discussion and based on the investigations we had already done on various models and approaches, we came up with our own Resource model.

The Resource Team was to have a core group composed of two resource teachers (collapsing Learning Assistance) and our Counsellor. The team would work with all teachers for the benefit of all students. It would also act as a liaison for accessing outside agencies such as Speech and Language and Family Services. There would also be peripheral in-school help provided by an E. S. L. teacher, our part-time librarian, or District services. As far as

possible the team would provide in-class assistance primarily for identified students and then for those children who are of concern to the teacher. Partly because some teachers would feel uncomfortable with another adult in the class during direct instruction time, there would also need to be some pull-out for certain activities. All students would be registered in regular classrooms so that the teachers would take ownership for student progress. In return, all classes would be guaranteed some help.

A Teacher Assistant would be hired to provide classroom support under the direction of the Resource Team, and a Child Care Worker would be engaged to facilitate work outside of the school such as life skills, liaison with a child's family and incentive activities for some behaviorally disordered students. This would also mean that should a child require an alternate day at home, this could be accommodated and supervised. We anticipate having an adult available in the resource centre in case of a behavior emergency.

As we would not want the resource room to have a stigma attached to it, we would plan to hold classes for the gifted and heterogenous groups in the room as well.

Many students at the school are at risk and one initiative that is proposed for them is a Career Program. Hopefully, by focussing on

students' interests and strengths, identifying potential careers, and setting realistic goals, they will be motivated to stay in school and pursue the courses required for their future career. On Friday afternoons a group would meet to work on career preparation activities such as minor mechanics, carpentry, wallpapering, sewing, drafting, architecture, first aid, computers, keyboarding, and motors.

Excavations and Foundations - The Execution of The Plan

"Change is the darkroom where negatives are developed," (Udas, 1993) and in so many ways this change in education was seen to be an extremely negative one.

It is now June 1992. Planning was easy; execution of the plan was key. I will look back at how we accomplished this change within the school by looking at each stakeholder group in the process.

ADMINISTRATION

Immediately I got a list of the students from the District who would be returning to our school with the closing of special education classes. There had been a great deal of anxiety that we would be

faced with vast numbers of special needs children but the list proved otherwise and calmed some fears. I also contacted the schools where some of our bused in students would be going next year. Collaboratively with other Principals we worked out which students should be "grandfathered," that is, kept in their current school because they were entering their final year in that building. In this way we were able to know how many students we had to plan for.

I had to solve the problem about the two teachers who would be displaced from their special classes as soon as possible. Their desires and professional needs had to be clearly understood - did they want to move to a regular class or become a resource teacher? Liaison with the District Personnel Officer helped this process and both were placed happily early in the year. I also had to meet with these two teachers and indicated how they should be responding to questions from parents. I was very fortunate that the teachers were incredibly professional throughout the whole process. As a general rule we agreed that they should refuse to comment on the change, but explain how a child would be supported through a resource program and refer any further comments or queries to me.

A crucial step was communication; talking to the Vice Principal, teachers, parents, students, visiting classes on a daily basis,

talking to the previous administrator and going through files helped me to know the students and the comfort levels of the various staff members and parents. During these meetings I had to have a clear vision in mind of the resource organization and the needs it would serve.

As early as possible and with staff input, the Resource Team was appointed. As many of the staff were already on site, this gave them the opportunity to get to know the students with whom they would later be working. These people were then released to visit and observe other resource programs that were being piloted.

Towards the end of the school year, the teachers visited the returning special needs students to observe and meet them and then organized a visit to the school; this was carefully co-ordinated with positive events such as sports day for those who were athletic, art lessons for those talented in this area or field trips related to a particular hobby, so that the students would have a pleasant first experience. We all felt that a pleasurable visit was essential as many of the students were returning to the scene of earlier frustrations and failures.

Throughout the year we tried to increase the integration time for those students in our own S. L. D. classes to prepare them for the

following September. We also arranged visits for them to their new schools in much the same way as is described above.

Physical items had also to be addressed. Wheelchair ramps had to be ordered for summer installation and contingency plans had to be in place in case the work was not completed. Emergency response procedures had to be revised as did first aid certification and procedures.

I lobbied the District to hire professionals to consult with resource teachers and regular classroom teachers regarding expectations, I. E. P.'s, programming, and evaluation. Two helping teachers were appointed.

Contact was also made with outside agencies such as Social Services, the Y. M. C. A., and Family Services. Outside playground equipment needed re-thinking; our old apparatus was decrepit, minimal and unsafe, so the school, the parent group, the local Rotary Club and the City all funded a new adventure playground that is partially accessible for those in wheelchairs and with physical handicaps.

Time had to be put aside at the year's end for all the required conferencing regarding exiting a special program and planning for

the future year. It was essential that this was handled smoothly and that students and parents had adequate time to ask questions or for clarification about the new student support system. Time also had to be put aside, especially in the first year of implementation, for planning to occur between the resource teacher and the classroom teacher. Money was put aside in the school budget to allow for a half hour of resource planning time for each classroom teacher every two weeks.

When we compiled the class lists at the end of the year, it was important that the staff felt actively involved in this process, so we did it together. This gave the regular and resource teachers the chance to meet with special needs children and their parents prior to the summer break, which alleviated a great deal of anxiety. Due to our high transiency rate, we always have to shuffle some students in September; however, we all agreed that we would do everything we could rather than move a special needs student at that time. Staff input into the class lists was crucial as some teachers willingly take certain types of disability but are more reluctant with others, so in cases where this could be accommodated it seemed sensible to match staff and students comfortably.

Finally, it was imperative that I demonstrated my support for the staff and students. I had to show that I would step in where needed, offer help, advice and encouragement, and sometimes take a class for a teacher who needed an extra break. I also spent time during the year emphasizing that our present good practices should not be forgotten with the changes going on around us. We should continue to celebrate our successes and accent the positive.

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

The two S. L. D. teachers were highly professional throughout the transition. Nevertheless, certain facts existed. Both teachers had been involved with the S. L. D. program for sixteen years and had clearly made a commitment in this regard. It was important that they both understood that the move to mainstreaming was a reflection of a philosophical shift in society and not a condemnation of their performance. In fact, their expertise would be in demand as never before, whether they chose to move into the resource role or enroll a regular class.

Both spent considerable time with me through the year voicing concerns about the specific skills that their children needed and both felt these could not be adequately addressed through a

Resource Program. Intellectually they understood the social and emotional gains that could be made. Both considered applying for the resource positions but were reluctant to lose their own class, feared being used like a Teacher Assistant and were hesitant to advise regular classroom teachers when neither had ever taught in a regular class.

The three of us arranged three informal meetings with the District Resource Co-ordinator to address these fears. As this person had been an S. L. D. teacher there was immediate trust and a feeling of "no holds barred and cut the BS." As a result these meetings were very successful and resolved some of the worries expressed.

Despite their professional attitude, there was a feeling of distinct relief when both had been happily placed for the following year; one in a regular class within the school and the other in a high school resource position.

As the year progressed, the amount of integration time for their students increased so that the students would have a smooth transition and so that regular classroom teachers could observe and analyse potential problems. Thus, a child who might only have been integrated for art in September might have this gradually increased to art, P. E., math, socials and science. The special class teacher

would be helping the child cope with the regular class; this might be in or out of class support depending upon the circumstances.

REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Many teachers were initially unhappy with the prospect of mainstreaming due to bad experiences in the past with integration. They were concerned about the effectiveness of the classroom support, the level of support and the number of students who might be arriving from other schools. They also expressed concern regarding their contract and class composition, although they conceded that class size was my problem and we agreed to draw up the classes collaboratively. They voiced practical concerns regarding timetabling, placement, programming, evaluation, and the physical facility.

We revisited our first brainstorming session where we had listed the advantages of a resource program and we applied to the local college and had two Teacher Assistants placed with us for their final practicum; we then shared out the T. A. time and teachers began to see the value in having a professional in the class with them. As our S. L. D. students were integrated more, teachers began to realise that these were not the lowest or worst in the class and

another fear was laid to rest.

In the staffroom as the result of an informal talk, a brainstorming sheet was put up. It had two columns; one was called "I Need" and the other "How This Could Happen." This let the staff feel that the program would not be "locked in" but there would be on-going implementation to meet changing needs. Staff had input into every decision including staffing levels and our decentralized budget.

For the last six months of the school year in response to the "I Need" list, we had speakers on alternate styles of evaluation, accommodating different learning styles, modifying programs and I. E. P's.

Throughout the year I made it clear that these changes were not optional but had been mandated by the School Act. At first there was some real reluctance in accepting special needs students and, given some of the students with whom they already deal, I cannot blame the staff for feeling like this. However, as more became known the group became more receptive. The establishment of our Resource Program was voted our number one school goal for the following year.

PARENTS OF "REGULAR" STUDENTS

Traditionally this group wants special students to be serviced away from the regular class so that there is no interference with the development of the regular child. This view might be valid if all students within a given class were doing identical work at one time but with the increase of learner-focussed approaches, this view is no longer relevant. Many of these parents also fear that special needs students are rough, disruptive and violent.

Throughout the year, a section of our twice monthly newsletters was devoted to new trends in education. This seemed to raise the level of awareness about what went on in classes and stimulated some interest and contact with the school. Also in the newsletter, I set out our expectations and rules, and made it known that among the supervisors before school, at recess, at lunchtime and after school were the Vice Principal and myself. We publicized more widely that our assemblies honor good citizens and acts of social responsibility.

Generally, the more the parents knew, the less they showed concern about the resource program, so our parent group A. G. M. hosted a question and answer period regarding the services that would be available to all students. A letter also went home to all parents

describing how the Resource Program could offer assistance after student absences, help with a specific tricky concept, work with our gifted students, do career preparation and give support for those with poor study habits. The Resource Team supplemented this information with its own monthly newsheet.

PARENTS OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

These parents tended to be very skeptical. Many had fought for years to have a child placed in a special class only to have it taken away. They had seen the successes of special classes, they recalled the failure of the regular class and they were unclear about Resource Programs. We kept very close contact with these parents during the phase out stages and the planning stages for the following year. We outlined the advantages and disadvantages of the change and again cited the School Act and the Charter. We described carefully how resource support would be provided and maintained an open door policy for questions as they emerged.

The bottom line is that these parents are by no means converted. "It was you educators who told me four years ago that this special class was the best thing for Kelly. Now you turn round and tell me you got it all wrong and that she should go back to the old school. I

just don't know what to believe," Mrs. Camden summed up at one meeting.

"REGULAR" STUDENTS

We planned that on the first day in September, the classroom teachers would introduce expectations and class routines and place special emphasis on describing each student as a learner whose job it was to do his or her best. All staff planned that students would also set individual goals for the year that would be referred to regularly. These would also be written down and taken home to be reviewed with parents. Our hope was that this process would help validate having different goals within a class, and assist in seeing each student as an individual. In exceptional circumstances, such as a severe disability or extreme behavior, we agreed it may be necessary to set up ground rules with the class for the special student. For example, in the event of a fire drill, who will assist Ben as he exits in his wheelchair? Or if Beth is getting angry, she might need to access a time out card to cool off.

Vic, Rob's friend, commented, "It was kind of weird at first. I mean, Rob used to come and go and we all thought he did different stuff at school from the rest of us. We didn't know quite what, but it must

have been really different 'cos he was in a different class to do it. And then Rob joined us and did all the same kinds of stuff we did ... he was real good at a whole bunch too I mean he wasn't dumb or anything. When we did electricity, he was the best in the class at setting up circuits and explaining stuff. So it was good having him with us."

Tara, who didn't know any of the newly integrated students, said, "I thought Neal was gonna be stupid and stuff and that we'd all have to help him with his work. Not. He's just like all of us - better at some things than others - but he's smart. I don't know why he was in that other class."

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

These children had increased integration time in their final year of special class placement and we ensured that this took place with teacher or T. A. support. Initially this happened in a subject that was a strength for the student and gradually increased from there.

In the following September, we ensured on the first day that each student met a resource person to whom he/she could go for help. Rob reports, "That first day was scary but then it was scary for

all the kids 'cos no-one knew their teacher and we were all edgy. At first I kept real quiet so they wouldn't see how dumb I was, but then I forgot that I was no different from them. A whole bunch of us got some extra help with things ... that was O.K. 'cos so many of us were going places for different types of work ... you know, E. S. L., gifted, library, newspaper meetings."

Cracks in the Road - Ongoing Concerns

It is September 1992 and although we all felt we had headed off a great many problems, we all acknowledged that we couldn't foresee everything.

Students with special needs had moved into our catchment area over the summer and more would come during the year. We knew it would happen and there was little we could do about it except be flexible and address needs on a priority basis. We have to be constantly prepared to adapt and create resources.

It is true that an incoming student can arrive with little or no documentation and can radically alter a class' profile. Given our population and transiency rates, a few students at any grade level might also mean redoing class lists in the middle of the year; this is

not ideal but is reality.

Staff members may also transfer at the end of August or go on a leave during the year. New staff would need to receive in-service and information on the operation of our resource program.

In-service needs to be on-going. We have already planned for the District Guidance Helping Teacher to do a workshop on Learning for Living which we anticipate may help us develop certain social and emotional skills in our students. We have also planned sessions on classroom management and on writing and implementing I. E. P.'s for the identified students.

Finishing Touches - Painting Lines

Although some change can be effected through in-service, the most fundamental change, that of attitude, is best addressed through informal strategies. With all the changes in education, teachers are experiencing a great deal of stress. It is important that staff see the advent of the Resource Program as a means of supporting special needs students in regular classrooms as a gain and not another load to be borne.

With support, staff should realise that whereas before they worked in isolation, now a team will be utilized to help them. Often our fears are a lot worse than the actual situation and this may well be true of the mainstreaming of high incidence students.

Creating Additional Lanes - Where We Went Next

It is now Fall 1993 and many features have been added to our original concept.

We have a School Based Team; this is comprised of the two Resource Teachers, our Child Care Worker, our Counsellor, one intermediate teacher, one primary teacher and myself. Our District Psychologist is always an invited addition. The group works in a problem solving capacity. Any member of staff can refer a student and come to a meeting. The group then discusses relevant background, the present problem and puts together a plan to resolve the issue. At the next meeting, a progress update is given and we continue or modify the strategies in place. In addition this group can recommend a student for psychological testing by the school psychologist. This always leads to some educational recommendations and may determine eligibility for a Ministry label. The School Based Team works collaboratively to support the teacher and help the student in

question and has been quite successful.

A number of physical supports have also been put in place. We applied for and now run a Ministry meals program so that no child should be left hungry at school. We divert items from lost and found to needy families. We are slowly building up our technology; this has been partly funded by the parent group and partly by an inner city schools grant. Some of our otherwise truant or tardy students have been used to run an early morning hot chocolate program; the program serves two main purposes. Students who would otherwise not be attending are given the responsibility of running the program and arrive at school any time after 7:30 a.m., and those children who would otherwise arrive cold and hungry in the morning benefit from a cup of hot chocolate. The chocolate and cups have been donated by local companies.

Our parent group regularly sponsors field trips; this may be an individual sponsorship for a student who would be unable to pay, or may be an entire trip for a class. Each year we also offer exposure to activities that might become lifelong leisure pursuits for the students. Each child gets three sessions at activities like skiing, jewelry making, first aid, tennis, drama, bowling, swimming, curling, and pottery. The students can be selected to go swimming with our Child Care Worker each week; children are selected for a

variety of reasons - having a well behaved week, learning something difficult, being a good citizen, helping someone, or getting all homework done.

For our students who enjoy practical work, we have also developed a garden; this is dug, weeded, fertilized, and watered by students. Often plants are started indoors and then transplanted outside. Frequently students have to look up in books, on our CD Rom or go to the local garden centre for specific information on growing plants, and we try to produce seasonal crops like pumpkins as well as those we can sell in order to buy our next load of seeds. These workers are so committed to the project that they come to school every day in the summer to ensure that our plants are weeded and watered. Unfortunately our garden is sometimes ruined by vandals, but this too has its advantages; our students learn first hand how frustrating it is to have one's toiled over property pointlessly destroyed. Hopefully it will deter our students from wanton acts of vandalism.

As a school we have also taken some measures to provide emotional and social support for our students. The staff has had in-service on Second Step, a violence prevention program, Learning For Living and Conflict Resolution. Our Counsellor runs a Peer Counselling Program and we have class buddies as well as individual buddies. Incentive

programs operate for groups and individuals, some students have individual behavior contracts and parents, students and staff are involved with annual school goals and specific projects and activities, for example, the school newspaper, and Earth Day.

After school hours can be a difficult time for some of our students. As a result, we have become involved with exploring daycare options and looking in to providing one at the school. We are using our RCMP liaison officer to spearhead some forensic science mysteries after school where the students have to solve "crimes" based on their forensic findings and general knowledge. We have developed business partnerships with the local library and a local bookstore so that our students conduct storytimes, write book recommendations and get first dibs at book sales and special events. Our parent group has sponsored the YMCA to do recreational activities at the school after hours one day a week, and three days a week our library is open late for homework, research and special activities like pinada making, Chinese New Year, puppet making and puppet play writing, making book ends, and studying pond life.

The Road Now - Where We Are

It is Spring 1994 and our staff are content to have S. L. D. students in their classes and most are now familiar with and comfortable with in-class support. They realise that their teaching styles and strategies are valued and appreciated by the Resource Team rather than criticized. In fact our Resource Teachers often state in staff meetings that they are blessed with the best Pro-D on earth on a daily basis - seeing their colleagues in action! A regular item on our staff meeting agenda is sharing a success, and while a teacher is often too shy to offer an anecdote, they are pleased when their Resource Teacher insists that they share an incident, approach or strategy that happened when the Resource person was in class.

Our whole Resource Team is worked off its feet all day every day. These people are key to the program and I am fortunate that I have seven talented, child-oriented, hard-working, humorous and upbeat individuals to run the program.

Seven?

Seven!

Two low incidence children joined us last year which meant we needed to hire two more part time Teacher Assistants. The children have been a real asset to the school; they have had a very positive experience by being with us and both are achieving beyond our wildest and the experts' wildest expectations. They have also had a powerful effect on our other students. At first our children would run to do things for our handicapped pair and had to learn the difference between sympathy and empathy. The arrival of these two also brought new meaning to a statement we had made many times - be the best you can be. Finally they allowed us as a staff to grow with them as they worked; we have learned about linguistics, talker machines, heading off perseveration, splints, wheelchairs, special bikes and a whole lot about modifying curriculum.

Sadly, none of us know how long placement in a regular class will be best for Jason and Craig and at some point we anticipate that they would be better served in a separate setting where life and community skills can be worked on more effectively. Meanwhile, for as long as we can, we are doing all we can for them and they are doing a whole lot for us in return.

The Closing of Nearby Highways Means More Traffic For Us **- Concerns**

The first "closing highway" is associated with our increasing knowledge about learning. As we learn more about the workings of the brain, we may expect an increase in the number of students identified with neurological processing problems; this in turn would lead to an increase in the numbers of E. M. H. and S. L. D. students. To a degree Resource Programs have been designed to deal with these students and the problem is merely one of volume leading to concerns about level of service. The second "highway" is due to medical improvements; with these advances and better health care, we can also expect an increase in low incidence students. The long term future for these students and the level of required and specialized service are still areas for concern for educators and society. Rob's story reflects the former identified group.

The third "highway" is of greater concern; it is the growing number of students with severe behavior disorders. These students disrupt classes, prevent learning, react illogically and at unforeseen moments, and can threaten the safety of property, other people and themselves. Britten's tale is of one such student.

Our fourth "highway" also reflects a change in society. Increasingly, students arrive in Kindergarten being unable to operate as one of a group, unable to listen and attend, and unable to speak at an age appropriate level. Traditionally, schools have expected that children arrive with certain social skills and the ability to listen and speak. Educators have not been prepared for teaching these skills in a class setting but are now faced with this prospect. Without the skills of listening and speaking, learning to read and write become impossible. Recent research shows that if children do not learn to read by the end of grade two, the neurons that need to be in place for this learning to occur are much harder to develop (Sylwester, 1992). So, the pressure is on; not only do we have to teach whole new skills, the old ones still need to be in place within the same time frame. Kris is a child in this predicament.

We have come a long way along our road and have bent around immovable obstacles, and have welcomed unexpected slip roads that have joined us. However, we still have a long way to go before our road is complete. Perhaps the road we are building is really a ring road with people joining and leaving us at various points; it would have to be a large ring road so that as we re-tarmac one part, another needs attention - rather like painting the San Fransisco Bridge.

CHAPTER FOUR

That Was Then, This Is Now

S. E. Hinton's book, That Was Then, This is Now, juxtaposes the past with the present in the lives of two boys. In this section, I intend to look at one student's experience in a segregated special class of the past, and juxtapose this with his experience in the present, in a regular class receiving resource program support.

In the "then" section of Hinton's book, the boys were part of a homogeneous group or gang,

"We were like brothers, not just you and me, but all of us together. We woulda died for each other then It was great, we were a bunch of people makin' up one big person, like we totaled up to somethin' when we were together." (p. 62).

This somewhat mirrors the situation in the old S. L. D. classes where students were placed homogeneously with other S. L. D. children.

In this separate setting it was thought that the S. L. D. students would feel a sense of confidence and reassurance that they were not unique; that they would be empowered to learn. In the book, Hinton's characters similarly feed off each other and feel secure,

"I looked across the street, watching some little twelve and thirteen year old teeny boppers make fools of themselves ... I had a sudden recollection of Mark and me at twelve, smoking our heads off, clowning around, hoping someone - usually some little long haired chick - would notice us and see how cool we were." (p. 93).

It was thought that identified high and low incidence students needed to be educated in isolation, away from the rest of the school population. This thinking is reflected in the book when Bryon wants to be separate,

"Curly, why don't you leave me alone?" (p. 13).

