THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTING LANGUAGE AS AN AID TO THE LEARNING PROCESS

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTING LANGUAGE AS AN AID TO THE LEARNING PROCESS

by

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ABSTRACT

In order to give students an opportunity to reach their potential, it is important that teachers be aware of the power of language in learning. They must realize that promoting the development of children's language will help the children to become critical thinkers and increase their capacity to learn. In the busy atmosphere of a regular classroom with all of its immediate demands teachers sometimes overlook the fact that it is through language that students learn. For some teachers the word language is strictly related to the surface structure of language, as something to be corrected rather than as an aid to the construction of thought.

This study was undertaken to survey the literature related to the nature of language and to the promotion of learning in the students. The purpose was to develop guidelines to broaden teachers' views of language so that they would incorporate a greater variety of language uses in their teaching. Another purpose was to focus on methods of teaching (other than the lecture method) which would give greater consideration to students' becoming more actively involved in their learning.

The set of guidelines provided for teachers include relevant background material and general language statements

as well as guidelines for exploratory talk, small groups, teacher questioning, large group discussions, and writing. In these guidelines emphasis is placed on allowing students to formulate their own language rather than just to repeat what someone else has said. A second chapter of Part II deals with the implementation of the guidelines. Two main headings of this chapter include a discussion of the roles of key people responsible for implementing the guidelines and key factors related to the implementation of the guidelines. The need for more analysis of classroom interaction between teachers and students has been suggested. A selected bibliography is provided for teachers who wish to do additional reading on the subject.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

A major aim of education is that children develop their power to use language in a variety of ways to increase learning. In order to accomplish this development, teachers must broaden their awareness and notions of language by carefully examining its relationship to learning. In all grades children must be involved in exploratory talk so that they can learn to formulate knowledge for themselves instead of just repeating the preformulated knowledge of the teacher. In a classroom environment conducive to language growth, children should be encouraged to put their ideas into their own language. This emphasis on language activities will help not only to increase the children's learning but also to make learning more enjoyable and meaningful for them.

The Problem

In spite of the research that has been done over the years on the importance of language development to learning, the result is still not as evident as it should be in some classrooms. It is true that teachers are becoming more acquainted with the fact that there is a relationship between language and learning, and these ideas are finding their way into more workshops and curriculum meetings than in the past. It seems, however, that at the school level much has yet to be done for language to become the facilitating force that it

should be in our day-to-day teaching. Urzua (1980) suggests that "language, and more generally communication ability, becomes one of the ways in which a human being learns to function in the social network into which he or she is born" (p. 40). Since language is such a powerful means by which we shape our experience, it needs more consideration by the classroom teacher.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the literature pertaining to the relationship of language to learning. This review of the literature was done with the purpose of gaining useful information which teachers can use to increase learning in their students. Thus, on the basis of the review, a set of guidelines was compiled to help teachers promote learning through language in the classroom.

The Need for the Study

It is the view of Jones (in Francis, 1977) that no significant new learning is simply the receipt of facts. He says that "it is rather, the active projection of the self on to what is to be learned -- thoughtful and emotional construction bound inextricably with life experience" (p. 77). A close examination of some of the textbooks and guidebooks used in the curriculum of Newfoundland schools indicates that many do not include enough questions which

require students to think critically and to become actively involved in the material being studied. An example of learning which could be viewed as a mere receipt of facts was found in World History, a textbook used in the junior high school. Out of the seven questions at the end of Chapter One, four are multiple choice, two are true or false and one is the matching type.

In the studybooks to accompany Sleeping Bags and Flying Machines in use in grade five, there seems to be too many activities of the receipt of facts type. An example of this type of activity is, "Choose the correct word to complete each sentence." The onus is on the teacher, then, to relate language to human purposes and to provide activities which would give meaning and understanding to the student.

The need for a careful consideration of the use of language in the classroom has been discussed by Rosen (in Barnes et al., 1969). He points out:

> Curriculum reform itself can only be strengthened if it includes considerations of language and learning; that teachers who embark on observation, exploration and experiment concerned with the role of language in learning will make a valuable contribution to education. (p. 144)

Piaget (cited in Barnes, 1975) directs our attention to the relationship between what the learner already knows and the new system being presented to him when he states:

> There is a much more productive form of instruction: the so-called 'active' schools endeavour to create situations that while not

> 'spontaneous' in themselves, evoke spontaneous elaboration on the part of the child if one manages both to spark his interest and to present the problem in such a way that it corresponds to the structures he has already formed himself. (p. 81)

Students need to play an active role in the formulation of new knowledge on the basis of their existing knowledge. They must be given the opportunity to do this through talking, which helps them to assimilate the new with the existing. Barnes (1975) believes that "it is more likely that the pupils have learnt from their schooling that their knowledge is irrelevant in a context determined by teachers, examinations and school syllabuses" (p. 127).

The need for more classroom activities to promote learning through language was realized by Bellack, Kliebard, Hyman, and Smith (1966) when they made a study of the teaching process through analysis of the linguistic behavior of teachers and students in the classroom. They summarized these results in terms of the rules of the classroom game of teaching. They found that pupils and teachers follow a set of implicit rules with few deviations and that "the soliciting-responding pattern comprises the core of the classroom game and accounts for slightly more than three-fifths of all moves made" (p. 240).