The segregated system certainly made everyone aware that identified students were somehow different. Hinton shows this in her book through the different moral code that Mark has.

"Mark scrounged around and came up with some money - I didn't ask him where he got it, and he didn't tell me, so I figured he stole it somewhere. Mark was really bad about stealing things. He stole things and sold them, or stole them and kept them, or stole things and gave them away. It didn't bother me. He was too smart to get caught. He had been stealing things since he was six years old One thing about it, though. Mark couldn't see anything wrong with stealing stuff."

And this sense of difference leads to a vulnerability or lack of self esteem.

"'Bryon, don't hate yourself,' Mom said, but that was easier said than done." (p. 146).

In the mainstream model where all students are included in regular classes, they are encouraged to see themselves as individual learners within a heterogeneous group setting.

"'Now we total up to something by ourselves just as easy ...'
'Yeah, but still, don't you kinda miss that all-for-one, one-for-all routine? It's kinda sad, really, where you get to where you don't need a gang - I mean, like you did before.'
'It's kind of a good thing too,' I said, 'when you know your own personality so you don't need the one the gang makes for you.'
'Yeah,' Mark sighed, 'But there's a difference. I wonder what the difference is?'
'The difference is,' I said evenly, 'that was then, and this is now.'" (p. 62).

The heterogeneous grouping is certainly a more complex one for the special needs child. It mirrors the transition from simplistic childhood to the complexities of adulthood that Hinton's characters have to face,

"Life had seemed so simple once, now it suddenly seemed so

complicated. I could remember a time when my only worry had been paying Charlie the three bucks I owed him. Things used to be so simple and now they weren't." (p. 139).

But in the regular class, the students are able to see themselves in relation to a wide range of others, and can see others in relation to the world. An attitude, behavior or ability that may seem usual in a small group setting, is put in a broader perspective in a large group or class. When Bryon, in Hinton's book, begins interacting with a wider social group, he is able to assess,

"Mark had absolutely no concept of what was right and what was wrong; he didn't obey any laws, because he couldn't see that there were any. Laws, right and wrong, they didn't matter to Mark, because they were just words." (p. 142).

Nevertheless, there is a sense of protection and security in being part of a small group. Leaving the group, with its sense of affinity and close belonging, even to make progress, will bring a sense of loss,

"'We were like brothers,' I said, desperate. 'You were my best friend -'

He laughed then, and his eyes were the golden, hard, flat eyes of a jungle animal. 'Like a friend once said to me, "That was then, and this is now."' (p. 153).

Examining Our Examining

Whether we were placing a student in a special class, or are accessing resource support for him or her, our screening and placement processes were and are fairly uniform. This section looks at those processes.

Rob was having great difficulty learning how to read, had had some learning assistance and was still making little progress by grade two. A variety of teaching strategies and approaches had been used to no avail. The classroom teacher therefore referred him for some additional testing, either to diagnose a specific disability or to get some recommendations about different appropriate approaches. These referrals are always co-signed by the parent, the school administrator and the learning assistance teacher. Rob was placed on a waiting list for testing.

Two months later, Rob was tested by a District psychologist he'd never met before. The testing took three snapshot sessions and were a series of oral and pencil tasks that had no direct relationship to what Rob was studying in class at the time. The tests also made no allowance for environmental factors or social or emotional conditions.

Rob can't recall being frightened when isolated with the unknown psychologist, but several other students could recall their anxiety at being plucked from their classes and given a battery of un-class-like tests. As a result of Rob's standardized tests (WRAT, Peabody, Ravens) a meeting was held. The psychologist, classroom teacher, special class teacher, learning assistant teacher and school administrator face off with the parent to review the test results.

In Rob's case the tests showed a discrepancy between his intellectual ability and his achievement, and it was recommended that he be placed in a special class for students with learning disabilities. Often this placement would mean leaving the neighbourhood school but in Rob's case a suitable class existed in his home school and he was placed in that. Only a very confident parent would resist advice from such an intimidating group, and in 1988 there was little option; either a special class placement or minimal learning assistance. In theory special class students were to be re-tested every two years to determine whether or not to continue with the placement. In reality, once assigned to a special class, students rarely left.

Clearly this process of identification and placement has some areas for concern. It would be easy to shrug these off as a "that was then" issue, but in reality much that was wrong with the process remains.

Despite the attempts of psychologists to take a few minutes to build rapport with students, children are still plucked from their classrooms to be tested. The situation can be fearful - closetted in a small room with a stranger. The tests still bear little resemblance to what happens in class; in the classroom we validate different learning and output styles, and we encourage co-operation and collaborative learning, but here no such accommodation is allowed. The meeting with the parents, where the child's school future is decided, is still intimidating. Yes, we now accent a student's strengths as well as difficulties but we still tend to line up our educational troops to talk a parent into a recommendation. Despite our better relationships with parents, many parents feel that their child's disability is due to something they have done wrong. Are we sensitive to these feelings? No, we line up psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, hearing specialists, District resource experts, Teacher Assistants, resource teachers and administrators to deliver our message.

I know we are all under horrific time constraints and bureaucratic functions have to take place, but:

-how much better to involve the child in the whole process. It's his or her future.

-how much better to have parents observe the resource program in action before signing a form agreeing to have their child access this.

-how much better to have a series of smaller, less intimidating meetings, with agendas being given to the child and parent ahead of time, so that everyone can have well thought out input, and in-depth questions can be addressed. Perhaps the meetings could be structured like this:

a) psychologist delivers test results to parent, child, classroom teacher and administrator. (The administrator has to be involved at this point because if the psychologist is recommending a Ministry label, there may be contractual ramifications; the child may have to move class, or several classes may need to be re-configured and the parent needs to be made aware of this). If the child is to be labelled, access to the resource program could be addressed and more meetings will be needed. The parent could sign a form at this time saying they understand that, according to Ministry guidelines, their child has been identified as having severe learning disabilities. If the child is not to be labelled, the learning assistance type of support would continue, utilizing any new suggestions that arise from the report.

b) the resource teacher invites the parent and child to observe the resource program in action and meet afterwards to review how it operates.

c) a bureaucratic form filling meeting can take place with the child, parent and administrator. This could occur directly following the resource visit or may occur later after the parent and child have had time for more thought. These forms officially access the child to the resource program. The parent also has the right to refuse this resource support.

In the school in question, with the blended resource and learning assistance model, the child is probably already receiving much of the necessary support, and signing on for resource support is seen as less of a major change than might otherwise be the case. This sometimes prompts the question from the parent about why the child should be formally identified if he or she is already receiving help. The response is that formal identification guarantees on-going support, which might otherwise not be the case if priorities within the school alter, it provides the school access to District experts who will help us in our planning for the child, and it flags the student as one who needs help should the family move to another area and/or another school.

d) an I. E. P. development meeting should take place with the resource teacher, child, parent and classroom teacher. This is where specific plans would be made for the child's programming.

Yes, four meetings would be time consuming but they would probably lead to better understanding, better support from home, better communication, and a better comfort level for the child and parent. Surely when we are talking about educational planning for a student with special needs, our priorities should not be on form completion and time management, but on the people involved.

In the middle of grade two, after the identification process, Rob was placed in a special class for primary students with severe learning disabilities.

That Was Then

Once upon a time, there was a little boy called Rob. Rob lived with his Mom and sister in a tiny house on a main road. Rob's Dad had left years ago, but Rob still enjoyed his infrequent visits to his Dad's house.

When Rob was in grade two, he was told he was learning disabled and put in a special class with six other kids and two teachers. He thought this meant he was dumb.

Rob really wasn't interested in reading and writing but math was O.K. He spent most of his day in a class where the walls were covered with words he didn't really understand. Rob spent lots of time on his own individual program and couldn't talk to the other kids about how to do stuff and what their ideas were. Rob was good at ideas. He was also good at modelling and building but no-one seemed to care about that. Rob didn't talk much.

"I'd arrive in the morning and go to my little class. Some of the things we did were a bit different. I'd be on a spelling list that was just for me - no-one in the whole rest of the class would be doing the same words. We'd do attendance and hear news. Some of the kids were really weird, but it was O.K. Anytime I needed help with my work, I could get it real easy. With two teachers for six of us, I got lots of teacher help."

After some time spent on spelling and language arts, it was integration time for Rob. He would go and join an age appropriate class for some math, storytime or art.

"I felt fine in my small class. It was still O.K. when a kid came

to get me for my other class. But it was kind of scary going in. They all knew each other and I really didn't know all of them. Mrs. Ennice made me feel welcome and so did the other kids; they used to go out of their way to be nice to me and to talk to me."

"Lessons were really different. There were a lot more kids and only one teacher. I didn't get much attention but I never worried 'cos I could always get extra help when I got back to my other class. With all the going to two classes, I often missed P.E. but I didn't care."

"When Mrs. Ennice told me I could go back to my other class, I used to feel relieved but sad too, but I always went right away. Often when I was in the big class they would be talking about things they'd done earlier in the day or were looking forward to doing. I was sad I hadn't been there for some of the things, but I always had lots of work to do in my class. Mrs. Ennice always asked me on their field trips and for special stuff, but sometimes I wasn't allowed to go. My reading and writing had to come first. A few times, when I was bad in my little class, I wasn't allowed to go to my big class."

"Another thing I noticed was that we only ever had one girl in my little class and she was only there for a while. My big class had lots of girls. We used to look up to the intermediate special class kids. We knew some day we'd be in that class and we used to try and hang out with them. Some of those older kids were pretty bad though. One of them used to fight a lot and another stole bikes around the neighbourhood and then stripped them for parts."

"Sometimes in my small class we'd do things as a whole class - usually in the afternoons and it would be a project or something. Then we used to get to help each other a bit too."

"At 3:00 most of the kids in my class got on buses to go home. Lots of them lived a long way so I never used to see them much outside of school. My best friend was Vic. He was in a regular class but he wasn't much good at reading and writing either. We used to go down the river and catch fish, or ride around on our bikes, or go to his place and watch T.V. until our Moms got home. Sometimes we'd collect bottles and cans and take them back to the store so we could buy candy."

"It was kind of neat in September when other kids would be up tight about which teacher they'd be getting, and telling each

other stories about what this or that teacher had done to kids, I'd know ahead who my teacher was and what would happen in the class. I felt kind of safe and that I knew everybody in my class, and they were all worried for a change."

When Rob left his special class after two years because it was being disbanded, his tests scores showed some real gains had been made academically. These tended to be in areas that required straight rote learning like spelling, decoding and number facts. He was still having great difficulty with reading comprehension and writing.

"I knew it was a struggle for Rob, but I could see what he had learned. He'd started at D level of a book and had worked right through to level B. He tended to be a bit of a loner, but he's always been a bit shy. I was worried when they took away the special classes. The class seemed to help Rob and he had had problems being in a regular class before. I couldn't really help him as I work long hours. His sister can't help either; the two of them just fight. I wasn't sure how this resource thing was going to work, although I think all the teachers do a wonderful job with Rob," said Rob's Mom.

Rob's teacher also had some reservations:

"Rob's a little boy who is very sensitive. I worry that when he sees how hard learning is for him compared to the other kids,

and how far behind he is with some things, that it will be bad for his self esteem. I just hope that he doesn't give up. He won't get as much help as he's been getting in our special class and I think it will be a real struggle for him."

This Is Now

Rob has just finished two years in a regular class receiving resource support. His day looks very different now.

Once a day, Rob and three others from the class take their writing assignments to work on with a Teacher Assistant for half an hour. One of the others is identified and two are not. They work outside the classroom as they tend to talk a lot and disturb the rest when they worked at a separate table in the classroom. Each day, they talk about the assignment, discuss how it relates to their personal experience, brainstorm some kinds of words they might want to use (this is sometimes done on the computer, with a thesaurus, or using the CD Rom). They often look at pictures on the topic and may even get a video about it. When they write, they follow the same writing process as is used within the classroom, just receiving some additional help with proofreading and editing.

Once a day Rob also gets some help with math from his resource teacher, Mr. Lewis. Depending on what the class is doing this may be given in the class or outside it. Here Rob is with a group of about six students; the actual membership of the group varies with the topic and when the class was working on graphs Rob could do the work easily, so he was removed from the group for this unit. The resource teacher and the classroom teacher adapt the regular class program for the students; that is, the group will work on the same topic but assignments, the type of output might vary. For example, during a decimals unit, the group checked its answers with calculators and even took school calculators home for homework assignments, and during a fractions unit the class covered all operations while the group concentrated only on adding and subtracting fractions.

Rob's teacher this year is one who used to teach a segregated S. L. D. class. He knows that in the smaller class, Rob could get more academics done and could learn more intellectually, but he also appreciates the positive effect of being in a regular class and the flexibility that a resource program has. Mr. Wood, working with Rob's resource teacher, has arranged that the last half hour each day is used for "consulting." This means that if Rob, or any other child in the class, wants to have some extra time for an assignment or some extra help, they may go to the resource centre where Mr. Lewis

will meet them.

Rob says it helps that Mr. Wood has had special kids before because he helps you before school, at recess, lunch or after school and he doesn't mind if you want to do work on the computer and put it through a spellcheck.

"I don't like getting help after school; it seems like a detention to me. It's better for me during class time, but some kids don't mind it."

"It's no big deal leaving the classroom. Usually there's a group of us and anyhow lots of kids leave the class to get help - we're all regular kids. Some go to E. S. L., some to Mrs. Mac (our Child Care Worker) for stuff, some to the office, some to buddy other little kids, some for help with work, some for gifted stuff - loads of kids come and go."

"It's good that I have other kids doing the same stuff as me. We can help each other and even call each other at home with homework questions. We all get to work on projects together too. Sometimes, quite a lot actually, I get to help little kids. That makes me feel good and they think I'm so smart. I'm good at teaching little kids."

"There's nothing bad about being in a regular class and I have more friends and do all the subjects now. I think all kids should be in regular classes."

"Academic support alone will not necessarily lead to increased achievement," (Caine, 1991). And many of the supports that we have put in place for Rob are in addition to academic ones. Rob has shown an interest in fish and last summer diligently collected fish and tadpoles from our local river for the aquarium in our grade seven teacher's class. In return, the teacher took Rob fishing one Saturday. We deliberately go out of our way to use Rob's sense of responsibility; he is often our helper for setting up stages, choir risers, sound systems, recycling bags, and packing ice creams for beach day. These are activities at which he excels and which certainly enhance his self esteem. When new equipment arrives at the school, we often ask Rob and a friend to put it together and set it up; this again plays to his mechanical strength and allows him to take on the leadership role of "technical advisor." Our resource teacher often assigns these tasks as problems - "see if you can set it up for me," "you can figure out how to do it," "how are you going to plan this?" "what do you think?"

For a while Rob was reluctant to come to school. Our Child Care Worker got him involved with our morning hot chocolate program; this meant he had to arrive by 8:00 a.m. to start preparations. Because he felt his help was needed, Rob came early for months. When things again became tough and attendance was an issue, our hot chocolate program had finished, so his resource teacher arranged with Mom that Rob would be invited back to his teacher's house to help work on a project, paving a new patio. Clear parameters were set up for this visit and Rob attended without incident for the rest of the year.

Although he is only in grade five, we made special arrangements that Rob could be included in the Stay-in-School Career Preparation program targetted for grade seven students. The intent of this program is that students select jobs for which they are suited and in which they are interested. This is achieved through a computer program and interest inventory. Then the District personnel arrange for a job placement in the child's chosen career. The purpose is to make students aware of the need to stay in school and take relevant courses that will prepare them for their chosen career. Rob worked for one day in a garage. The owner was so impressed that they have arranged for Rob to help out any Saturday he wants.

We have also hooked up with the local high school to try and arrange some shop time for Rob next year. This will be difficult due to class size and composition limitations as well as scheduling and transportation issues. Nevertheless, this type of initiative is extremely important for a number of our students who will otherwise be added to the drop-out statistics.

Rob's progress is always going to be a roller-coaster one depending upon the frustrations he feels at school and home and how well we adjust to meet his changing needs. When I asked Rob what more we should do to help kids like him, he replied, "I don't know. Our school does lots," but then spoke about how some families would benefit if the school and other agencies could work together. He mentioned the local office of Housing and Social Security and local family counselling services, and also spoke of greater opportunities for job shadowing.

We spoke of having lots of different adults helping one student and Rob validated what we had attempted to do with him, which was to have him work with one main contact other than his classroom teacher. "It's better to have one or two people who know you well and not seven or eight different ones." Part of Rob's success story is that he has an excellent relationship with his resource teacher, who acts as his mentor. It was important that this person was a

man and that they shared interests like mechanics, so we were fortunate to have such a person in place.

When asked for his final thoughts on the topic, Rob said perceptively, "It's better to be in a regular class. I have to do more stuff and I have to be more independent. I can't just rely on an adult to come and help me with every piece of work."

After two years in a special class, Rob's testing showed considerable academic gain. After two years of resource support, Rob's re-testing shows that these gains have continued. Rob and I both feel that in addition to these figures he has also gained socially and emotionally from being in the resource program. He is generally happier in himself, has more confidence and better self esteem, takes on leadership roles in certain circumstances and shows problem solving abilities and initiative.

But resource programs were designed for students like Rob, whose problems are largely academic. We as educators were prepared to deal with the Robs. We were experienced in adapting materials, breaking down instructions, providing alternate ways to do work, and accommodating different learning styles; we're educators, we had been trained to do this. Rob's transition to the resource program has been largely a smooth one.

Nevertheless, when other problems arose such as attendance and motivation issues, we were less well prepared. It has only been due to the creativity, flexibility and commitment of his resource and classroom teacher that things have been able to be put into place to help Rob in this area. These initiatives are the timetaking ones that are difficult to pull off in the elementary setting for all the students who need them. And yet, unless these social and emotional issues are dealt with, the academic ones cannot begin to be addressed. Until we could get Rob to school, we couldn't begin to teach him and work with him. So often in inner city settings it is the social and emotional problems that cause concern; these are the ones that need to be addressed over a long period of time and are often ones that can never be satisfactorily resolved as they are often out of the school's control.

Rob's Mom is very supportive of all we do and comments of the resource program,

"It's harder for me to know exactly what progress Rob makes. He no longer goes from book 1 to book 4. He works on units and themes. When we have parent meetings, the teachers are able to tell me what he's learned, but on a day to day basis, I really don't know what is normal, how much he should be able to do. Sometimes I can't believe the things he does. He did a real good essay on flight; he says he learned it from flying paper

airplanes with Mr. Lewis, but he wrote about all sorts of science stuff that I didn't understand but which he could explain to me. I was so proud of him. He even showed some of the other kids what to do."

"I like the way the teachers and I sit down each year to plan for Rob. We always put in some things to do with home in the plan and that really helps me. The bottom line is that I trust the teachers Rob has - they're great and he really likes them - he's learning lots and except when things are rough at home, he likes going to school and seems much happier than he used to be."

Both Mr. Wood and Mr. Lewis were pleased with Rob's social progress, his sense of personal responsibility and his work ethic. But, of course, there are things they'd like to improve upon.

"I wish I could give him some more time, both for hands on activities and for traditional academics. Rob really responds to one on one help and I think he really likes to build a relationship so that we're two guys working together ... you know, the male bonding thing is important to him especially as he's in a house with two females and no male role model," commented Mr. Lewis.

"I'm glad he's slated for my class again next year. Having a split class has some advantages when I can have students for a second year," added Mr. Wood. "I want to do some things differently for him. Because I've taught in special classes, I know what I would have been able to do for his academics in that setting. Next year I need to really work on some of those things with him. It's not that he's not doing well; he is. It's just that I think he can do even better. And it almost takes having a student like Rob for two years. A year to build and get all the other things in place like routines, expectations, so that he feels comfortable and trusts you not to show him up and so he feels the trust you have in him as a learner you believe in him and that he can do things and then the second year to really hammer at the work."

"Rob's sensitive. Another thing I need to work at for him and all the other students, is handling transitions better when kids come and go from the class, getting help or buddying. I need to get a system in place so they can exit and enter without my drawing attention to them in case they feel awkward. Rob seems to handle this part well, but I'm not sure it doesn't worry him underneath and anyhow I've other students who are fragile about coming and going so I need to find a better way for this to happen."

"Paul (resource teacher) and I get on well. That's really important when planning together. I don't know how it would be if I had to work with someone I didn't personally get on with. Paul's a real plus he's so easy going and helpful and he gives the kids the time that so many of them need and that I just don't have time for with thirty in the class. He and I try to find interesting ways to work with the kids; we worked together on the Mimi (computer project linking socials and science) and on pulleys. The kids loved it and we just fed off each other in the class. Those will be topics those kids will never forget. It takes a lot of planning but we must do more of that kind of team teaching; it was great for the bright kids as well as being good for my slower ones. Rob revelled in both projects ... so did Evan (another S. L. D. child). We have to plan more stuff like that for all the students."

"You're going to ask me if I think the old special classes were better for kids. I think they were good, but they were different and had different aims. I look at Rob and I'm glad for him as a person that he's in with all the other kids. Then I think how much more he might be able to do if he had all the extra help that we could give to eight students in a special class with two adults. I want the best of both worlds (laughs); let's have the resource setting, but give me Paul to

work with full time just in my class now that would really be great for everyone!"

In summary, I think all parties are fairly happy with the way our resource program serves high incidence students like Rob. Everyone would like to see higher levels of service, but given current budget restrictions we all realise this is not possible. I appreciate that the staff do not sit on their laurels basking in their success, but constantly strive to improve the service provided. Rob's Mom's comments are important too; we need to communicate more effectively with her on a regular basis about Rob's progress. The grade level booklets that our district is producing for parents should help her to understand the topics that will be covered during the year and the expectations that are usual for that grade.

Special classes were then; resource programs are now. Like Hinton's book, That was Then, This is Now, we need to focus on how we can improve what we have now, just as Mr. Lewis and Mr. Wood are doing in their work with Rob.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Battle of Britten

Typical Skirmish

Dear Diary:

I'm not used to this, so let me introduce myself. My name is Britten and I just had my eighth birthday. I got a special birthday sucker at assembly on Friday. I lived with my aunt until I was seven, but now I'm back with Mom 'cos she's not drinking so much. Last June we came to this school. I try hard but I'm a pretty bad kid. People always get me into trouble. I'm just going to put everything down in my diary so you can see how I get picked on.

Today, I got up at 8:00. Mom was asleep so I got ready for school. I couldn't find clean clothes so I put on the stuff I wore yesterday. I didn't bother with underwear. I arrived at school early. They don't like us to be too early in case something happens to us before the teachers get outside. I took my new stickers and played with them for a bit. Soon my teacher, Mr. Hughes, came out. We talked and I showed him my stickers and even gave him a yellow dinosaur one. He stuck it on his shirt. Other kids came over to him too. I went over

to where some big kids sell hot chocolate before school for c25.

They do this all winter and I like having a hot drink in the cold weather. If I forget my c25, they often give it to me free.

Today I buy two cups and carry one back for Mr. Hughes. He looks at me and asks if I'm sure I don't want to drink it. I tell him I got it for him. He checks I still have money to buy a juice at lunch time. I do. My Mom gives me enough money every day for stuff like that and I know where her purse is if she forgets. Mr. Hughes takes time to thank me and makes a fuss about how thoughtful I am. As he walks around, he sips the chocolate and shares sips with some of the other kids in my class.

I see Simon playing with a toy truck. I ask if I can play. He says no. I'm mad 'cos Simon is my friend but I don't do anything. I keep asking until he gets the answer right. He doesn't budge. I show him my stickers and offer him a choice to keep. He can't make up his mind so I point some pretty nice ones out that he might like, just to let him know it's O.K. to pick. He stays quiet but I want him to take one so I ask him if I should choose for him. He agrees. I choose a small blue one that I don't mind parting with. He smiles. I ask again if I can play with the truck. He hesitates and says no. "But I gave you a sticker, you have to let me play," I tell him. Finally he agrees.

We take the truck over to the slide and roll it down like we've seen older kids do. I tell him I want to climb up the slide with the truck and he can wait at the bottom. He snatches the truck away and starts climbing so I have to wait at the bottom. The first couple of times I let the truck come right down and hand it back to Simon so he can climb. That gets boring. I want to climb so I grab the truck on its way down and run to the other slide out front and start climbing that. Simon runs after me yelling. I ignore him. It's my turn. He catches up as I'm still climbing and grabs on to me. I tell him to let go and I kick him. He punches my leg but lets go of my jacket to do it so I pull away, roll the truck down the slide and then start to cry and go over to a teacher to tell on Simon. This is how it goes:

Me: Simon hit me.

Teacher: Why did he do that? Did you do anything to him?

Me: No. I was on the slide.

Teacher: (calls) Simon. (He comes over and looks mad at me) Did you hit Britten?

Simon: (Nods head)

Teacher: Why did you do that?

Simon: He took my truck.

Teacher: (Looks at me questioningly)

Me: No, we were playing. It was my turn.

Teacher: Whose truck is it?

Simon: Mine

Teacher: Whatever he does with your truck, does it make it right to hit him?

Simon: No. But he hit me first.

Teacher: Oh, Britten did you hit Simon?

Me: No

Simon: He did.

Teacher: Did you punch Simon?

Me: No

Teacher: Did you kick Simon?

Me: He grabbed me and it was my turn.

Teacher: Seems to me like you both did something wrong, so I'll take the truck until the bell and you two can walk with me. Is that fair?

Me: But I want to play. It was my turn.

Teacher: If it's Simon's toy, Simon decides whose turn it is. Simon you know the rule about bringing toys to school and this is just the kind of reason we have for the rule; people end up arguing over the toy or maybe even breaking it, so when the bell goes please put it away in your backpack and take it home after school and keep it there.

Simon: (Nods)

The bell goes. I'm pretty mad by now. I gave away two stickers and got my teacher hot chocolate and still got into trouble. I want to be

close to the door in the class line up. Korey is already leaning on my favorite bit. "Move, Korey."

"No."

"Ko-r-e-y," I wheedle, "please. I want to stand there."

"No."

So I push her. She shoves back. I push harder and tell her she's mean. She's bigger than me and shoves me right out of the line. Shelby and T.J. tell me I have to go to the back of the whole line. I start crying so Karen lets me in. Mr. Hughes gets to the door and lets us all in. He says hello to every kid and says nice stuff to one or two like Kyla who has a new T-shirt on. Kyla always gets new stuff but she's O.K. She let me borrow her spare shorts once for P.E. so I wouldn't get in trouble for not having my P.E. strip.

I make sure I take my stickers to my desk and I have four quarters in my hand that I will buy my juice with later. I forget to bring my reading book to my desk. We take home a book a night to read at home. I took one home but Mom and I didn't read it. If no-one asks, I'll take it home again tonight. Maybe Mom will be in to read tonight. I like books but it's easier when I'm on my own to put the T.V. on. If I try to read on my own, there are too many words I need help with.

Mr. Hughes calls us over to the meeting corner where we take register and do news and stuff. I take my stickers in my pocket with

my quarters and wiggle in between Jess and Simon even though there really isn't enough room. They both budge over so the three of us squeeze in. While Mr. Hughes takes register, I ask Simon what he did with the dinosaur sticker I gave him. He says it's in his pocket. I ask to see it. Mr. Hughes asks us to stop talking. I get out my stickers and show them to Jess without talking. He pretends not to be interested. I put them right in front of his eyes. He pushes my arm away. I wait a bit and then poke him in the ribs. He tells me to stop and gets caught by Mr. Hughes. Serves him right. Jess has to sit away from the group as a time out. I smile sweetly at him.

We finish our beginning stuff and Mr. Hughes has given me my second warning and I've had to put away my stickers and quarters. We have till Mr. Hughes counts to five to be sitting at our desks. I need to talk to him so while the rest go and sit down, I follow him to the front of the room. He looks at me as he counts and points to my desk but I stay there as I need to talk to him. He gently turns my shoulders and helps me walk the first step to my desk. "I have to talk to you Mr. Hughes."

"Not right now, Britten. Go and sit down at your desk."

"But I want to ask you something."

"Please go and sit down."

"I have to ask you something."

"Is it an emergency, Britten?"

"I just want to ask where you put the dinosaur I gave you."

"Britten, that's not an emergency. Go and sit down. You can ask me that later."

"I just want to know."

"Britten, you've had two warnings. Think of the choice you are making if you need a third."

"I only want to ask you something!"

"O.K. Britten, you've chosen a time out."

"No."

"Think what you're doing and choosing, Britten."

"It's not fair and I'm not going." So I go to my desk and kick my chair. Then I go to the back of the room and hide under a spare desk there. Maybe he'll forget about me and let me stay. Mr. Hughes sends Travis to get the Principal. In she comes. She bends over me.

"Britten, you have a choice to leave the class yourself, or you can be embarrassed and I'll have to help you out."

"I don't want to go."

"Any discussion will be in my office. How do you want to leave?" She holds my hand firmly and I get up and go with her.

I sit down in her office, bury my head and refuse to look at her.

"I'm going to give you a couple of minutes to calm down and then we'll go over what happened and the consequences you've chosen."

I'm still mad when we talk. I tell her I didn't do anything and that I just want a chance. I tell her I don't want to go into the grade three room and work there - that's where we get sent when we've bugged the class. I don't like it 'cos there's no-one to talk to so I have to do my work the whole time and I'm not even allowed to get up and walk around. I tell her I'll be good in my own class and that I want to go back there. She tells me that I've already made my choices and we count off the number of chances I was given. She gets to five, so I ask for one more. I keep telling her I just want to be in class. She's not giving an inch so I try a new tactic that always works at home when keeping on asking doesn't.

I start to cry and tell her everyone picks on me and no-one likes me. She tells me that I was being unfair on the other boys and girls and Mr. Hughes and was picking on them so they couldn't do their work. I cry louder and tell her that no-one likes me. She tells me to stop feeling sorry for myself and we talk about things I can do that will make me more likeable. This isn't what I wanted. I don't want to change. I just want to be able to do what I want to do. I listen for a bit. That should make her happy. Then I ask if I can go back to class now, after all I've listened to what she had to say. She refuses so I start to cry some more. She gets me some work and I have to stay in her office right until recess. After doing a lot of work, I come up to her desk and try to look at what she's doing and if I can help. She

tells me to sit down and get on with my own work. And I was just being helpful.

At last the bell for recess goes and she tells me to go outside and play nicely and then after recess, if I can behave, I can go back to class. I feel better now, so I skip down to my class to get my snack and coat. By the time I get to class all the other kids have gone outside. While I'm getting my snack from the coatroom, I notice that in a cubby near mine Emma has left a fruit roll. Well if she doesn't want it, I sure do. I throw the wrapper on the floor and stick one end in my mouth, grab my stickers and go out.

I settle in a doorway and lay out my stickers to look at them. The music teacher walks by on "snoopervision." She stops to talk. I try to ignore her. She looks at my stickers. "Where did you get those, Britten?"

"My Mom got them for me at the local gas station."

"Britten, those aren't for sale at gas stations. You can only get them from a catalogue. I had some like that last week and they were taken from the music room. Did you find those somewhere?"

"My Mom got them from a special place. She's a teacher. Why doesn't anyone ever believe me?" I start to cry. That should take her mind off my stickers.

"Britten, the stickers. Let's try again. Where did you find them?"

"Why doesn't anyone believe me?" I'm really howling now. "No-one ever believes me. I just want someone to believe me."

"Did you take the stickers from my room?"

"I just want someone to believe me. They're mine."

"We could always ask your Mom about them."

"My Mom's at school to-day. My friend gave them to me." Still howling.

"I'll take the stickers until I can talk to your Mom."

"No you won't. They're mine. Why won't anyone ever believe me? I hate you." I'm sobbing now. Why isn't this working?

"Britten, you've given me three different explanations already. How can I believe you?"

"I'm telling you the truth now. They're mine. I hate this school. I'm going to go to a different school."

She takes my stickers so I push past her and run away on the gravel. I shove over a little kid as I pass him. He starts to cry. I don't care. I run to Simon and shove him. He looks surprised and pushes me back. I kick at him and miss. He shoves me away and Shelby yells at me to stop. I start crying and go to tell on Simon. I avoid the music teacher and go to Mrs. K.

"Simon just pushed me," I sob.

Mrs. Tam, the music teacher, is walking purposefully over. "I'll deal with it, Mrs. Kelly," she says. "Britten, I saw it all. You were mad that I caught you stealing. You pushed a Kindergarten student and

you started trouble with Simon. Go to the library, please."

"But he pushed me," I cry.

"Yes, after you had shoved him. Go."

"We were just playing Power Rangers. It was a game. We were playing."

"You're not allowed to play fight."

"I didn't punch anyone."

"No, you pushed and were rough. Library."

"I wasn't rough. Simon pushed me."

"You were rough too. If you keep arguing, you'll have longer in the library."

"It's not fair. I'm not going."

Mrs. Tam takes my hand and leads me towards the library. If any of us get into trouble outside at recess or noon, we have to go to the library where the Principal or Vice Principal watch us playing quietly or reading books. The library isn't too bad and some days I choose to go there to play instead of going outside 'cos I always get in trouble outside.

Mrs. Tam checks me in with the Vice Principal who writes down my name and tells me I'll be inside at lunchtime too. He sends me to sit at a table and lets me pick a book to read. I sit down but I don't feel like reading so I ask if I can play on the CD Rom. I know I'm not

really allowed; only those kids who choose to be in the library get to play on it. If you're sent to the library 'cos you're in trouble, you're not allowed to play. I ask anyway. He tells me no. I sulk.

At last the bell goes and I go back to class. As the kids come in Emma tells Mr. Hughes that someone has taken her fruit roll.

"I saw Britten with a roll," pipes up Jess, "and he told me he'd forgotten his recess snack this morning."

"I forgot that I brought it," I start to argue.

"You said you hadn't a snack and you wanted me to share with you," adds T.J.

"No," I argue.

"Let's sit down, get on with some work and then Britten and I will have a talk," calms Mr. Hughes.

"No, I'm not going to," I storm. "No-one believes me." Maybe that will work this time.

"Work," says Mr. Hughes firmly.

"I don't want to and you can't make me."

"Britten, think what choice you're making."

I'm sick of dumb choices by now. I kick over my chair and tip over my desk. The Principal arrives and we go through the choice stuff about leaving the class again. This time I refuse to go. She holds my arm. I start crying loudly and sit on the floor. Some kids laugh at

me. That makes me madder so I cry louder. Mrs. Russell, the Principal, lifts me up and carries me to her office. I try to hang on to everything I can on the way just to be difficult. I'm still crying loudly.

She puts me on a chair and as she moves away I try to kick her. She moves and I miss. She says evenly, "Just calm down, Britten. You've made your choice." I keep crying. She ignores me. That's not supposed to happen. She picks up the phone, looks up a number and start dialling. I stop crying to listen. I guess that she's calling my Mom but she isn't. She finishes her call and turns to me, "O.K. Britten. Now you're calm, I'm going to call your Mom. You've disturbed your class twice already today and you're not going to disturb anyone any more."

I start a new line. "Just let me go back to class. All I want is another chance. I want to go back to my class." I start crying again. "Britten, you've had your chances for today. This isn't open for discussion." She dials. I swear at her. She keeps dialling.

When we get to this point, two things can happen; either she gets hold of my Mom and I get sent home for the rest of the day with work. They have it all sorted out so I have to stay in my room and I don't get to watch T.V. until the work is done. If she can't get hold

of my Mom, I get to stay at school all day. If this happens, I usually have to be with Mrs. Russell. They tried putting me in the medical room or the Counsellor's office, but I messed up those rooms and took the Counsellor's puppets so they couldn't leave me alone any more. A couple of times Mrs. Russell was called out of her office. Then I do things like lock the doors on her and take some of her suckers. She found the suckers once because as I stood to leave, one dropped out of my pocket. I argued that my Mom had given it to me, but she didn't believe me.

Today is unusual. Mom's at home so Mrs. Russell explains what's happened - the disturbing, the stealing, the swearing and the kicking - and says that she will be sending me home for the day with work. She always says that being sent home is the punishment and Mom doesn't have to add to it. She also says that when my work is done and when I'm ready to behave, I'm welcome back and that can be as early as tomorrow if I'm ready. Mom is agreeing to my coming home. Mrs. Russell hangs up and turns to me.

"Now you've got me into trouble. I hate you," I yell. This usually works with grown ups.

"No Britten, you've chosen to get into trouble. I can't do that for you. You did that all on your own. All I have done is deal with the consequences. You will go straight home, your Mom's expecting you. Tomorrow choose to have a better day."

I cry some more but she's not giving in. We collect my things and she sees me off the school grounds.

Battle Plan

STRATEGIC PLAN

Britten's behavior had been a concern for a while and his teacher, the counsellor, a resource teacher, our child care worker and the administration have all been involved informally. Britten's behavior was definitely escalating after Christmas, where days like the one described above were becoming more frequent and more severe. His name was referred to a School Based Team Meeting where we discussed our concerns at length and made plans for the future.

Our concerns with Britten fell under four broad headings. First we discussed how self centred his behavior is and drew a parallel with the behavior of a three or four year old as described by Piaget; this child imitates rules but breaks them frequently because he or she has not accepted the fact that the rules have also to apply to them. Britten's teacher described Britten as "being on his own agenda and ignoring the rules and wishes of others in the class." We talked about Britten's need to develop empathy and be able to see things from the perspectives of others.

A second concern is closely linked to this - Britten's need for control and power. Although Britten doesn't fall neatly into Montagner's (1978) or Manning's (1978) categories regarding power and hostility, Britten nevertheless expects to be able to manipulate peers and adults alike. Britten is not naturally aggressive but will resort to an aggressive tantrum when he is resisted or where he cannot talk his way into what he wants. Associated with this need to be in control, we mentioned his stealing and lying, over which he appears to have no remorse or conscience.

Our third area of concern covers his social isolation. Although he is a member of a very forgiving and accepting class, Britten is unable to develop any lasting relationships. When he has been excluded from a group for his antics, he uses all the ways described by Sluckin (1981) to be re-accepted; he persistently asks to join the group, he tries bribery with stickers or candies, he tries to negotiate his way back in, and failing all that, will then disrupt the game, activity or lesson. Which came first, the antisocial behavior or the rejection tactics is, as Asher (1983) claims, a chicken and egg issue.

Our last main area of concern is Britten's reaction to the trouble he gets himself into. He tries all of Sluckin's methods of avoidance (1981) - pretending that he was just playing and what happened was

all part of a game, blaming others for what occurred and changing his story until an excuse is believed. Obviously, this all compounds the situation and makes everything worse not better. One of Britten's strengths is that he is bright, but he chooses to use this to manipulate others for his own ends; he does this by altering rules, using words to wriggle out of trouble and he plays on the sympathies of others. Despite this, sometimes when he is offered a choice, he makes a wise decision. This usually occurs if he can be given a choice before he has dug his toes in and has already escalated his behavior. Once he has started his spiral of misbehavior, he seems to find it very difficult to back down.

TACTICS

In planning how to act, we felt we had to wear two hats at all times; the first hat demanded that the class could not be disrupted by Britten and that the three warnings prior to having to leave the class should be continued. This system is in place for all of the children, so Britten is not being singled out in any way. The second hat demanded that as advocates for Britten, we find a way that will help Britten succeed in his class.

It was important that we strike a balance for the negative consequences for misbehavior by establishing some positives that

were worth working for in Britten's eyes. For students like Britten, it is very easy to slip into a negative mode where the child (and us) seem to be just waiting for a problem. So to provide an "attitude of joyful hope (which) is one of the most basic demands of education," (Bollnow, 1963, p. 25) we set up each day in time slots. The first section went from 9:00-recess, the second from 10:45-noon, and the third from 12:45-2:45. If Britten remains in his class doing work, he can earn some "special" time each block. He can earn five minutes early recess, twenty minutes before noon with our Child Care Worker, Mrs. Mac, practising social skills by playing in a small group, and a special centre during centres time in the afternoon, again with Mrs. Mac. We felt it was important not to single out Britten for this special treatment as this would add to his isolation, so the recess perk was given to all class members with their work completed, the social skills activity was offered to a small group from the class during a time when another group was being given some enrichment, and the special centre was again offered to a small needy group from the class.

"Trust is a pre-requisite for all healthy human development," (Bollnow, 1989, p. 12). We decided that we needed to continue explicitly stating our expectations, consequences and classroom management system to Britten. We hope that this consistency will help him by providing a structure. "I get bored with the same things

all the time," complained Mr. Hughes, "but I can see he needs it and it won't hurt some of the others to hear it too." Unfortunately, wearing our other hat and flying somewhat in the face of this trust is the issue of stealing. We clearly have a responsibility to protect the property of other children, so Mr. Hughes agreed to supervise the getting of snacks and lunches, to remind the students regularly that personal property should not be brought to school, and to lock the classroom at recess and lunch once everyone had left. We also agreed that we would check with Mom about things arriving at home that weren't Britten's.

Britten's untruthfulness and self centredness we planned to address in a number of ways. Mr. Hughes agreed that the next Learning for Living unit he would work on would be on honesty and interaction/empathy/caring for others. He planned a multiple approach through reading, talking, and writing from different perspectives, establishing class meetings (with help from another teacher who already conducts these) to discuss class problems, role drama, providing concrete examples of socially responsible and selfless behavior and encouraging this behavior within the class. The Counsellor and Mrs. Mac would also build on these attributes during their small group work. The Counsellor also planned to include Britten in a small social skills group where newly learned skills could be rehearsed without embarrassment.

All of us who deal with Britten agreed to reinforce explicitly and frequently how to make wise choices to improve a situation rather than make it worse.

We wanted to give Britten a relationship that could be positive and that could develop. It would have been ideal for Britten to do this with Mrs. Mac, but as she is currently up to her eyes with other needy children and he has given no indication of wanting her attention, we looked for an alternate. As Britten has only been with his Mom for a year, we also didn't want to get in the way of any bonding or attaching that was still developing there. In the end we decided on a grade six student, Dennis, as a mentor or special buddy. As Dennis is in grade six this relationship can be carried on next year, but meanwhile Dennis is old enough to be respected and can be firm should this be needed. Dennis is a bright, athletic student who is well liked, has good interpersonal skills and relates well to younger children. We set it up with Dennis' teacher that he would check in with Britten after 9:30 each day to see how Britten was doing in class and to give encouragement and help. Later, Dennis would pop in two or three times during the day to check up and we left it open that the two could earn a special time together if things went well. (This might be an ice cream, time to play together, time on a joint hobby, or extra P.E. time.)

We also wanted to catch Britten early in the day and ensure a positive start before he had a chance to go down the spiral, so we arranged for Mrs. Mac to take Britten at 9:05 and work on his journal with him over a cup of hot chocolate. She already does this with another severely at risk child in the class, so this would not be singling out Britten. The original child is allowed to invite a friend for chocolate and journal, and we decided that this should continue.

Our final component to the plan was regarding contact with the home and outside agencies. We had already developed good rapport with Britten's Mom, who is appreciative of all we do with and for Britten, but she often expresses frustration with him too and says, "I don't know what to do with him I'm tearing my hair out over him." We need to keep contact with Mom and make a conscious effort to pass on the good news as well as the bad about Britten; it is always so easy to forget to say what was good - we expect good and tend to take it for granted. In cases like Britten, it is crucial we note progress - for Britten's, his Mom's and our own sakes.

We had talked in the past with Mom about the support groups available in the immediate area, but at our meeting we agreed to go over these with her again more thoroughly. The ones that we highlighted for her were a worker from the local Ministry of Housing and Social Services to help her with finances, parenting, and her

school work, support from the same agency for Britten in the form of an after school Child Care Worker, an application to the local Big Brothers Association, although we know there is a two year wait list, a referral to the local Youth and Family Services for family counselling, and information on the nearby parenting courses being offered.

Mom has all the information on these services and now needs to apply or give her consent; our counsellor is keeping contact with her and following up on this. Our parent group recently booked a Family Counsellor for a parenting course at the school; the teacher who is liaising on this was Britten's teacher last year, so she followed up and accessed a free place and text for Britten's Mom and phones to remind her about each session. Although Britten's Mom was nervous at the first session, she did enjoy it and said she was working on a number of the ideas she got from the session. For a while we saw an improvement in Britten too. She also found it a relief to hear that other parents were struggling with their children.

THE OFFENCE

Britten's timetable each day would look like this:

- 9:00 Journal and chocolate with Mrs. Mac.
- 9:20 In class. (Teacher Assistant from the District B. D. program in class until recess. She is assigned to another, labelled, child, but will help anyone who needs it).
- 9:30 Dennis checks in.
- 10:25 Early recess earned.
- 10:30-10:45 Recess
- 10:35 Class. (Resource teacher in class to help where needed).
- 11:40 Social skills group with Mrs. Mac.
- 12:00 Lunch time.
- 12:15-12:45 Play.
- 12:45 Class. (Teacher Assistant in class for 30 minutes to help where needed).
- 2:25 Special centre time.
- 2:45 Home.

In addition, Dennis checks in two or three more times a day, Mrs. Mac checks in three times a day (not just with Britten) and the Counsellor works with Britten once a week.

EMPLOYING THE NEW TACTICS

We discussed at length how the new supports would be implemented. We agreed that we had to give Britten two big messages; we mean business and he can no longer disturb classes.

As a result, and with Mom's agreement, we planned to start the implementation before the natural break of a long weekend provided by a Pro-D day. In the week before the break, when he behaved badly, I removed Britten totally from the class - his books, supplies, desk, chair, and coat - and "reassigned" him to an alternate class, previously arranged with a willing grade seven teacher. This was totally different from any previous timeout arrangements, where the understanding had always been that he would return to his class at the end of the day. Britten chose to misbehave on the Wednesday and so had two days in the grade seven class before the weekend. He frequently asked when he could return to his own class and was told that this was his class now.

After the holiday, the classroom teacher and I met with Britten and laid out both sides of the plan. I laid out the consequences of inappropriate behavior and Britten told us what would constitute this. I covered the three warnings, timeout, in school suspension, out of school suspension and expulsion and referred to the School

Act, which I took down from the shelf and showed to Britten. Mr. Hughes then reviewed the plans in place to help him succeed in class. The bottom line, we said explicitly, was that Britten would be making all of the choices and was in control of what happened to him each day. The "small events that are likely to happen in any child's day and that need to be handled as they occur (add up to) a good life or a pretty miserable one." (Bettelheim, 1962, p. 27-8).

BATTLE LINES

Just as there may be a fine line in battle between victory and defeat, between honorable winning and dishonorable annihilation, and between warring territories, so we are treading some fine lines as we plan for Britten.

We see that Britten needs to build a close trusting relationship with an adult and yet we cannot schedule that for him as we have so many needy children. We are also wary of spoiling any relationship he is building with his Mom. How can we do better?

We know that Britten needs breaks from the regular class environment and yet he needs to develop a bond with the class, what Norman Kunc calls a sense of belonging (1993). How do we balance these effectively?

Britten needs to be treated differently because he is an individual with unique needs, and yet we have to preserve his credibility with his peers as one of the class. How can we do this?

The battle of Britten is not going to be a quick victory like the Falklands War, but rather a prolonged struggle reminiscent of Vietnam or Northern Ireland. Even worse it could resemble the

Hundred Years War in Europe! Nonetheless, when I consider what (or rather, who) is at stake, the struggle is worthwhile. Anyway, what alternative do we as educators have if we give up the struggle and give up hope? Van Manen talks of hope being central to pedagogy, (1986, p. 28) "To hope is to believe in possibilities. Hope strengthens and builds." If we do not believe in possibilities for children, we shouldn't be educating. Children should hope and dream and dare; that's how they grow.

I don't know if our plan for Britten will "work." I'd be surprised if it all worked first time, but you never know. It is much more likely that the plan will need refining and adapting as we and Britten work with it. I believe Britten was trying to manipulate when he kept saying, "I just want another chance," but he did strike a chord. Doesn't he always deserve another chance? Another chance for us to get his puzzle right, and make school and having positive relationships work for him.

CHAPTER SIX

Amazing Grace and Timid Kris

Meeting the Characters

Grace is the main character in Mary Hoffman's book Amazing Grace.

Grace has an incredibly rich language background at home.

"Grace was a girl who loved stories. She didn't mind if they were read to her or told to her or made up in her own head. She didn't care if they were in books or in movies or out of Nana's long memory. Grace just loved stories."

Kris is a Kindergarten boy who struggles linguistically, does not understand how stories are put together and how story parts interrelate, and who appears to be a fearful learner. He has not been read to, has not had stories told to him, and cannot make up his own stories.

The stories that Grace has heard have helped develop her imagination,

"After she had heard them (stories), and sometimes while they were still going on, Grace would act them out. And she always

gave herself the most exciting part. Grace went into battle as Joan of Arc and wove a wicked web as Anansi the Spider." Children's stories, by definition, (Huck et al., 1987) have happy endings. This means that Grace is also learning about pursuing dreams, striving towards a goal, winning against all odds and overcoming obstacles.

In contrast, Kris shows little imagination and chooses playing with trucks, blocks and other concrete materials over joining pretend games or role dramas. He is reluctant to try new activities, he has little self confidence and is shy around the other children. Any time a difficulty arises, Kris either reacts with physical aggression or withdraws, defeated.

Grace faces obstacles with confidence and determination, as she has seen modelled in books. She wants to be Peter Pan in her class play. "Raj said, 'You can't be Peter - that's a boy's name.'

But Grace kept her hand up.

'You can't be Peter Pan,' whispered Natalie. 'He isn't black.' But Grace kept her hand up."

Grace also receives support at home for following her dream. "That just shows what Raj knows,' said Ma. 'A girl can be Peter Pan if she wants.'"

And Nana adds, "You can be anything you want, Grace, if you put your

mind to it." This kind of support also models perseverance, which is a characteristic of an effective learner (Lerner, 1989). Thus empowered, Grace believes she can achieve her goal, "I can be anything I want," she thinks, and of course, the happy ending has Grace being an outstanding Peter.

In stark contrast, Kris did not volunteer for any part in the Kindergarten Christmas play or the assembly performance, hung at the back for both of these, and had to be cajoled and encouraged to be with the class for these activities. Once the events had started, he seemed to enjoy himself; it was just that he was reluctant to take the initial risk of doing something new.

Kris' Initial Screening

The following is excerpts from the screening process used by Marcia, our Speech and Language Therapist.

Marcia: Alright, Kris, it's your turn. Let's go and play some games together.

Kris: (Shakes his head and begins to whimper). Un-nn.

Marcia: (Takes his hand) We're going to go to the Counsellor's office. You know Mr. Brown?

Kris: (Nods his head).

Marcia: Well he said we could use his room. Have you ever been in his room before? No? Well, he's got all sorts of toys in there that we are going to look at and play with. (Leads Kris out of class).

* * * * *

Marcia: Kris, what's your full name? Your first and last name.

Kris: Kris Boyle.

Marcia: Good. (Checks form) Do you see this line here? Could you take this pencil and write your name on the line? (Hands over pencil) I can see you know how to use a pencil. You hold it very well. Here is the line (points). Print your name there. (Kris prints the letters r, s, i in a large wobbly hand) Great. Kris I need a little bit of information from you. Do you know when your birthday is?

Kris: (Shakes head). Four.....

Marcia: Do you know how old you are?

Kris: (Shakes head). One.

Marcia: Thank you. (Checks form). I saw that you were working on apples in your class today, do you like apples?

Kris: (Nods) Yea

Marcia: Which apples are your favorite?

Kris: (Gives eye contact for the first time) Red.

Marcia: Me too. What else do you know about apples?

Kris: Eat snack foob.

Marcia: Where do we get apples from?

Kris: Stowe

Marcia: Where do the people in the stores get them from? Can you pick them?

Kris: (Nods) Twees.

Marcia: Had you done calendar today in class?

Kris: (Nods)

Marcia: What was the weather like? You can look out this window to check if you like.

Kris: Clou

Marcia: Yes, it is cloudy. Can you say anything else about the weather?

Kris: Blue.

Marcia: Yes, we can see some blue sky too. In between the clouds. I'm going to ask a few questions about your family. How many adults live at home?

Kris: Te

Marcia: Who are they?

Kris: Um.

Marcia: What do you call one of the big people?

Kris: Ma Da.

Marcia: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Kris: Yea, boy.

Marcia: You have a brother?

Kris: (Nods) Boy.

Marcia: Thanks for telling me about yourself. Now I'm going to say some words and I want you to say the same words after me. Ready?

Bike.

Kris: (Silent)

Marcia: Can you say bike?

Kris: Bike.

Marcia: Good. Ball. Can you say ball?

Kris: Ball.

Marcia: Good. Boy, cat.

Kris: (Silent)

Marcia: Can you say boy, cat?

Kris: Cat.

Marcia: Can you say boy and cat?

Kris: Boy and cat.

Marcia: Can you say brush, coat, toy?

Kris: Coat, toy.

Marcia: Good. Can you say soap, train, pop?

Kris: Train, pop.

Marcia: How about cookie, book, dog, pencil?

Kris: Dog, pencil.

Marcia: Good job, you're pretty good at that game aren't you. Now let's look at some picture games. Can you tell me what this is?

(Points to spoon).

Kris: Fork.

Marcia: And this? (Points to fork).

Kris: 'poon.

Marcia: A spoon? What about this? (Points to a monkey).

Kris: Man.

Marcia: And this? (Points to a tiger).

Kris: Cat.

Marcia: There's no tricking you. What is this? (Points to a robber).

Kris: Monster.

Marcia: And this? (Points to a monkey).

Kris: Monster.

Marcia: What about this? (Points to mail).

Kris: Stuff.

Marcia: Do you know another word for it?

Kris: Paper.

Marcia: Yes, it is paper isn't it. Let's try another game. I'll show you lots of pictures that kind of tell a story. Here you are. (Shows pictures). Now can you tell me what is happening in the pictures?

Kris: He come get him. Dog come out. Turtle come out.

Marcia: Why do you think they had to come out?

Kris: He wants his shoe.

Marcia: Kris, I'm going to show you some letters and I want you to tell me their names, okay?

Kris: (Nods)

Marcia: (Shows B).

Kris: Four.

Marcia: (Shows K).

Kris: Six.

Marcia: (Shows A).

Kris: Te.

Marcia: (Shows A again). This is A, like in the A, B, C's, right?

Kris: (Nods)

Marcia shows a series of letters. Kris identifies two out of nineteen correctly.

Marcia: (Shows T, a letter Kris identified). Do you know what sound this letter makes? A says Ah, what does T say?

Kris: I can't.

Kris fails to relate the other sound/symbol letters.

* * * * *

Marcia: O.K. Kris, can you count for me,..... 1, 2,.....

Kris: 1, 2, 3, 6, 4, 1, 7, did I say that one? 3, 5, 7, I don't know how.

* * * * *

Marcia gets out a colour chart and asks Kris to name the primary colours, which he can do.

* * * * *

Marcia tried to explain to Kris the categorization picture, but he couldn't understand this concept at all. One sheet showed a picture of different animals; the child is expected to categorize them as animals and add some more members to the group. The second category was food and the third toys, but Kris was unable to understand what he had to do, even with Marcia's prompts.

* * * * *

Marcia: I want you to listen very carefully and then do what I ask, O.K? Put the ball in the cup and give me the shoe.

Kris: (Hands the shoe to Marcia).

Marcia: Good. Listening again. Ready? Hold the spoon in your hand and put the red block on the table.

Kris: (Picks up the fork).

Marcia: Last one of these. Ready? Put the blue block under the table before you look in the book.

Kris: (Looks in the book).

* * * * *

Marcia then told Kris two short stories with pictures accompanying them, and asked him after each to tell the story back to her. Kris was unable to tell her the story. He pointed to objects in the pictures and named them, sometimes accurately.

* * * * *

Marcia: Can you see Mary in the picture?

Kris: (Nods).

Marcia: Mary is going to bake a cake. Do you ever cook with Mom?

Kris: Yea

Marcia: What do you cook?

Kris: Foob, cookie,..... cake.

Marcia: Wow, you must be a great cook. When you next cook up some cookies, maybe you can invite me over so that I can help you eat them. Would you like me to help you to eat them?

Kris: (Smiles). Naa.

Marcia: Oh, well. Do you think Mary in the picture might be cooking a cake like yours?

Kris: Yea.

Marcia: Oh, but what has happened here? (Points to next picture).

Kris: No stuff.

Marcia: Yes, she's run out of flour. What can she do now?

Kris: Run out no stuff

Marcia: What can she do about it? (Pause) What do you do if you run out of something when you're cooking with Mom?

Kris: Dunno nuffink.

Marcia: Can you think of what she might do to get more flour?

Kris: Unn.

* * * * *

Marcia's final "game" was one where Kris had to label a picture or copy what she said. This time, Marcia was listening for correct articulation. Kris showed difficulty with w which he substituted for r several times and th which he pronounced f.

* * * * *

The two then returned to class, chatting.

Marcia: That was fun, Kris. Thanks for coming and playing with me.

Kris: 'Welcome.

Marcia: Do you think we might play again sometime?

Kris: Yea!

The following is the screening sheet that Marcia jotted notes on during her interaction with Kris and all our other Kindergarten students.

Kindergarten Screening

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____ School: _____

- ___ States complete name
- ___ Spells first name _____
- ___ Knows D.O.B.
- ___ General knowledge
- ___ Conversational Management
- ___ Auditory Memory/ Sentence Imitation "Copy Cat"
- ___ Syntax
- ___ Letter Names
- ___ Sound/Symbol Relationship
- ___ Counts
- ___ Identifies Colours/Names Colours
- ___ Categorization/Vocabulary/Word Retrieval
 - ___ Animals
 - ___ Foods
 - ___ Toys
- ___ Direction Following

___ Put the ball in the cup and give me the shoe

___ Hold the spoon in your hand and put the red block on
the table

___ Put the blue block under the table before you look in
the book

_____ Narrative

Harold and the Purple Crayon

One was Johnny

_____ Verbal Reasoning

Screening notebook

_____ Articulation

_____ Voice Quality

_____ Fluency

On Kris' sheet, Marcia had jotted several notes and had circled eleven of the categories as being of concern. She also wrote the words reading, vocabulary, syntax, listening and storytelling at the top of the sheet as requiring most immediate attention.

Findings and Follow Up

Marcia, our Speech and Language Therapist, had been requested to screen all our Kindergarten students near the beginning of the year, to provide practice packages and to re-screen at the year's end.

Funding for this (\$3200) had been accessed through a Ministry Inner City School Grant.

Nineteen of our fifty four Kindergarten students missed significant items on the screening test; that is, 35% would qualify for Speech and Language Therapy. Under our present system, the school receives one day a week of service for Speech and Language, which would clearly be inadequate even to deal just with our Kindergarten population, never mind our other needy students. According to the Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Schools (1989), the Ministry of Education will continue to fund, through the Fiscal Framework, "one unit for every 2500 students." (p. 35). This means that in our decentralized district, our school is actually receiving more support than is mandated, and yet what we have is still woefully inadequate.

If one assumes that our Kindergarten class is fairly typical of our school population, approximately 130 students would be eligible for therapy and have speech and language delays, requiring modified or adapted programs and/or direct therapy.

After Marcia had completed her testing, letters were sent home to every Kindergarten parent (see appendix). Some letters indicated that the child's speech and language development were age

appropriate and encouraged the parent to continue reading and talking with his/her child; other letters indicated a delay in specified areas, included a package of activities to promote language development, and again encouraged the parent to read and speak to his/her child. The packages (see appendix) contained simple ideas for specific language areas; for example, one page provides hints on "reading to your child," while another is called "listening and following directions." All of the ideas are easy to follow, lively, relate to activities around the home, and take very little time.

Packages were also given to the Kindergarten and resource teachers. By raising awareness and providing simple ideas, many of the teachers felt quite comfortable doing the activities in class on a regular basis. One Kindergarten teacher commented,

"Some of the singing and games fitted in beautifully with our themes. My children particularly liked the fingerplays and we made finger puppets to go with them that were about our themes. "Ten Little Tug Boats" became ten ghosts at Hallowe'en, ten fish during our aquarium study, ten of Bo Peep's sheep when we were working on nursery rhymes and so on."

"They also loved the memory game and we often played that during snack time. Again we'd change it to fit what we were doing. We weren't just going on a picnic and taking food items. We were astronauts going into space and seeing planets, meteors, suns. We were environmentalists visiting a rain forest, etc. At the beginning I was shocked that some of the boys and girls just couldn't think of an appropriate item. We'd be in space and someone would suggest seeing a Ninja Turtle or a house or something. They just couldn't understand the big concept, the category. But the more we did it the better they became and some of our lists by the end of the year were incredible - even I couldn't remember them all. Our nursery rhyme character list went round our circle nearly twice - that's about thirty things to remember!"

Unlike Grace's family, who were willing to join in with her games, "Sometimes she could get Ma and Nana to join in when they weren't too busy," we knew some of our parents would not follow up with the packages. So we arranged that some of our older students would follow the directions and act as a big buddy to give more one on one practice time for the most needy students.

Carla: (Sitting next to her buddy in the hallway, leaning against the wall) Can you hear that the words "big" and "pig" rhyme? Let's see

if we can think of some words that rhyme with "red."

Melissa: We've done this game before. Um... bed said wed ...

Carla: Way to go. Mmm (thinking) I can think of another, l..., l..., le

Melissa: Led!

Carla: Right! (Acts out choking herself and lies on floor. Sits up.) D...

Melissa: Dead. You were dead! (laughs).

Carla: (Taps her head. Taps Melissa's head).

Melissa: Head!

Carla: Great! Oh, he's brown, he's cuddly, he's a bear and I love going to bed with him.

Melissa: Teddy.

Carla: Make his name shorter to rhyme with "red."

Melissa: Ted.

Carla: We did really well on that. Have you had enough or do you want another word?

Melissa: Let's play a new game.

Carla: O.K. I know you like this one. I've got Mrs. Devlin's grab bag here. (Picks up large bag from beside her). Let's guess first what could be in there.

Melissa: Make up, comb, kleenex, money, keys..... I dunno.

Carla: Mrs. Devlin tells me she's going to the beach after school.

What else might she put in?

Melissa: (Smiles) Sun stuff..... cream you rub on, bathing suit (giggle) towel, shorts, T-shirt.

Carla: What couldn't she fit in there?

Melissa: Her car, her son, a 'brella, one of those boxes that keep juice cold.....

Carla: Yes, an umbrella to sit under. Do you mean a cooler?

Melissa: Yes, a cooler.

Carla: You're right. That certainly wouldn't fit in this bag!

In June, Marcia re-tested those students who had shown delays. She used a similar format to the one used in September, but the actual conversations and stories were different. The level of the questions was also slightly higher to offset the developmental advances that should naturally take place. Of the nineteen, all had made progress and only seven were referred for direct therapy in grade one. All of the students would still need a rich language environment, but many of the problems look as if they can be handled within the classroom and with continued buddy support. All nineteen had a copy of the letter to their parents placed in their file to flag them as linguistically at risk and to ensure that we keep checking their progress.

We were delighted with the progress the students had made but cannot begin to predict what factors had been most influential. Certainly some maturation had occurred, so some gains may have been purely developmental. The fact that the children were now in

school and being exposed to a rich language environment, would help their language. The fact that we had certain specific areas targetted for us helped our teachers in designing units and themes. The package may have been a contribution that the home made; some parents used it regularly, while others did not. The package certainly helped us to target certain skills in school and in class, and finally the package was a tool that senior students could use comfortably in a buddy setting.

At the end of his Kindergarten year, Kris still had significant delays but had made good progress in the areas of storytelling, following directions and letter names. He is still shy in class, but went without tears with Marcia for his re-testing in June. His buddy Cal, a grade six student, worked with Kris daily. Kris really took to Cal, and Cal often gave up his soccer game at recess to play with Kris and his friends around the front of the school. Cal also taught Kris "cool" things like high fives, the latest way to wear a baseball hat, and how to wear jeans on the hips. It was through Cal that Kris met and played with his peers. The young boys were attracted to playing with Cal and then Cal ensured that Kris was included. Cal would model how to behave, how to talk to other kids and how to be patient to take the time to talk things through. Initially, the other children only played with Kris because Cal was there, but gradually Kris was able to maintain friendships without Cal. Kris remains on our

referral list for speech therapy next year.

As a result of this year's work, we have applied for and received a grant to screen incoming Kindergartens again next year and also increase our Speech and Language Therapy time to two days a week. This year we certainly raised awareness in our early primary staff; next year we need to build and expand on that to raise everyone's awareness so that we can provide better programming in classrooms and in the resource program, as well as expanding our buddying system. As the students grow older, the degree of parental involvement decreases, so it is important that we do as good a job as possible in school, and that we target children and remediate their problems as early as possible.

On my personal agenda for the Fall, is communicating with the Ministry of Health so that we can liaise regarding the services provided for pre-schoolers. This is mandated under the Inter-Ministerial Protocols. I need to explore who they serve, how support is accessed, and investigate whether or not the younger siblings of our students with language problems could be screened and/or served. I realise that I will run into the usual array of obstacles - yes, this child is eligible but the parent works or cannot provide transportation - and I need to be ready with some options. We really don't have a lot of room in our school, but if Health Unit therapy

could be given at the school instead of at the Health Unit, transportation is not an issue and daycares could walk children over. If the process for help is in place, there are always ways around the obstacles.

Also for Fall, we will be liaising with the Early Childhood Education department to see whether jointly we can operate a pre-school for some of our future at-risk students. The Early Childhood department are able to access grants that we are not, and we have applied for partial funding under the Inner City Schools initiative. The program would have to be offered free in order to reach its target audience. This project should be one that is win-win-win. The benefit to the students is obvious as they would be better prepared for Kindergarten. For the parents, it provides free pre-school classes. For our staff it ensures students who are ready to learn to read and write. For the Early Childhood department it provides job opportunities for its graduates and practicum opportunities for its students. The program would be extremely language rich, utilizing our librarian, our library, our speech and language therapist, and the resources in our half time Kindergarten room. We would also be able to apply some of the latest brain and thinking skills research (Healy, 1990). Pre-school parents would also have access to our Parenting programs and our Parenting library.

Why are Speech and Language so Important?

For the past four years, our primary staff has been dismayed by the language problems they have seen in some of our students.

Traditionally, children have arrived at school able to speak and listen, and ready to learn. Indeed, according to Chomsky (1972) children typically master speech by their fourth birthday. This delay had several ramifications for the staff. First, they had to spend increasing amounts of time teaching and modelling correct speech, a task for which their training institutions had not prepared them and for which the school setting is unsuited. Secondly, reading and writing readiness skills were irrelevant until speech and listening were in place. This in turn led to a delay in the development of reading and writing skills.

It was as a result of their concern that we arranged for the Kindergarten screening project and had some in-service sessions on language development and intervention techniques. The more we explored the more worrying the effects of poor language skills became. Poor language is often a pre-school omen for later learning disabilities. Lerner (1989) cites language delays, speech disorders and poor cognitive and concept development in pre-schoolers as major characteristics of later S. L. D. students. He also points out that cognition and concept development cannot form until language

becomes quite sophisticated. In contrast, the literature that has been produced on thinking skills and giftedness states that one of the twelve features of efficient learners is that they use precise language and thought (Lerner, 1989). From this we conclude that children whose language is at risk are likely to become our least efficient learners and our students with learning disabilities. But the effects are wider than this.

Sluckin (1981) speaks of the importance of verbal skills on the playground. Through his observations, he shows how children use rules to their own advantage, wriggle out of trouble, re-define situations to their own advantage ("we were just playfighting") and clarify situations to prevent trouble, if they can manipulate language. He also shows how children who haven't verbal dexterity, resort to fighting or withdrawal to deal with problems.

At our school, a number of the students who get rough do so because they can't use words to resolve a situation; they know the steps they should take, they know what they should do, they just haven't the skills, the words, to carry it off. When we teach the steps to avoid conflict and we teach about talking out problems, it is important that we use role play as a strategy so that we also rehearse the actual words that need to be used.

Children without verbal skills seem to have two options in their social interactions; become an isolate and possibly a victim, or become physically aggressive. Kris was already beginning to show these behaviors on the playground. Sluckin's and Healy's works provide a weight of evidence that lead us to the conclusion that students who are at risk linguistically, may also be our future behavior problems, or our social and emotional problems.

We constantly hear of employers wanting a work force that has collaborative and co-operative skills, employees who have strong inter-personal skills and good communications skills. It would seem that by Kindergarten, some students are excluding themselves from the job market unless speech and language assistance can be given.

In the more immediate future of these children, Sylwester (1992) and Healy (1990) write of greater brain plasticity during the early years, making learning easier at younger ages. We know that if students do not learn reading basics early, it is harder for them to do this later. Sylwester informs us that this is because it is much harder for the necessary brain neurons to develop after grade two. This is why so much learning assistance has traditionally been targetted at grades one and two. Our primary teachers talk fondly of the reading lightbulb going on, usually in Fall or Spring of grade

one, and it really seems as though everything magically clicks into place and, after all the struggles, the student begins to read.

This means that we now have to teach listening, speaking and reading and writing all by grade two; the load has grown, but the timeline remains rigid.

Is it surprising that we are seeing an increase in the number of students with language problems? Probably not. As early as 1964 Shipman and Hess were investigating language, cognition and social development as they related to mother-child interactions. In a society where, at every socio-economic level, we have single parents, working parents, and daycares, it is obvious that these interactions will be reduced, affecting language, intelligence and sociability (Healy, 1990). This puts an added responsibility on daycares, babysitters, pre-schools and schools to catch up on that "lost" development. Bernstein (1972) bleakly writes that "education cannot compensate for society," (p. 213) and thinks that interventions have an initial effect but then peter out. Data from projects such as Headstart seem to be somewhat contradictory in this regard too. Healy points to a number of societal changes that have led to altered brain development; the deficits she describes accurately reflect the results of our first Kindergarten screening.

Let us consider our options. We can do nothing and watch our language delayed children become our learning disabled students and/or our behavior students and/or our social and emotional outcasts. At an early age they will have problems learning to read and write, and down the road they will be our least employable citizens. By ignoring them now we are ensuring that they will become high cost problems later on (resource support, counselling, welfare, prison?).

Kris and his peers deserve better than that. He wants to learn. He just doesn't have the tools in place to do it. Next year we are planning screening, additional therapy time, investigating health unit pre-school support and establishing a free afternoon pre-school for at-risk children. All of this is to be funded through our Inner City Schools Grant. It is a measure of the importance that our staff has placed on this project, that they opted for this initiative in preference to additional resource and teacher librarian time.

"If Grace put her mind to it, she can do anything she want." It is important that Kris learns to believe that this is true for him too.

Hopefully these language boosting initiatives will help all of our Kris'.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Covered Bridge - Reflections and Dreams

Where We Have Been

Brian Doyle has written an eclectic book that includes characteristics of many genres and mirrors our resource program. Covered Bridge is sort of a historical novel. Our resource program grew out of what we had experienced and our past. Covered Bridge is kind of a fantasy because ghosts and apparitions appear. Our resource program is like a fantasy; we have a dream or vision and we try to close in on it but, like all apparitions, it floats out of our reach. Doyle's wicked sense of humour gives Covered Bridge the appearance of contemporary realism, and in our resource program we are working with reality and not neat textbook cases. Covered Bridge has an element of romance, and we care deeply for our students and try to establish emotional bonds or ties with them. Covered Bridge has an element of mystery, and on a daily basis we are trying to solve the mysteries that our children bring; we use clues to find out how Mary can learn best. We use clues to solve John's temper problem, and so on. Covered Bridge has moments of farce. If we can't laugh at ourselves and things that happen, we

wouldn't last long! When Barry carefully spent an hour weeding our carrots because he thought they were grass shoots, we laughed along with Barry.

Just as Covered Bridge refuses to be slotted into one genre, so our resource program covers a multitude of aspects and does not limit itself to dealing with high incidence identified students, as was originally intended.

So what does our resource program deal with? The A, B, C's of course!

-I'm worried about **A**. He's so depressed.

-**B's** not showing any emotion about being in a new foster home away from her family.

-**C's** Mom died over the weekend.

-I think **D** just disclosed abuse to me, but I don't really believe her.

-**E's** been absent all week and yet **F** saw him playing outside in the street after school.

-**G** was locked out of the house again last night all night.

-**H** won't settle down in class today. She just keeps bugging all the other kids.

-I burst into tears for no reason. That's the third time this week and it's not like him.

-**J** is pretending she doesn't understand me, and I know her English is

good enough for what I said.

-K just admitted to breaking our classroom window last night.

-L says M shoplifts.

-N is deliberately trying to get thrown out of class today.

-O won't say a word.

-P hasn't had any breakfast or dinner last night and is hungry.

-Q refused to do his work.

-R hasn't arrived at school. The home phone has been cut off and I'm worried about him.

-S just stole T's lunch and \$5.00 from her desk.

-U and V chased W last night after school and he's scared.

-X threatened Y.

-Z's Dad says he can't study families because he doesn't want us prying into their home life and yet it's on the curriculum for grade one socials and learning for living. What can I do with Z for those times for the next three weeks?

The alphabet of kids appear daily in an inner city school and some other letters arrive too! Why then did I zero in on the three students featured in this study? I wanted to select students who were representative of a larger community in the school and a larger community in our society. I also wanted to choose students whose educational problems and needs were dominantly in one area. I did not want to select some of our students with multiple diverse needs

because they cloud some of the issues I wanted to address, and are unique. A series of solutions that we adopt to resolve these complex needs are highly situational and not easily transferable to another setting. By choosing students with one dominant problem I hope that some of their comments and our actions may prove helpful for anyone reading this.

Rob was chosen to reflect our Severely Learning Disabled population. Of these students, only three had experience in the resource program and the segregated class setting; as I wanted to compare the two systems, one of these three was an obvious choice. I eventually chose Rob because one of the others had several compounding factors, and I felt Rob was more comfortable and more able to articulate his thoughts than the third student. Despite this, I notice that when writing about Rob, I am also talking of behavioral issues like attendance and motivation.

Britten reflects our Behaviorally Disordered students. At the present time Britten is not yet Ministry labelled, but has been referred for this. Britten was chosen because he provides a wide variety of behaviors on an on-going basis. If I had chosen others, I would have had to have spent days or weeks observing them waiting for an outburst, as I cannot be observing in one class all day because other students need immediate help. If I had been called during an

outburst, I would then not have observed the situation that led up to the explosion and this too would be pointless. Britten was also a good choice for me as we had run through our normal range of strategies, and by looking at him in depth, I hoped to be able to develop some more ideas to enable him to function in school and in the classroom.

Kris was selected as representing a fast growing group of students who provide a whole range of totally new problems for us to deal with. Again, by looking at him closely I hoped we would be able to refine and extend our interventions as well as provide a better situation for these students within the class, without this being at the expense of the rest of the children. Kris was selected because his problems were fairly severe and he is already showing signs of the lack of confidence that often accompanies this problem and which can lead to future issues of self esteem and poor behavior.

I did not consciously select three boys; they happened to be the best candidates for my purpose. I do not mean to imply that all students who are S. L. D., B. D. and Speech and Language delayed are boys. We have girls in all three categories, both labelled and unlabelled. It is not altogether surprising that boys were selected, though, as there are more boys than girls in every category in our school.

Where We Need To Go

Despite its successes and because all systems can be improved, I want to look at the changes that are needed right now for all of our students to be able to succeed in school. I admit that support services should always be evolving to meet changing needs and that a year from now some of these recommendations would be altered and probably a whole heap more will have surfaced.

AT THE MINISTRY LEVEL

Change here needs to be twofold. There needs to be a change in direction and a change in parts of the fiscal framework.

Michael Campbell, speaking on his radio show Moneytalks on July 16th, spoke of the need for total reform in the education system. He spoke of the need for vast curriculum revisions and a shift in the focus from fact dispenser to thought stimulator. This seems typical of the current schism between the educational vision of the Ministry and the vision of field educators, students and employers. Arnold and Brungardt (1983) wrote that schools perpetuate academic competition while students desire satisfaction, co-operation and social acceptance. Andry (1972) goes further and states that schools act as delinquent producing agents through their practices

of streaming, academic competitiveness and assisting special needs students by accenting their weaknesses, instead of building on their strengths and preparing them for life by developing social skills and their interests.

Students and researchers like Ross and Faviano (1972) stress the need for relevant education. This was offered in the Year 2000 documents, which freed educators and motivated children. Currently the Ministry is moving away from this creative vision and reverting to standards by grade level, measurable in traditional ways. Standards by grade might be appropriate for a mass produced industrial product where raw materials are also standardized, but in education where students arrive at different levels and with different capacities, expecting a standard output automatically condemns many to failure and many more to mediocrity. All of this will come to light with the new Ministry reporting procedures released in September, 1994 , available to schools in mid October, and due for implementation in November, 1994. I'm also not convinced that a standard citizen is what we want for our future leaders; give me genius, flair, originality yet none of these is required in a standardized test! The standardized tests re-instituted in 1994 at grade 4, 7 and 10, were of the traditional pencil and paper variety. The tests made a token effort towards thinking skills but were still middle class American in their bias; no

variance was given for special needs students or ethnic groups, the latter despite the Ministry's promotion of multi-culturalism. Apparently multi-culturalism is an item we teach but do not value enough to test or even adapt a test for.

One of the most relevant pieces of curriculum that the Ministry has produced was the Learning for Living program. Recently the Minister has abolished this in favour of a course of study called Personal Planning, claiming that parents ought to be covering topics like personal safety, relationships and responsibility. But what about the cases where parents do not cover these? Sylwester (1992) tells us that when a brain is under stress, it downloads; this means it can't think rationally, use logic, or be creative because its attention is on fight/flight. Given that we have more students under stress than ever before, Learning for Living provided one way to at least address the causes of stress and how to deal with it effectively.

According to Blanchard and Bowles (1993) to create "raving fans," three "secrets" have to be followed. The first is to decide what you want; the Ministry has done this. The second is to discover what the customer wants, and the authors go to some pains explaining that it is necessary to find out what **all** the customers want. I do not believe that this part is being done. Sullivan travelled the province listening to all parties to formulate Year 2000, but the current

Ministry is moving away from these initiatives, apparently without the broad base of input. The final secret is to deliver what you promise plus 1% more, which is difficult because many educators are uncommitted to the new changes and are unclear about exactly what the new changes are.

As well as needing to review the whole educational vision, I believe there need to be some changes in the fiscal framework to match the changes that have already taken place in our society. Changes that come to mind immediately are the one Speech and Language Therapist per 2500 students, and the one Psychologist per 3000 students. The Ministry says in its Inter Ministerial Protocols (1989) that it will fund B. D. programs, and facilities and teachers for these programs. Except for the money released in April 1994 for severely B. D. students I have seen no evidence of behavioral money at the school level. I understand that our district may choose to run its program of itinerant service using this money, but I would still comment that our entire district program is totally inadequate for the needs and the numbers of B. D. kids in our district.

Thornburg et al. (1991, p. 207) wrote,

"Schools must adapt to the changes in the family structure, values and attitudes, and the economy. They must work with the conditions and outcomes these changes have created in

ways that will undoubtedly be very different than in the past and even today. Change is never easy and always takes time - time that is running out. Schools, however, must take time to make the crucial changes necessary. Collaborating with other community service programs to alter the conditions that place children, youth, families, and society at risk is a must!"

Jehl and Kirst (1992, p. 97) add, "School leaders have increasingly realized that the education system alone has neither the ability nor the political clout to address the full range of children's problems." Rob, our S. L. D. student, also spoke of the need for Ministries to get together on cases, and Larson, Gomby, Shiono, Lewitt, and Behrman (1992) add, "For school-linked service efforts to be effective, the participating agencies will have to change how they deliver services to children and families and how they work with each other."

Our resource personnel already have a good rapport with our local services and, often despite regulations, work together for the benefit of the child. This needs to happen on an automatic basis, and the Ministries need to revise some of their regulations in order to facilitate this liaison. Having services located within the school would also be a plus, much as occurs in some of the States where the school is a community centre. Currently some of our newer schools, which are designed to include testing and consulting rooms, are able to offer office space informally to community agencies, but

this needs to be available to all schools, not just the ones that happen to have space.

AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

The importance of the quality of staff cannot be overstated. This often has nothing to do with quantifiable paper qualifications, but is a reflection of more nebulous attributes such as flair and talent, combined with a sense of mission and dedication. Some of the characteristics cited by Van Manen (1991) are crucial, not only in the resource personnel but in all teachers, especially in an inner city setting. These teachers certainly need tact as defined by Van Manen, "a tactful person seems to sense what is the right thing to do," (p. 126) and must always be ready and able to improvise when unanticipated situations arise; the unanticipated is the norm in inner city schools.

Teachers also need to show a genuine interest, because "learning stems from interest, and forced or faked interest leads to superficial learning," (p.196). Van Manen tells of poorly prepared teachers who are indecisive, insecure and inconsistent and who in turn create situations where students become disorderly, disruptive, inattentive and unwilling to learn. He reminds us that the word

discipline comes from disciple or follower of a great teacher. He concludes that "children need teachers and parents who have not lost the faith that miracles do indeed happen in life and in education and are not rare," (p. 204). How much more important is it then, in an inner city setting where so many parents have given up on their children, that the teachers provide an environment of hope and a belief in the ability of each child?

Staffing is crucial and yet contractual language in many districts requires that vacancies be filled on a seniority basis. Teachers and administrators struggle with these limitations, as it is apparent to all that some otherwise fine educators are unsuited to inner city students, just as some educators who thrive in an inner city setting may be unsuited at another school. Seniority can be programming a teacher, and his/her students, for failure. Equally, using seniority means that a school can no longer look at the overall staffing needs - for example, a school may need someone who teaches in a regular classroom and who has an interest and/or leadership in technology. The only way that these positions can be filled now is through specialist postings, using the expertise for providing teacher preparation time.

At the school observed, the resource program works well for the students for whom it was initially designed, those labelled S. L. D. and E. M. H. Those students who are B. D., those with compound problems and the sheer volume of numbers of at risk students provide a huge challenge.

Our students who are at risk behaviorally need consistent expectations, consistently enforced. They do not need consistent consequences, just individualized and appropriate ones. For example, a grade one child who plays a little roughly once and knocks over another student should not receive an identical punishment to the grade seven student with a history of aggressive behavior, who deliberately and viciously punches a younger, smaller child. The punishment must not only fit the crime but also the child. We have struggled with consistency and have decided to set a committee to work, publicizing our procedures and expectations, and encouraging all staff members to take ownership of all students at all times. Thus, staff members may not officially be on assigned supervision, but on seeing a child throwing rocks, they will go out of their way to correct the child. Some of our staff were reluctant to do this as they didn't know how to deal with some of our behavior students in other classes. To help this, we are talking about at least one child at each staff meeting, explaining strategies and contracts, and providing a picture to go with each description.

Our committee has also arranged to make posters of our expectations and display them around the school, have ordered some motivational posters, and intend to promote a goal of the week throughout next year, the goal to reflect an area of social responsibility.

We already have a system of time outs, alternate classrooms, and supervised study for misbehavior at recess or lunch, but we must continue to talk about these routines as we have several new staff members next year. These systems are really only bandaids for class management and do not address the root of the problem. So we are also advocating for our own behavior teacher to be a mentor to the students who are at most risk or who are going through a troubled period in their lives. Our Child Care Worker is wonderful in this regard, but she is swamped, and by having a teacher, I.E.P.'s can be managed and the students can take certain classes with the teacher and do some alternate studies, for example, survival, or outdoor education. Also the C.C.W and the teacher could collaborate to plan and work with the children; two heads are usually better than one. Perhaps job shadowing situations could also be addressed for these kids; our district Stay in School program is cutting back on our participation from 14 students to 2 to equalize distribution among all elementary schools, so the need is certainly there.

As a staff we often worry that our incentive programs and pull out activities make it seem as though we are rewarding poor behavior. We try to ensure that well behaved students also benefit from our swimming, buddying, or ice cream treats, but Rob made an insightful remark about this when we talked. "We don't mind when B. D. kids go out to do something else. It's just like having an easier math program for someone else; it's what they need and what helps them. It also gives them and us a break. It's O. K."

Truancy is an issue that also needs to be addressed at the school and district levels. Unfortunately, some parents are not very supportive in this regard, either because they feel helpless to deal with it, "I just can't get him up in the morning," said one Mom of her grade two child, or because they support the excuse for absence, "She doesn't feel very good today, so I'm keeping her home." Attendance is not an R.C.M.P. or a Ministry of Housing and Social Services issue; it is the school's mandate. We phone to wake up families, we send our Child Care Worker to pick up students or to drop off work for the day, depending on the situation. We offer incentives, provide buddies for coming to school, and contact local agencies if they are involved with the family. If a situation persists, we write a formal letter regarding the parent's responsibility to ensure attendance and sometimes offer home schooling.

Under the School Act, the Superintendent may prosecute, but I do not know of an instance of this as it would appear to be a lose-lose situation and may not change a student's attendance pattern - then what are you going to do? One or two truant children take up a great deal of time and effort, and often lead to a sense of enormous frustration. Thankfully elementary truants are fairly rare right now. However, I think this problem will be one that grows. On the brighter side, perhaps with advances in technology, in the future these students may be tutored at home academically through a fax/modem. They will still miss the social, emotional and physical aspects of their education, but at least they might glean some basics.

Our low incidence students also bring with them some support concerns. For some students mainstreaming is not a great issue in the early grades until they reach the stage where they need less academics and more life skills, which cannot be realistically carried out within the regular classroom. For some students, the multiply handicapped or severely handicapped, much of what goes on in a regular classroom is irrelevant to their needs. The warning here seems to be to balance constantly the needs of the individual with the needs of the class.

Our experience with low incidence students has been generally positive because the funding levels support the students well. For example, our non-ambulatory, cerebral palsied, non-verbal little boy receives twenty hours of teacher assistant time a week. This is a good level of support as it provides him with a lot of help and yet requires that for five hours a week of class time, he is independent; this degree of support makes his mainstreaming viable and successful. His T.A. adapts class lessons for him on his touch talker, and he is able to participate in nearly all classes. In another scenario, an autistic child only received eight hours of T.A. time a week which made mainstreaming extremely difficult for him; we were able to appeal the level based on his disability, and now he too receives twenty hours, which is appropriate. These kinds of levels and this flexibility enable mainstreaming to work for the children.

For our low incidence students, we must continue to learn and adapt to their needs. Every child seems to come with his own set of unique equipment and her own set of unique problems. As a staff we have grown professionally from working with these students, and many of our regular population have benefitted from the new strategies and approaches we have employed. Our regular students have also gained by having these pupils in the school. At first our children tried to do everything for our handicapped students, but they and we have learned to back off and let our low incidence pupils

learn some independence. The determination and frustrations that our handicapped children have to deal with has been a lesson to all of us, and we have reached a point where we see beyond the handicap to the child himself. Craig is no longer, "the boy in the wheelchair" and is now, "Craig and Steve, the little monkeys, who kept playing when the bell went and arrived back late to class."

As time passes, we will have more low incidence children and the needs of the ones we already have will continue to change; we must stay flexible and ready to learn, and keep their needs foremost in our minds.

Despite the laws, the School Act and the Charter, I believe that some students should not be mainstreamed. For example, when a child needs a totally separate, modified curriculum and is not benefitting from social interaction with his/her peers, as with extreme autism, the student might gain more from a different setting. The key here, as Ministerial Order 13/89 (2) states, is that all students should be placed in regular classes, "Unless the educational needs of a handicapped student indicate that the student's educational program should be provided otherwise;" that is, the decision is based on the special student's needs.

Equally, I believe there are some severely behaviorally disordered students who are so disturbed, disturbing and violent, that they create a risk for others and might need an alternate setting. This I envisage as not a special class within a regular school, but a totally separate location, possibly residential, where their programming would be completely modified. The key here is what is best for the student and the environment they are creating for others.

I do not make these suggestions lightly, and do not think they should be used to provide a situation that is easier for the school or the teacher; "Jenny is difficult to deal with so let's put her in a special class," would not be appropriate. That is why I state the criteria for such a decision as being what is best for the student and not what is best for the teacher or school. I also believe that the cases where students should be removed from regular classes are few and far between - but they do exist. After four years in my present school, we've had some challenging students and yet I don't think any of them would have been better off in a segregated setting, although many would have benefitted from higher levels of service.

We know we have to intervene early for a number of our students, and especially for those with speech and language problems. We plan to continue our Kindergarten screening program next year and increase awareness among staff of the difficulties the students

have and how we can help them. We will never be able to provide direct therapy for all those who need it, so we had better utilize our classroom teachers, our resource staff and our senior students to help out. We also plan to run afternoon pre-school; this would be free for the siblings of children in our school who are at risk, or those who are recommended by the health unit.

We had considered a full day Kindergarten program, but rejected it. A neighbouring school ran this and found that by the afternoon, the students were too tired to take in new learning. Also, spaced practice is known to lead to more effective learning; it allows a newly developed neuron to become embedded and access other related knowledge, thus solidifying learning (Sylwester, 1989). We intend to have our Speech and Language Therapist work with the teacher of our pre-school group and the children themselves, hopefully providing them with a rich language environment and getting them ready for Kindergarten the following year. To accommodate this and to provide additional therapy to children, tutoring guidelines to our students, and teaching ideas to our staff, we have also doubled our language support time to two days a week.

We must also address a management issue. With referrals going to resource teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, E. S. L. teachers, hearing teachers, occupational therapists, behavior

teachers and counsellors, it is really easy to fragment the service offered to a child. This happens most frequently with those students who have compound needs.

Casper is an example. He is an E.S.L. student with some learning problems separate from that. He also has difficulty hearing, some articulation problems and is labelled B. D. For a short period of time Casper was seeing the Counsellor, his resource teacher and T.A., the E.S.L. teacher, our C.C.W., the behavior program's itinerant teacher, T.A. and C.C.W., the language therapist, and the district hearing impaired teacher. The result was that he was out of the class two and a half hours a day and receiving help in class for an hour more. This was the last thing Casper needed. He needed consistency, the chance to bond and relate to one person, and to feel part of the class. In our efforts to help, we had made the situation worse. He soon let us know this through his behavior!

Casper's is an extreme case, but it is really easy to fragment services to children. Most of our children who need help, also need a meaningful contact with an adult, a kind of mentorship, partly to enhance their self esteem and partly because many do not have this outside of school. It is asking a great deal from teachers and T.A's to be able to cover several areas, such as Hearing, Speech and Learning Assistance, but this is what the child needs. For the

coming year we are trying to set up our support timetable so that consulting time is built in with our district experts, so that we can minimize the number of different contacts that take place. We are also planning to ensure that each student with compound needs has an assigned mentor who co-ordinates services and keeps track of the number of contacts a child has.

BACK TO OUR TRIO

I have described life at school for Rob, Britten and Kris and some of the difficulties they face. In each case I have described how the school is currently serving their needs and what we are planning to do in their futures. I have tried to assess what needs they have that we have not addressed, but this is often problematic as I may overlook things, and they don't necessarily perceive their needs as different or an issue. In addition to our trio, we are also responding to the needs of many other students and our student support program is one that is constantly evolving and constantly stretched to the max.

A downside is that the program is extremely challenging to implement; just as one issue is licked, another rears its head. Just as we finally get a schedule that works for everyone, a desperately

needy student enroles and we are back to square one! I am extremely fortunate in having an incredibly creative and talented resource staff, but I have concerns for their health and workload. Routine would be boring but occasionally a little routine would be a pleasant change.

Barth' s analogy of a tennis shoe in a tumble dryer describes student support services to a tee. But whereas a dryer has an end to its cycle and, after using energy, comes to a rest, our resource staff live in a never-ending cycle that totally drains them and will eventually burn out their motors. Increasingly, schools will see staff members needing transfers and stress leaves as the pressure of responding to increasingly divergent needs weighs against producing standard students with standard learning and standard grades.

Yes, we can and will improve our services to Rob, Kris and Britten, but really they are pretty fortunate. They have a number of things in place for them and the most important thing we do is provide mentorship; each has an adult advocate with whom to work. Rob has Mr. Lewis; they work together, do projects together and spend time with each other. Britten has his classroom teacher, Mr. Hughes, who provides a forgiving atmosphere, offers patience but firmness and consistency, and who gives Britten a great deal of extra time. Kris

has Marcia for an advocate. He sees her weekly and she organizes materials for his class, a big buddy to work with on a daily basis, and home ideas for Mom. With the magnitude of needy students and their increasingly complex needs, providing quality adult time becomes incredibly difficult in an inner city setting.

WHY COVERED BRIDGE?

Why did I select Covered Bridge to relate to these conclusions? It sounds as if the diversity, dedication and talent needed to operate our resource program is more akin to The Little Engine That Could! Well, a bridge is a pathway that gives a transition from one piece of land to the next. Our support services give students a transition over the curriculum rapids to their future lives. The fact that the bridge is covered means that it offers protection; that is what we try to do for our students - give them academic, emotional and social shelter.

Brian Doyle has a zany style of writing; he speaks of hearing your mailbox "squeak (or whatever it did - some squealed like little pigs, some groaned like cows, and some went chunk like an axe hitting wood.)" He also uses humour extensively. The book begins by

describing Hubbo, the main character, and his dog, Nerves, as they see a ghost appear in the covered bridge, late at night.

"Nerves stopped knocking and went stiff.

Then we heard a big splash.

That is, I heard a big splash.

Nerves didn't hear a thing.

He was passed out." (p. 10).

Chapter titles are written like newspaper headlines, for example, "Baby Tells Lies Before It Can Talk," and characters are depicted with humour. Mickey Malarkey, the oldest inhabitant, is described as the biggest liar in town.

"Went out last night after dark on the river

Filled the boat with catfish!' Said Old Mickey Malarkey.

'*Filled* the boat, Mickey?'

'Well, filled a *tub* and a couple of buckets.'

'A *tub* and a couple of buckets?'

'O.K., a *tub* then. A *tub full.*' " And so on, to,

" No! I didn't go fishing. I hate fishing." (p. 77-78).

In the same way our staff needs a strong sense of humour, especially those working with some of our more challenging children. Doyle's humour is carried off in good fun and is not made at other people's expense, and this mirrors what we try to do and model for our

students. Unfortunately, much current comedy comprises of put-downs and quips made at the expense of others, so we try to provide a positive alternative for this.

Doyle juxtaposes taut action with his humour. He describes a train crashing into a chipwagon,

"We got the horse unhitched just in time," and then adds the visual humour,

"The air was full of potato chips and paper plates and toothpicks for about half an hour. It poured salt.

And it rained grease." (p. 14).

This is very much as we behave on a daily basis. We deal with the serious, tragic, moving and frustrating things that happen to our students, while trying to be positive and providing them with a sense of hope and humour. Frequently, I put down the phone from an abuse call to M.H.S.S. and have to rush to a class to celebrate a new discovery, or see a new project. Juxtaposition happens lots in inner city schools.

We also have to bring a sense of play and fun to what we do. Doyle brings this sense of fun into his writing technique; he carefully introduces characters and situations so that he can manipulate them into settings where he can write the tongue-twister, "Fortunately

for Fleurette Featherstone Fitchell, Foolish Father Foley from Farrelton was far from fixing her with his fault-finding," (p. 57) so that it makes sense and is logical within its context.

Doyle writes in a style that echoes children's speech. Omens are delivered forthrightly, "A while later, some dead trout floated by. They floated on their backs, their white stomachs shining in the sun, the dark pink of the inside of their gills like little ribbons around their necks," (p. 26). This reflects how children sometimes report tragic or poignant information. While visiting a friend at the local hospital, I ran into one of our grade three students at the pop machine.

Me: Hello, Angela. What are you doing here?

Angela: Visiting Mom.

Me: How is she doing?

Angela: She's in the psychiatric ward, there (pointing). She was drunk last night, (frowns) but I got scared when bubbly stuff started coming out of her mouth like a cartoon (character) after he's eaten soap."

As well as Doyle's style and technique setting a tone that feels like our school, his plot complexities also strike a chord. By the book's end, Doyle has the mystery of a ghost haunting the covered bridge, a

sad mailman whose fiance leaped from the bridge and who is buried outside of the local church graveyard, the Proulx development company who are building a new bridge and the controversy about what will happen to the old covered bridge, the romance between Hubbo and Fleurette, Father Foley who delivers scathing sermons, and a pet goat, all of which need resolving for the book to have a happy conclusion. This feels exactly like our school, where we have our alphabet of students whose needs we juggle on a daily basis, hoping for and working towards a happy ending.

THE LAST WORD

When I spoke to the grade seven group about research and information gathering, I had explained the subject of my writing, and in return the group had spoken to me frankly about our needy pupils. They indicated that they liked the fact that anyone at our school who needed it could get help, that no-one was made to feel different or de-valued, that they were all treated as individuals with individual strengths and weaknesses, and that there were a number of people to whom they could go for help.

"That's really important. I mean, I couldn't tell Mr. Green if I had a personal problem. I might need to talk to a lady, like Mrs. Mac. But if I needed help with some project on the computer, or just some

project, Mr. Green would be great. So it's nice that I can choose someone who can give me the best help. It's pretty nice of all those people to be ready to give me help, too. (Laughs, then jokingly) Mind you I'm a pretty nice kid, you know." (Good natured groans from the others).

One of these students, who had remained quiet during this discussion, came to me in June with a crumpled piece of paper. Lacey slipped this into my hand.

I know that Jason's special
He's autistic - you can see.
He whoops and rocks, my story buddy,
And then he runs from me.
But he's also kind and gentle
And though I'm told he can't react,
At lunch he smiles and hugs me.
We call it our secret pact.

In my class Gloria's special,
She comes from Vietnam.
Who cares if she can't write English
And she's never eaten ham?

She tries so hard in class,
While others barely start.
But she speaks more clearly than all of us
Through her beautiful "Gloria's" art.

And clearly Craig is different;
He can't walk or talk at all,
And when he loosens his straps
You know he's heading for a fall.
He squeals and jerks in assemblies,
Mrs. Kelly by his side.
Somewhere in that uncontrolled body,
A little boy's prisoner inside.

So many different children,
You can see it with your eyes,
But if you treat them differently,
It's you I will despise.
In life's gene lottery
Luck is really hit and miss,
But treating differences differently -
Isn't that prejudice?

And isn't Mike also special
Now his Dad's back on the booze?
And what about Robbie - whose Dad's gone for custody,
And we all know he's going to lose?
And what about Trish, whose Mom threw her out
In the middle of the night?
She walked the streets till 3 a.m.
Then lit a fire out of spite.

So when you're deciding who'll gain
From support and other good deeds,
Keep remembering we're all unique
And we all have special needs.

If this is how our students are thinking and feeling, I think we must
be doing something right.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purposes of this project, whenever the following terms appear, they refer to the specific definition that follows and have no other connotation or meaning:

Ministry Identified/Labelled: This refers to a student who falls into specific special needs categories as specified by Ministry of Education criteria. In the past this student could be placed in a segregated special class and spend brief periods integrated with "regular" students. If all special classes were full, the student could be wait listed until a vacancy occurred. Basically, students are identified either as low incidence or as high incidence. A Ministry label currently carries with it contractual obligations. The number of identified students who can be mainstreamed into one regular class is usually limited, for example, in Langley's contract only three labelled students are allowed in each class and only one of these can be a B. D. student.

Low Incidence: This term covers many specific disabilities. A child who falls into this category would be a very needy student; he

or she may be autistic, have cerebral palsy, or be trainable mentally handicapped. Within this category there are two main levels of support based on the severity of handicap - severe/profound and moderate. A student in this category would be funded for some specific support time; for example, in Langley, a decentralized District, a child who is classified as moderate low incidence would be provided with resource teacher support and approximately eight hours of teacher assistant time each week.

High Incidence: A child in this category may be severely behaviorally disordered, educably mentally handicapped, gifted, or have severe learning disabilities. When the inclusion movement began, it was students from this category who were to be mainstreamed into regular classes with resource program support.

Behaviorally Disordered (B.D.): A child who is designated B. D. shows a variety of behaviors - defiance, violence, irrationality, withdrawal, fantasizing, perseveration. The behaviors have to be extreme and have to continue over a period of time to warrant eligibility for labelling. B. D. children are frequently the students who disrupt classes and frustrate teachers most. In the latest Ministry guidelines for identification, the school has to indicate that outside agencies are also involved with the family; this new criterion can be problematic because the school can suggest, refer

and counsel a parent to seek outside support, but many families are most reluctant to access help or are unable to follow through the referral process.

Educably Mentally Handicapped (E.M.H.): These students are identified by psycho-educational assessment performed by a Child Psychologist. These children tend to show a low level of performance and a low level of ability on the standardized tests that are used.

Severely Learning Disabled (S.L.D.): These child are also identified by psychological testing; they demonstrate an average to high level ability and yet a low level of achievement. The specific causes for this gap may be varied.

At-Risk/Grey Area: These students do not fall into the Ministry guidelines for identification and yet may require special help. They may perform at a low level and do not have average or better ability to be labelled S. L. D., or not be low enough to be labelled E. M. H. They may have medical problems, they may not learn in traditional ways (i.e. have a different learning style), they may have some behavior problems, they may have social or emotional troubles, the family may be highly transient, there may be some family issues that affect the child. The specific causes may again be very varied,

but the bottom line is that the child is perceived to be at risk in school; this may be at risk for academic failure, truancy, drop out, suicide, or isolation.

Inclusive Schools: This is a school that provides services for all of the students within its neighbourhood. That is, all students have the right to attend regardless of physical or mental ability or disability. These schools also have a philosophy and attitude of acceptance; a vive la difference approach.

Special Needs Students: Narrowly this term is applied to those students who qualify for Ministry labelling. In the school being studied, this term includes at risk students.

Inner City School: This term applies to those schools whose catchment area fulfills certain criteria established by the Ministry of Education for grant purposes. Criteria include socio economic status of the school community, number of families on income assistance, participation in the Ministry meals program, transiency and absenteeism rates, percentage of E. S. L., immigrant and refugee students, number of health care issues referred, number of Social Services referrals, number of single parent families, and student achievement levels. This year's grant application form refers to these high percentages of at risk students as "a critical mass."

Resource Program/Student Services: Originally these were site based personnel who worked with those students who were Ministry identified. In the school in question, due to the large numbers of at risk students, the resource program was designed to support all students who needed help. Thus, this program incorporated a regular Learning Assistance Program which would otherwise address the needs of the unlabelled children. The resource team includes Teacher Assistants, Resource Teachers, an E. S. L. Teacher, a part time Teacher-Librarian who provides some gifted and enrichment programming, a Child Care Worker and the half time school Counsellor. All of these people are site based, as opposed to District personnel, and work within the school.

Helping Teachers: These two teachers are District staff and can be invited to observe and consult with resource personnel and regular class teachers regarding programming and resources for identified students. They are experts in the field of special education.

Psychologists: These are District staff who work in a number of schools. They may observe and consult with staff or they may put a child through a specific series of tests for information, planning and/or identifying purposes. A psychologist will make a recommendation to have a student labelled if test results and other

data fulfill the Ministry profile.

Speech and Language Therapists: These are District staff who work in a number of schools. The therapists test and make recommendations for further action and programming, as well as provide direct therapy. At the school in question, extra Speech and Language time was purchased through the Inner City Schools grant so that all Kindergarten students could go through a basic screening process to provide early identification and remediation for potential problems.

Behavior Program: This is a District program whereby additional support is provided for students who have been labelled. Support is usually offered in terms of incentive programs and irregular itinerant teacher/teacher assistant support.

Integrated: This is when a Ministry identified student, who would be enrolled and spend most of his/her time in a segregated class, would spend limited time in a regular class, traditionally for subjects like art and P.E.

Mainstreamed: This is when a Ministry identified student would be enrolled and spend most of his/her time in a regular class and receive resource program support.

APPENDIX 2

All Kindergarten students were screened by our Speech and Language Therapist, Marcia. After the testing, each parent received one of the following two letters explaining the results.

Dear Parents of Kindergarten Children:

Your child has recently participated in a screening program held at the school, which surveyed the speech and language skills most children of kindergarten age should have attained. The screening session was about 20 minutes in length and briefly looked at the following communication areas:

Articulation (sounds of speech)

General language knowledge skills (such as counting, colours)

Vocabulary

Syntax (how sentences are put together)

Auditory Memory (remembering what you hear)

Following directions

Storytelling

Verbal reasoning

Letter names and sounds they make

Conversational skills

Voice quality

Fluency (absence of stuttering)

You will be pleased to know that your child _____ passed the screening and that his/her speech and language skills appear to be adequate for kindergarten age at this time.

I would encourage you to keep reading every night to your child, even if only for 15-20 minutes. Our language and learning grow so much when we see and hear new vocabulary words in various sentence types and are presented with so many new ideas we can read about in books. Children also learn more about letter names, the sounds they make and how to sound out the words they encounter.

Good communication skills are so important, both in school, at home and in our busy world. Have fun reading and talking together!!

Marcia Jones

Registered Speech/Language Pathologist

Dear Parents of Kindergarten Children:

Your child has recently participated in a screening program held at the school, which surveyed the speech and language skills most children of kindergarten age should have attained. The screening session was about 20 minutes in length and briefly looked at the following communication areas:

Articulation (sounds of speech)

General language knowledge skills (such as counting, colours)

Vocabulary

Syntax (how sentences are put together)

Auditory Memory (remembering what you hear)

Following directions

Storytelling

Verbal reasoning

Letter names and sounds they make

Conversational skills

Voice quality

Fluency (absence of stuttering)

Results of the screening indicated that your child _____ had difficulty with the items which are marked by asterisks above.

Included are some suggestions on the following pages which may be helpful to try with your child to encourage development in these areas. You as parents can play a very important role in boosting your child's speech, language and learning skills.

In the late spring I will be re-screening your child to see how his/her communication skills are progressing. Good communication skills are so important, both in school, at home and in our busy world. Have fun reading and talking together!!

Marcia Jones

Registered Speech/Language Pathologist

APPENDIX 3

The following pages provide examples of the materials that were sent home with those students who demonstrated delays in specific areas.

CONVERSATION AND SOCIAL LANGUAGE

Conversation makes the world go around!! We use conversation when we first meet people. It is an important way that we gather information about others and our world. Some children have difficulty carrying a conversation. It is important to be able to talk to others in order to "get by" in this world. Here are some basic ideas to try with your child.

1. Get the listener's attention. Make sure you get your child's attention before you talk with him/her. Also, encourage your child to do the same with you when he/she has something important to talk about. For example, if you are washing the dishes when your child wants to talk, stop for a moment and give attention to your child.

2. Eye contact. Make sure your child looks at you when you are both having a conversation. Good eye contact lets the listener know the speaker is sincere. It also lets the speaker know that the

listener is really interested in what he has to say. It sounds so simple, but think of the last time you spoke with someone who didn't look at you when you had something to say - it probably irked you.

3. Encourage your child to stay on the topic. If your child wanders to another subject before he should, tell him/her. For example, "Wait, we're talking about dinosaurs. Let's finish."

4. Making comments. Encourage your child to take part in a conversation by making comments. This exposes the child to more language than just asking questions.

5. Do not let your child interrupt others. If you or some other family member is talking at the dinner table and your child interrupts, talk about how people do not interrupt others in conversation. For example, "Oh, don't interrupt your brother. It will be your turn in a moment."

6. You can choose books that teach social skills. These may include being polite, showing respect for others, or making friends. The vocabulary in these books is important for children to learn in that they use words for feelings other than "happy" or "sad." The Berenstain Bears book series are excellent for this idea.

7. Role playing. Act out stories or use puppets to take on the roles of characters. Show how they carry on a "good" conversation. Play "dumb" with your character, interrupting or changing the topic and pause, waiting for your child to tell you that this was incorrect. If he/she does not catch it, explain in words something like this, "Oops, I interrupted. We don't interrupt in conversations."

8. Conversation calendar. Try the activities on the conversation calendars included. Have fun talking with your child!!

STORYTELLING

Being able to tell stories is a very important communication skill. It helps children become excellent conversationalists and good learners. They can talk about events which happened before or happened at school "right now" or which may occur in the future. Stories provide a beginning, middle and end. Children can explain "how to" procedures such as making sandwiches or getting ready for a trip. One learns how to "keep to the point" by staying on the topic and relating the most important information. Using precise and specific vocabulary is also required to relate a story in the most meaningful way.

1. **Choose books where pictures tell the story** in order to help your child remember the main events as the story unfolds. Stay away from books that illustrate primarily only the characters instead of the events.
2. **Wordless picture books** are books that tell a story through the pictures alone without any written words. Let your child make up his/her own story as you look at the pictures. Then take a turn yourself thinking of a different twist for your story. You can ask the librarian to help you find some of these books.

3. Cumulative stories. These repeat sentence patterns and build on previous sentences to help teach sequencing. Stories like This is the House that Jack Built and The Lady who Swallowed a Fly are some good examples to try.

4. Beginning, middle, end. When you read a book to your child, talk about the beginning, middle and end of the story. "What happened in the beginning?"

5. Fingerplays and songs. These help children remember and tell stories. Children can use their hands to tell a story or sing a song to tell a story. Included for you are a few on another sheet. More of these are available at the library.

6. Story mapping. Begin to tell a story and stop from time to time and ask your child to draw a picture of what is happening each time you stop. Use a large sheet of paper to draw on and connect events with a "road", like a map, until you come to the end.

7. Draw and tell stories. Tell stories which involve drawing as you speak. These help children to organize story sequences. One is included for you, but you can think of other stories to tell which have a beginning, middle and end.

DRAW AND TELL STORY

Two Little Bugs

One day two little round bugs
were flying around and around.

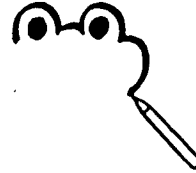


These are the two bugs.

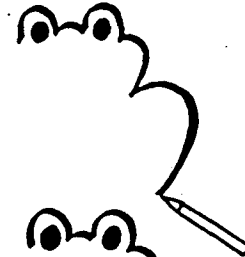
They flew over your house and
over my house just like this ...



They zoomed around a beautiful
tree and came to a beautiful
lake.



Away they went around the lake
like this

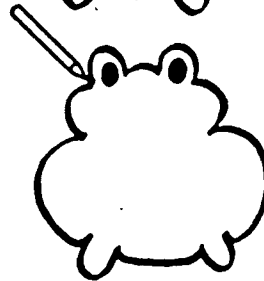


They flew around a sail boat
and they flew around a row
boat.



Around the lake they flew.

"Whee, what fun," said one little
round bug.



They even flew out over the waves of the lake just like this... All of a sudden they saw a little green animal. He was sitting as still as a statue. The green animal liked little round bugs for supper. His long tongue shot out and just missed the two little round bugs. "Whew," said one little round bug rather shakily. "Who was that?" Do you know who it was? IT WAS MR. FROG.



FINGERPLAYS AND SONGS

The Rain

Pitter-patter raindrops

Falling from the sky (Wiggle fingers to imitate rain)

Here is my umbrella (as if to open an umbrella)

To keep me safe and dry (hands over head)

When the rain is over

And the sun begins to glow (Make circle with arms)

Little flowers start to bud (cup two hands together)

And grow and grow and grow. (spread hands apart slowly)

Bringing Home My Baby Bumblebee Song

I'm bringing home my baby bumblebee

Won't my mommy be so proud of me

I'm bringing home my baby bumblebee

OOOO - it stung me!

I'm squishing up my baby bumblebee

Won't my mommy be so proud of me

I'm squishing up my baby bumblebee

OOOO - it's all over me!

I'm wiping up my baby bumblebee

Won't my mommy be so proud of me

I'm wiping up my baby bumblebee

OOOO - now look at me!

Ten Little Tug Boats

(Make ten little tug boat silhouettes and stick one on each finger)

Ten little tug boats out in the bay

Let's see how they get through the day

(Place fingers outspread palms down on a flat surface in front of you. Move both hands away from you slightly after each couplet.)

Ten little tug boats coming down the line

One goes to work, now there are nine.

(Hide a finger by bending it after each couplet.)

Nine little tug boats keep their row straight

But one slows down so now there are eight.

Eight little tug boats one blue as heaven

It needs repair so now there are seven.

Seven little tug boats are up to tricks

One backs up so now there are six.

Six little tug boats. Goodness sakes alive!

One toots down the bay, which leaves only five.

Five little tug boats headed for the shore

One collides with a barge, so now there are four.

Four little tug boats are as busy as can be

One has private business so now there are three.

Three little tug boats to take the liners through

One reports for duty so now there are two.

Two little tug boats are ready for the run

One runs out of fuel; that leaves only one.

The last little tug boat pulls a liner to shore

Now he's exhausted there are no more.

Two Brave Bunnies

Hoppity hop hop; hoppity hop hop;

Hoppity hop hop.

(Make a bunny of each fist with two fingers for bunny ears)

"I can hop high!" cried Bunny Number One,

And he hopped and he hopped in the light of the sun.

(Hop right hand)

"I can hop low!" cried Bunny Number Two,
But she stubbed her toe on a drop of dew.

(Hop left hand, make bunny fall.)

Now these bunnies hopped in the cool fresh air
Until they saw a fox sneak out of his lair.

Then they hopped and they hopped to their home, sweet home
And promised their mother no more to roam.

(Make bunnies again and have them hop home.)

Military Band

Listen to the band parade

Little snare drums swell and fade

(Beat out the rhythm with index fingers on table)

Rat-a-tat-tat,

Rat-a-tat-tat,

Rat-a-tat-tat, tat,tat.

Down the street the marchers come

I can hear the big old drum.

(Beat bass drum like marching drummer with imaginary sticks in
each hand)

Br-r-r-rum,

Br-r-r-rum,

Br-r-r-rum-tum-tum.

Flutes are playing shrill and high
As the players go parading by.
(Use fingers to play imaginary flute)

Deedle-dee,
Deedle-dee,
Deedle-dee-dee.

The big bassoons rumble and roar,
Deep bass notes out of them pour.

(Play imaginary bassoon)

Rumble-rum,
Rumble-rum,
Rumble-rum-rum.

I can hear the trumpets too,
Sounding clear and loud and true.

(Play imaginary trumpet)

Toot-a-toot-too,
Toot-a-toot-too,
Toot-a-toot-too-too-too.

Slide trombones sound loud and sweet,
As the band marches down the street,
(Play imaginary trombone)

Tra-dum,tra-dum,

Tra-tra-tra,

Tra-dum, tra-dum, dum, dum.

LISTENING AND FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Sometimes children find listening for information difficult. They may learn to rely mainly on visual cues and pictures to help them understand. If the child doesn't listen to or understand the teacher's verbal instructions, he/she may cope by watching or copying what other children do in the classroom. Pictures are important for understanding new concepts, but children also need activities and stories where they must rely on listening alone for information. Here are a few ideas to encourage listening.

1. Taped books are very good since your child can replay the tape a number of times to help remember the story.
2. Ears only. The first time your child hears a new story, have him listen to you read it without looking at the book.
3. Retell the story. Before you begin a story, tell your child she will need to re-tell the story to someone else after listening.
4. Making mind pictures. Encourage your child to make pictures in his mind while listening to the story. Stop at times and ask him what his picture looks like. What does the place look like? What does the main character look like? How are they feeling? Your child can draw pictures to remember the story and to help him re-tell it.

5. Make sure you have your child's attention before giving directions. Speak a little slower.

6. Chunk information. When you have a lot to say, chunk important bits of information and phrases, pausing between chunks. For example, "When your go to your brother's room (pause) tap him on the shoulder (pause) so that he will know (pause) it's time to set the table with you."

7. Check for understanding. Have your child give you a brief summary of key ideas to be sure he/she understands.

8. Encourage your child to ask questions when he/she is not clear about a particular direction.

9. Play listening/remembering games. One is included for you called Remember Then Move. You can use different colored buttons as markers and you will need a die. Take turns by shaking the die and reading the information on the spaces in sequence. For example, if 2 appears on the die, read aloud two spaces - touch your toes, then cough. If you remember, then you get to move. Have fun!!

10. Play listening games in the car or while having a snack. A fun game is the picnic game. Take turns thinking of something you might

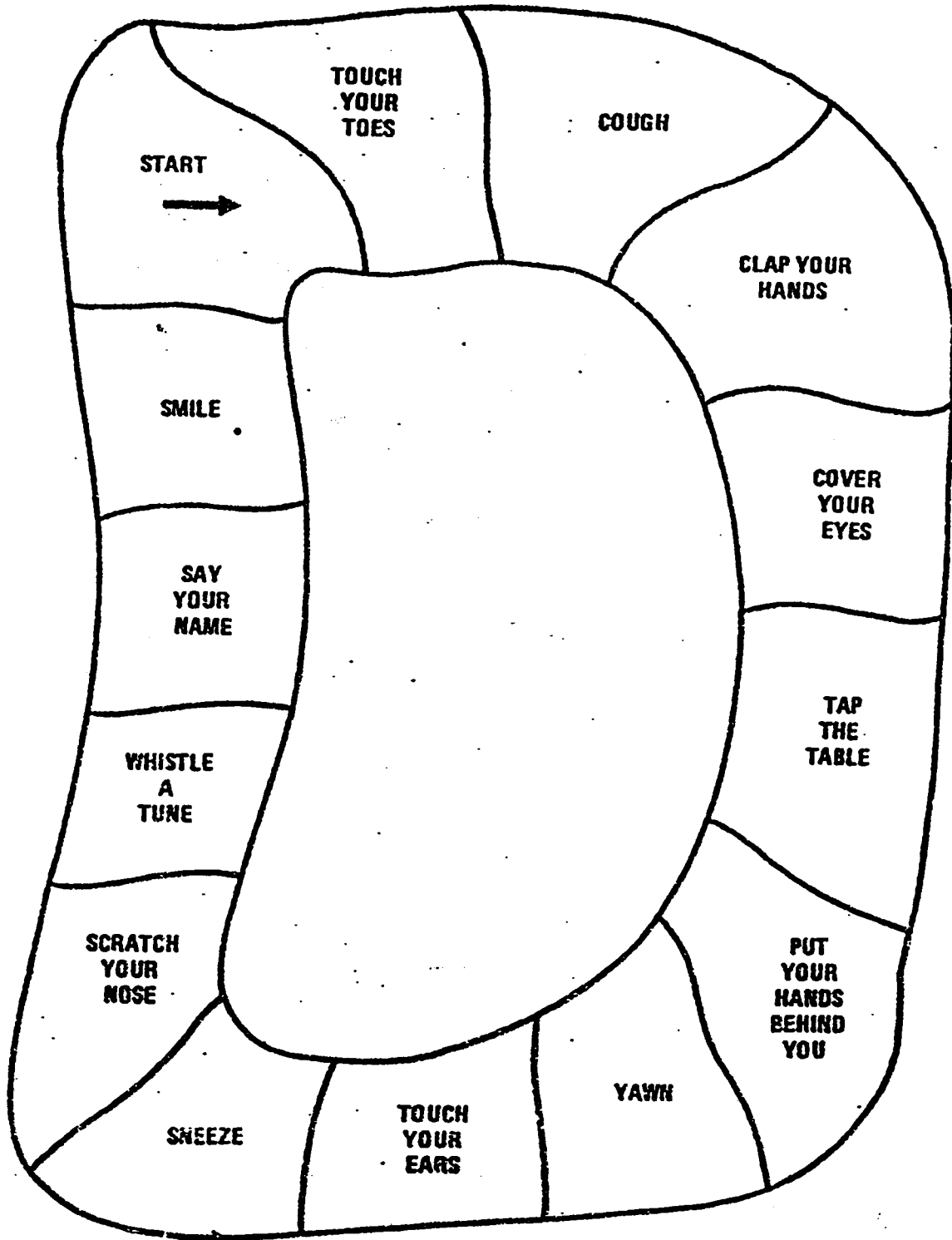
take or find on a picnic, keeping them in order. For example,

"I'm going on a picnic and I'm taking an (apple)."

"I'm going on a picnic and I'm taking an apple and a (bug)."

I'm going on a picnic and I'm taking an apple, a bug and some (chicken)."

REMEMBER THEN MOVE



READING TO YOUR CHILD

1. Read every night to your child, even if only for 10-15 minutes.

Our language and learning grow so much when we hear and see new vocabulary words in various sentence types and are presented with so many new ideas which we can read about in books. Children also learn more about letter names, the sounds they make and how to sound out the words they encounter.

2. Letters and the Sounds they make. Spoken language is a flow of sounds represented by groups of letters. Each child has to discover through many experiences that letters represent individual sounds. As your child looks at books with you, focus on the meaning of the story, but also run your finger along the line of printed words that you are reading out loud. Read smoothly and let your finger point to each word as you read it. Soon your child may be pointing to some words and waiting for you to say them.

3. Take your child to the library regularly. Teach him/her how to sign out books, how and when to return them and of course how to take care of them.

4. Encourage your child to create his/her own books. All you need is some glue, scissors, old magazines, crayons and some paper. Write down your child's homemade story and read it to him/her.

5. Show your child that there are all kinds of books. Not all books are story books. Some books help you to cook with recipes and pictures of what a certain dish should look like. Some books help us with projects like building a fence or taking care of animals. Some books teach speech sounds.

6. Choose theme books about something your child is interested in and that introduce new vocabulary with pictures and simple explanations.

7. Here are five ways to share a book with your child:

- draw pictures for three different things that happen in the story
- continue the story from where it left off
- make a comic strip about the book
- make a playdough model of a scene from the story
- make up a play about the book.

VOICE

Our voice is extremely important to us. When people listen to our voice, it should not draw attention to itself. Our voice is considered average according to our age and our gender. Your child may be using his/her voice incorrectly. Every day voice misuse can lead to serious problems. Bad voice habits can lead to swelling of the vocal cords and growths called nodules or polyps.

Vocal abuse typically involves straining the vocal cords by screaming, yelling, coughing or clearing the throat. Vocal misuse is speaking too loudly or speaking with a voice too high or too low in pitch. Everyone sometimes abuses or misuses the voice, but when harmful uses of the voice become a habit, they become a problem.

1. Identify the instances of vocal misuse or abuse. Observe your child in many situations. Make a list of situations when vocal abuse or misuse occurs. Keep your list in a handy place, like the refrigerator.

Does your child:

- shout a lot at home
- yell at others who are not in the same room as him
- yell when playing with friends outside or when playing sports
- do lots of throat clearing

- do lots of coughing
- speak with excessively hard force or "pushing"
- speak loudly
- talk over background noise
- speak in pitches too low or too high

2. Discourage loud, effortful talking. Remind your child to use an easy voice, one that is softer. Demonstrate what you mean. Agree upon a signal, such as putting your finger on your throat, which will be a reminder to your child.

3. Eliminate or decrease background noise. Turn down the volume on the T.V. or stereo while talking with your child or when your child is playing with friends. When driving in the car, turn down the radio and roll up the windows.

4. Limit the amount of talking your child does. If your child comes home from school sounding hoarse, you may want to direct him/her to activities that can be done alone, such as looking at books, Lego or colouring.

5. When your child has a cold, encourage him/her to rest the voice. If your child has allergies or takes medication for health reasons, encourage him/her to drink lots of water and citrus fluids.

6. Discourage throat clearing and hard coughing. Encourage instead slowly swallowing or drinking water. Talk about this with your child so that he/she becomes aware of these behaviors and can adjust.

7. Smoking. If you smoke you may be contributing to your child's voice problems. Research has proven that second hand smoke has harmful chemicals that affect the vocal cords.

8. See your Doctor. If the throat looks red or swollen, your Doctor may refer your child to an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist. If the condition does not improve, your child may need medication or even surgery. Voice therapy with a Speech and Language Pathologist may be required.

SOME ARTICULATION ACTIVITIES

Here are some activities to try with your child to improve his/her speech sounds. Your child was able to produce this sound in the screening session after watching and listening and being asked to "be a copy cat." Make sure your child is making the sound correctly by itself before trying to say the sound in a word. We do not want to practise saying the sound the old way, just the new way.

Remember to:

take turns

use verbal praise and hugs

have fun!

1. Colouring sheet. Your child names pictures on a page the new way and then colours each picture. Do one at a time. Model if your child requires it. Use the character name (Fanny Fox, Copy Cat, Sailor Sam) to help the child remember the sound.

2. Make picture cards. Use the handout pictures. Glue them onto construction paper and then cut them into cards. You and your child can do this together. Take turns naming the cards as you cut them out and then as you glue them on.

3. Make more picture cards using magazines, flyers, catalogues. Find pictures that have your child's problem sound in the beginning, middle and end of words.

4. Fishing. Make a fishing pole with a magnet and a string. Use paperclips as hooks. Take turns to fish for then name each card.

5. Hide and seek. Your child chooses a picture, names it, then closes his/her eyes as you hide the card in a fairly obvious place. "Where is the _____?" Use clues like, "You're close/far." Your child names the card before and after he/she finds it.

6. Bean bag toss. Lay cards out on the floor. Take turns naming them as you put them down. Aim for a particular card, name it and toss the bean bag at it. If the bag lands on the card, the player gets the card and another go. If the bag lands anywhere else, it becomes the other player's turn.

7. Think of other fun activities to try to encourage your child to practise his/her sound the new way.

BUILDING A GOOD VOCABULARY

A good vocabulary is very important. Children need to understand what words mean. They also need to understand how the same word can mean something different in another situation. When children use specific words they are better at expressing themselves and getting their point across to the listener.

1. Books are a great source to use in developing and expanding vocabulary. Choose picture dictionary books like the Cat in the Hat Beginner Book Dictionary or choose theme books that your child is interested in like dinosaurs, cars, animals that introduce new vocabulary with pictures and simple explanations.
2. Talk about the pictures a lot. Introduce your child to new words and concepts and try to help your child connect them to something he already knows about. Explain what new words mean. Describe what things look like, how they feel, sound, taste. Talk about what people are doing and the names of specific places where they are.
3. Explain meanings of words your child doesn't know. When reading to your child, clarify questionable words. Encourage him/her to ask what words mean when unsure. Use synonyms, words that mean the same thing, to explain words.

4. Choose a word for the day and have fun using it in as many appropriate contexts as you can.

5. Use a dictionary at home whenever a family member questions a word's meaning. When your children see you learning this way, they will be encouraged to do the same.

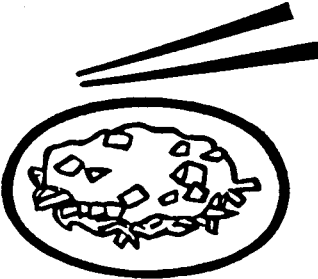

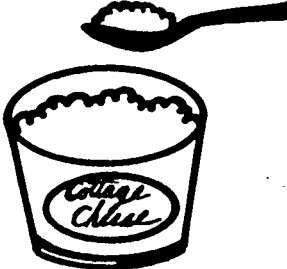

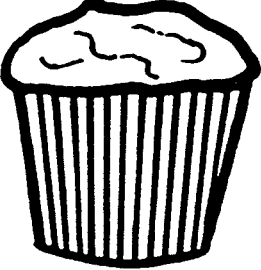
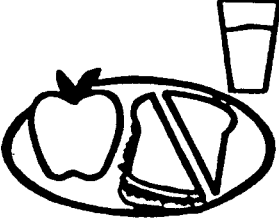
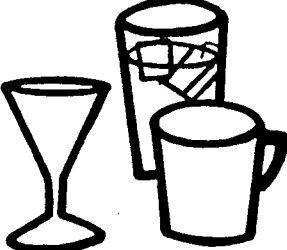
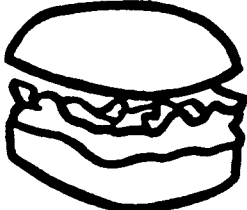
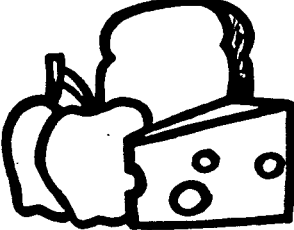
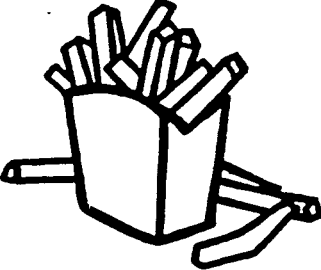
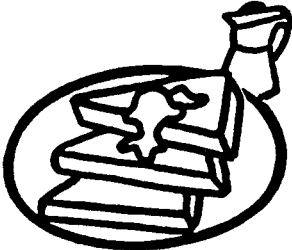
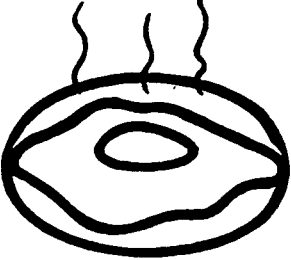
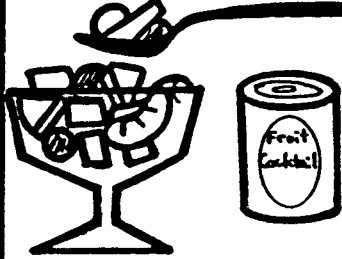
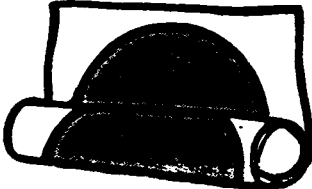

6. Play family games which encourage the use of varied vocabulary in a fun and exciting way Memory, Outburst, Panic, Scategories, Pictionary.

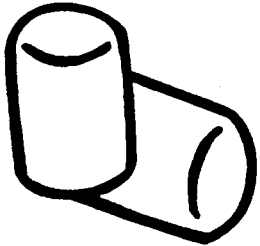
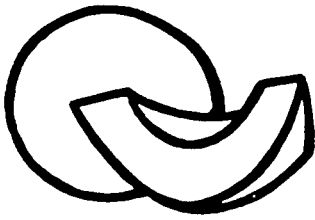
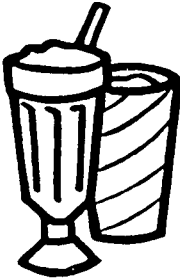
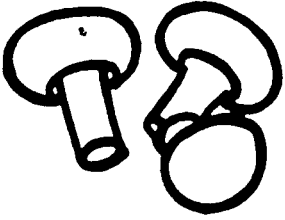
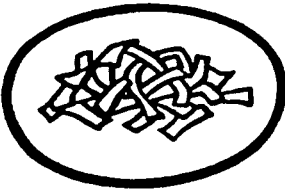
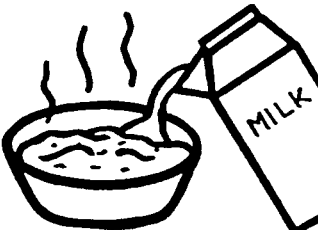
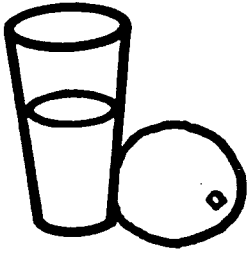
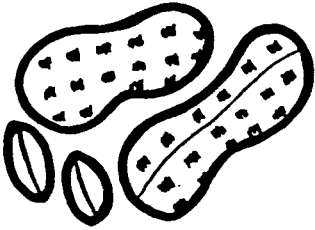
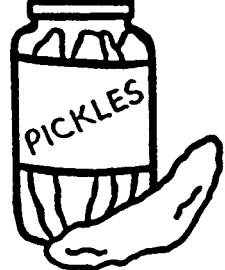


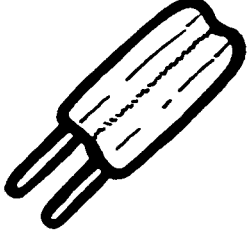
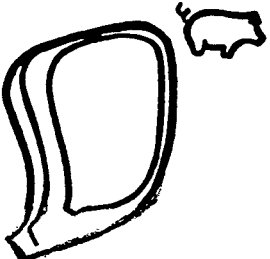
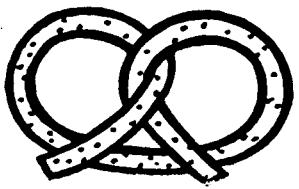

7. Play vocabulary games in the car, walking or while eating a snack. A fun one is the Picnic Game. Take turns thinking of different foods which you might take on a picnic, keeping them in order. For example,
I'm going on a picnic and I'm taking an (apple)
I'm going on a picnic and I'm taking an (apple) and a (banana)
I'm going on a picnic and I'm taking an (apple), a (banana) and some (chicken).

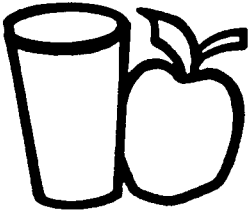

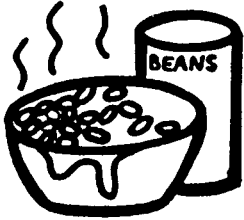

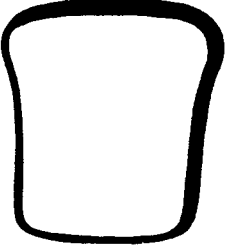
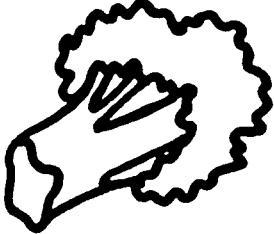
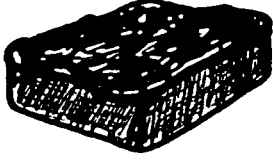

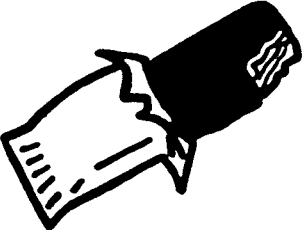
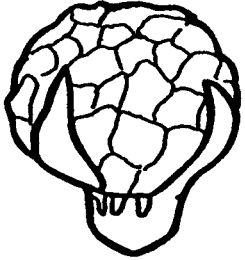
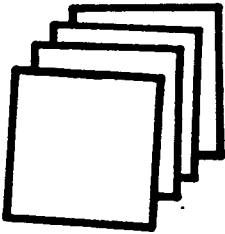
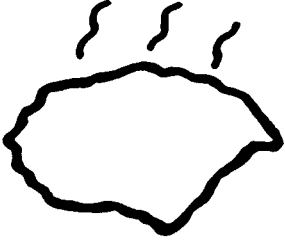
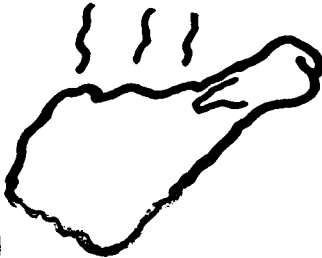
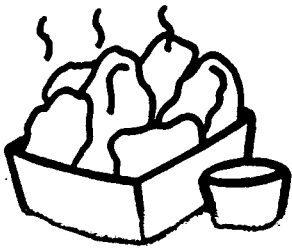
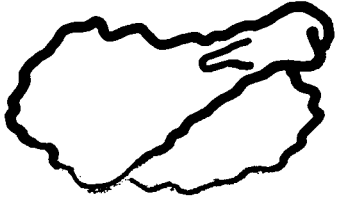
8. Play the Food War Game. Included for you are some pages of various foods. Glue each sheet on construction paper then cut out along the solid lines to make individual cards. Shuffle and deal the cards face down. At the same time turn one over, say its name and

see if you have a match. Continue like this until one of you has all the cards - the winner!

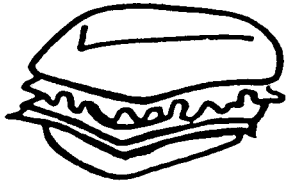
9. Think Out Loud Category Game. While cooking, in the car or wherever, pick a category and name as many names as you can. Work together. Some categories might include cold things, blue things, school things, breakable things, wet things, heavy things, or dirty things.

<p>chinese food</p> 	<p>chocolate powder</p> 	<p>cottage cheese</p> 
<p>cranberry juice</p> 	<p>cupcake</p> 	<p>dinner</p> 
<p>drinks</p> 	<p>fishburger</p> 	<p>food</p> 
<p>french fries</p> 	<p>french toast</p> 	<p>fried egg</p> 
<p>fruit cocktail</p> 	<p>fruit roll</p> 	<p>granola bar</p> 

<p>marshmallows</p> 	<p>melon</p> 	<p>milkshake</p> 
<p>mushrooms</p> 	<p>noodles</p> 	<p>oatmeal</p> 
<p>orange juice</p> 	<p>peanuts</p> 	<p>pickles</p> 
<p>pie crust</p> 	<p>pineapple</p> 	<p>popsicle</p> 
<p>pork chops</p> 	<p>pretzel</p> 	<p>pudding</p> 

<p>apple juice</p> 	<p>applesauce</p> 	<p>beans</p> 
<p>box drink</p> 	<p>bread slice</p> 	<p>broccoli</p> 
<p>brownies</p> 	<p>can of pop</p> 	<p>candy bar</p> 
<p>cauliflower</p> 	<p>cheese slices</p> 	<p>chicken breast</p> 
<p>chicken leg</p> 	<p>chicken nuggets</p> 	<p>chicken pieces</p> 

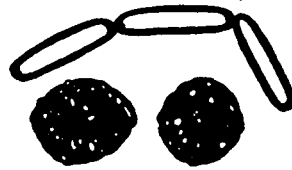
roast beef sandwich



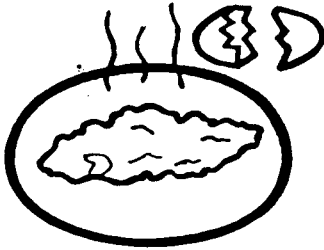
sack lunch



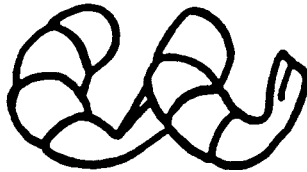
sausage



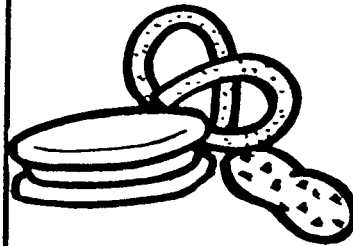
scrambled egg



shrimp



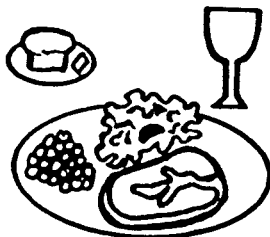
snack foods



soup



supper



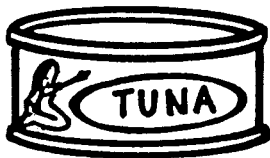
tartar sauce



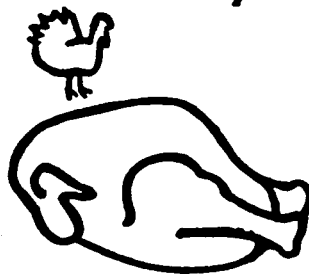
toast



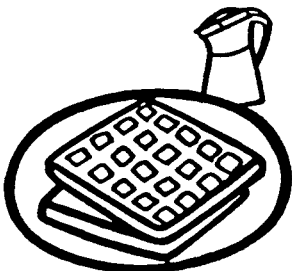
tuna



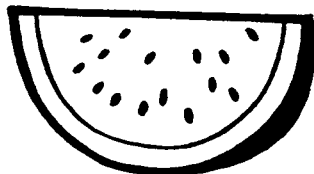
turkey



waffle



watermelon



yogurt



HOW SOUNDS ARE MADE

- f** Upper teeth bite gently on the lower lip and air forces its way out. Strategy: Say bite your lip, let the air come out.
- v** Produced like f except the vocal cords vibrate.
- k** Made near the back of the throat. Arch the back of your tongue so that it presses tightly against the soft palate. The tip of the tongue is down behind the front teeth. Build up air pressure behind your tongue, release it quickly as if to cough. Strategy: Draw your finger across the throat and say make it in the back.
- g** Made the same as k except the vocal cords vibrate.
- t h** The tongue is placed between the upper and lower teeth with the tip slightly protruding. Blow air over the top of the tongue.
- l** Open your mouth slightly. Raise the tongue tip and place it lightly against the gum ridge behind the upper teeth. Use your voice. Strategy: Show the tongue touching the upper lip.
- s** Lips are in a smile. The teeth are together. The tongue tip goes behind the upper gum ridge. Air is directed down the centre of the tongue. Strategy: Smile, put your teeth together, let the air come out.
- z** Produced the same as s except the vocal cords vibrate.
- ch** Teeth are together and lips slightly rounded. The tongue assumes the shape of d or t with the tip against the upper gum ridge. Build up air pressure and quickly let the air out.

- sh** Teeth are together and lips are slightly rounded. Pull your tongue back a little as you push your lips forward. Blow air down the centre of the tongue.
- y** Lips and teeth are slightly opened and back. The middle of the tongue is raised. The tip of the tongue is lowered. While the vocal cords vibrate, quickly change position to the vowel sound that follows.
- r** There may be different r sounds depending upon the vowels that precede or follow. The approximate position requires the back of the tongue to be close to the soft palate and the sides of the tongue curve up to touch lightly the upper teeth on both sides. The tongue tip is usually curled up slightly.

ARTICULATION

Articulation is the ability to form the speech sounds we need for English. Your child has difficulty making the sounds _____. Here are some basic ideas to help improve your child's sound formation.

1. Say it the new way. When talking to your child about the way he/she speaks, use the terms new and old way. Avoid using words like right and wrong, good and bad.
2. Model. Verbally demonstrate the word or phrase. Exaggerate the sound your child needs to work on.
3. Segmentation. Break up a sound from the rest of the word in order to produce it the new way. K-- ite, du--ck. This technique establishes correct placement for the sound and ensures success for your child.
4. Visual Cues. Draw attention to sounds by using your hands to show how sounds are made. Move the index finger to the lips while mouthing the sound. Move the finger away from the mouth to show letting the air out (f, s, z, sh, ch, j sounds). For k and g sounds draw a finger across the throat to show the sound is made at the back of the mouth.

5. Verbal Cues. Describe how the sounds are made, using short, visual terms. Bite your lip and let air out (f). Make it at the back (k, g). Lick your lip and stick your tongue out (l). Let the air out (s, z, sh, ch, j, f, v). Make your lips go around (w).

6. Corrective Feedback. Listen to what your child says. Repeat back what he/she has said while slightly exaggerating and stretching out the sound in the new way. Child: I want to doe to the store. Parent: You want to ggo to the store. As the child has more success with the sound, play dumb to give feedback. Child: I want to doe to the store. Parent: You want to doe ----- Oh! --- You want to **go** to the store.

CONVERSATION CALENDARS

Monday

Look outside one of the windows in your house. Name all the plants you can see.

Tuesday

Name some things that are in the sky at night. How about some things that are in the sky during the day?

Wednesday

Say the rhyme Humpty Dumpty. What was Humpty? Where did he sit? What happened to him? Who tried to help him? Could they help?

Thursday

What are some things that make you feel happy, sad, scared or mad?

Friday

Try one new food that you've never tasted before. What did it taste like? Did you like it? Why or why not?

Saturday

What does a car do? Describe your parents' car.

Sunday

Mom just said, "This noise is driving me crazy!" What did she mean? Is she going somewhere in the car? Is she *really* crazy?

Monday

Pretend that today is National Worm Day. What are we honouring? What good things do worms do? Plan something special to honour our friend, the worm.

Tuesday

Click is a word that describes a sound. Name other words that describe sounds.

Wednesday

What is wrong with this sentence: "I went to the city and saw some cows." What would you see in the city? Where would you find cows?

Thursday

Look outside and find two stones. Talk about how they look different and how they look the same.

Friday

Look in your closet. Describe your favourite thing to wear. Why is it your favourite?

Saturday

Sing Eensy Weensy Spider. What kind of animal is the song about? What came down? Where did the rain come from? What did the rain do to the spider? What dried up the rain?

Sunday

Think about your classroom at school. Name five things in your classroom. Now name five things that are not in your classroom.

Monday

Look at the size of your mother's purse. What do you think could be inside? What could *not* fit inside? What are some important things that she might need to carry with her?

Tuesday

Rhyming words sound alike, such as big and pig. What are some words that rhyme with red? Book? Tall?

Wednesday

What are some of the things that a police officer might do? Do you think being a police officer is an important job? Why?

Thursday

Have someone read you a story. Who was it about? Where did the story take place? When? Tell the story again in your own words.

Friday

Have someone time you for thirty seconds. Name as many things to eat as you can think of.

Saturday

What is wrong with this sentence: "I got up early because I was so tired." What would you do if you were very tired?

Sunday

Sing Baa, Baa Black Sheep. What colour was the sheep? What sound did the sheep make? What did the sheep have? How many bags of wool were there?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agar, M. H. (1980). The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography. Toronto: Academic Press.
- Alcoff, L. (1991). The Problem of Speaking for Others. In Cultural Critique, Winter 1991-1992.
- Andry, R. (1972). Delinquency and Parental Pathology. In Juvenile Delinquency, the Family and the Social Group, ed. J. B. Mays. London: Longmans.
- Arnold, W. R. and Brungardt, T. M. (1983). Juvenile Misconduct and Delinquency. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Asher, S. (1983). Social Competence and Peer Status: Recent Advances and Future Directions. In Child Development 54.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1991). Quoted in Voices of the Mind by Wertsch, J. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Barth, R. (1990). Improving Schools from Within. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publ.
- Barth, R. (1986). The Rustle of Language. New York: Hilland Wang.
- The B.C. School Act. (1989). The Province of B.C.
- Bernstein, B. (1972). Education cannot compensate for Society. In Language in Education. London: Open University Press.
- Bettelheim, B. (1962). Dialogues with Mothers. New York: Avon Books.
- Blanchard, K and Bowles, S. (1993). Raving Fans. New York: William Morrow and Company Inc.

- Bogdan, R. C. and Biklen S. K. (1982). Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods. Newton, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bollnow, O. F. The Pedagogical Atmosphere: The Perspective of the Child. In Phenomenology and Pedagogy, Vol. 7, 1989. pp. 207-211.
- B. C. T. F. (1993). Task Force on Violence in Schools - Interim Report.
- Byars, B. (1977). The Pinballs. New York: Harper and Row.
- Caine R. N. and G. (1991). Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain. Virginia: ASCD Publications.
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. (1982).
- Chomsky, N. (1972). Language and the Mind. In Language in Education. London: Open University Press.
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods. Chicago: Aldine.
- Dolbeare, J. and Schuman, D. (1982). Policy Analysis, Education and Everyday Life. Lexington, MA: Heath.
- Doyle, B. (1990). Covered Bridge. Toronto: Greenwood Books.
- Duke, K. (1992). Aunt Isabel Tells a Good One. New York: Penguin Books.
- The Effects of the Head Start Classroom Experience on Some Aspects of Child Development. (1969). U.S. Dept. of Health, Educ. & Welfare.
- Evans, J. (1989). Children at Play: Life in the School Playground. Victoria: Deakin University Publications.

Fadiman, C. (Ed.). (1985). The Little, Brown Book of Anecdotes. Boston: Little, Brown.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Chicago: Aldine.

Goetz, J. P. and LeCompte M. D. (1982). Problems of Reliability and Validity in Ethnographic Research. In Educational Research Vol. 52(1) 31-60.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (1983). Ethnography: Principles in Practice. New York: Tavistock Publ.

Healy, J. M. (1990). Endangered Minds: Why Children Don't Think and What We Can Do About It. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Hinton, S. E. (1971). That Was Then, This is Now. New York: Dell Publ.

Hobbs, A. (1973). The Battle of Britain. Sussex: Wayland Publ. Ltd.

Hoffman, M. (1991). Amazing Grace. New York: Dial Books.

Huck, C. S., Hepler, S., and Hickman, J. (1987). Children's Literature in the Elementary School. Florida: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia. (1993). Province of B.C.

The Intermediate Program. (1993). Ministry of Education, Province of B.C.

Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services for Schools. (1989). Ministry of Education, Province of B.C.

- Jehl, J. and Kirst, M. (1992). Getting Ready to Provide School Linked Services: What Schools Must Do. In The Future of Children: School Linked Services, vol. 2 (1), 95-106.
- Jensen, E. (1993). White Water Learning. Brochure for his presentation in Spring, 1994.
- Kunc, N. Speech on inclusion at an elementary school, 1993.
- Larson, C. S., Gomby, D. S., Shiono, P. H., Lewit, E. M., and Behrman, R. E. (1992). Analysis. In The Future of Children: School Linked Services, vol. 2 (1), 6-16.
- Lather, P. (1991). Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern. New York: Routledge.
- Lerner, J. (1989). Learning Disabilities: Theory, Diagnosis of Teaching Strategies. Boston: Houghton Mifflin
- Lofland, J. (1971). Analysing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis. California: Wadsworth Press.
- Lyon, G. E. (1992). Who Came Down That Road? New York: Orchard Books
- Manning, M., Heron, J., Marshall, T. (1978). Styles of Hostility and Social Interactions at Nursery, at School and at Home: An Extended Study of Children in L.A. In Aggression and Antisocial Behavior in Childhood and Adolescence. Ed. by Hersov, Berger and Shaffer. In Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, Vol. 1. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

- Merriam, S. (1988). Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass Publ.
- Minister, K. (1991). A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview. New York: Routledge.
- Montagner, H. (1978). L'Enfant et la Communication. Paris: Pemoud Stock.
- Patton, M. Q. (1980). Qualitative Evaluation Methods. California: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (1989). Qualitative Evaluation Methods. (10th edition) California: Sage.
- The Primary Program. (1990). The Province of B.C.
- Ross, R. R. and Faviano, E. A. (1985). Time to Think: A Model of Delinquency Prevention and Offender Rehabilitation. Tenn.: Institute of Social Studies and Arts.
- Sanjek, R. (1990). Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Satre, J. P. (1977). Life/Situations: Essays written and spoken. New York: Pantheon Books.
- School Regulation and Minister of Education Orders. (1989). The Province of B. C.
- Seidman, I. E. (1991). Interviewing as Qualitative Research. New York: Teachers' College Press.

- Shipman, V C., Hess, R D. (1972). Early Experience and the socialization of cognitive modes in Children. In Language in Education. Open University Press: London
- Sluckin, A. (1981). Growing Up in the Playground: The Social Development of Children. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Shakespeare, W. (1987). Macbeth. New York: Nelson Doubleday Inc.
- Smith, S. The Security of the Child's World. In Canadian Journal of Education 16:4 (1991).
- Swanson, M. S. (1991). At-Risk Students in Elementary Education. Illinois: Charles C. Thomas Press.
- Sylwester, R. (1992). Synthesis of Research on Brain Plasticity: In The Classroom Environment and Curriculum Enrichment.
- Taylor, S. J. and Bogdan, R. (1984). Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods. (2nd edition) New York: Wiley.
- Thornburg, K. R., Hoffman, S, and Remeika, C. (1991). Youth at Risk:Society at Risk. Elementary School Journal, vol. 91(3),199-207.
- Udas, M. (1993). Special Needs Students: A speech given at the Special Needs Conference, in Vancouver in 1993.
- Van Manen, M. (1986). The Tone of Teaching. New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Van Manen, M. (1989). By the Light of Anecdote. In Phenomenology and Pedagogy, Vol. 7.
- Van Manen, M. (1991). The Tact of Teaching. New York: State University of New York Press.