The above study indicates the need for more exploratory talk in the classroom. As the Bullock report (1975) states, "For such talk to flourish, the context must be as informal and relaxed as possible, and this is more likely to occur in

small-groups and in a well organized and controlled classroom" (p. 189).

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to survey the literature pertaining to the use of language in learning and to develop a set of guidelines to help teachers use language to promote learning in students. The review of the related literature provided the direction the remainder of the thesis would take. A review of the nature of language, its functions, its relationship to thought and learning revealed the complexity of language and provided a basis for developing the guidelines. The review of literature on student-teacher interaction showed that teachers are sometimes not aware of the variety of ways that learning can be increased through language activities. There was evidence that even though some teachers are aware of the importance of language in learning, this awareness is not reflected in their teaching. In the literature reviewed there were also indications that when teachers were included in the analysis of their own teaching, they discovered that they were not promoting learning through language as much as they had previously thought.

As the literature was reviewed, implications for classroom teachers became clear. The research revealed the extent to which children use language before they come to school as well as the need for this process to continue

throughout their years of schooling. The environment of the child outside of school provides a natural setting for the development of language, whereas, in school, situations have to be created by teachers so that children can benefit from the power of language to learn.

In preparing the guidelines it was decided to include samples of the reviewed literature to give teachers some background information, and to provide those who wish to pursue the topics further, a list of general statements on language and its role in learning.

Since the review of literature revealed the power of exploratory talk to help students formulate their thoughts, a list of general guidelines on ways to help children explore topics through talk is provided. The research also revealed the need for specific guidelines on small and large group discussions, teacher questioning, and writing. These guidelines are general in nature so that they may be applied across grades and subjects. Specific examples, it was decided, would be included where feasible and desirable.

It was also decided to provide suggestions for the implementation of the guidelines. The specific roles of key people who could help to implement the guidelines are discussed. Suggestions for the actual implementation of the guidelines include ways to determine the existing language practices of the school as well as a plan of action based on the findings.

A selected bibliography is prepared for teachers who wish to do additional reading.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is arranged in two parts. Part One consists of three chapters, the first of which provides a general introduction to the subject. It includes a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the need, the methodology, and the organization. A review of the literature related to language and learning is the focus of the second chapter. It is reported under the following headings: The Nature of Language, The Functions of Language, The Relationship of Language and Thought, The Importance of Language to Learning, and Student-Teacher Interaction. Chapter three contains a summary and recommendations.

Part Two, designed to serve as a booklet for teachers, consists of two chapters. Chapter one is a set of guidelines for the classroom teacher. These guidelines are related to language as it increases learning in students. Chapter two consists of suggestions for the implementation of the guidelines, as well as a selected bibliography for teachers.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

"Man interposes a network of words between the world and himself, and thereby becomes the master of the world." This statement by Gusdorf (cited in Bullock, 1975) indicates his deep appreciation for the power and potential of language.

Although much interest and attention have been focused on language during the last century, its impact is not being realized to its maximum in our schools and classrooms. It is true that some teachers are becoming more aware of the importance of language, but for many, their understanding of language and its implications for learning are not evident in their teaching. This view was shared by Rosen (in Barnes et al., 1969) as is evident in the following statement:

> For all the dissemination of new ideas relatively little has been done to work out in detail just what needs to be modified or changed in our day-to-day practices in order to achieve solid advances. We still have ahead of us that crucial and demanding phase of realizing in classroom practice the theories which seem so promising. (p. 161)

Dias (1978) shares a view similar to the above as he writes:

> The notions we hold about what constitutes growth in language competence are commonsensical and predictable and yet we find that classroom practice is directed by a prevailing assumption that growth in language is simply a moving towards error-free composition, a demonstration of a wider vocabulary,

> an acquiring of a mature style (variously defined), and fluent speech. (p. 56)

This type of criterion appears to be demonstrable, and grades obtained on these specifics usually satisfy both the pupils and their parents. It is unfortunate that it leads to a type of teaching which treats language as a content to be handed over to the student rather than as a process in which the student is actively engaged.

Why, then, in spite of the latest research on language, have many teachers not been more determined to effect a change in teaching styles? It is likely that most teachers have not reached the stage where they have a clear enough understanding of the importance of language to learning. Most have not been subjected to an in-depth study of language and the direct influence it can have on a child's learning. As a result there are too many misconceptions and vague notions prevalent among teachers. There is, however, an increasing number of teachers becoming more sensitive to the language their students use to learn, but what is needed is a whole school approach and more definite policies if students are going to be affected in any significant way.

In view of the above comments concerning the amount of teacher awareness of language, it seems logical to review the related literature under the headings of The Nature of Language, The Functions of Language, The Relationship of Language and Thought, The Importance of Language to Learning, and Student-Teacher Interaction. It should be noted that

these are not rigid categories and that information or research contained under one heading could also apply to some degree to another heading. The important thing to remember is that all information in this review could be grouped under one main heading - What Teachers Should Know About Language. This is a key consideration if some of the existing problems of language instruction are to be resolved.

The Nature of Language

The National Association for The Teaching of English (1976) states that "language, as a word, has so many associations, that we ought to define it as we wish it to be understood" (p. 7). In the same manner, the treatment of language in this section of the review should be explained.

Because of the complex nature of language many of its aspects will not be considered in this section. Instead, comments will be confined to language as it promotes learning. The history of linguistics and the comparison of different methods of linguistic analysis or grammar theories will not be studied. Information regarding the acquisition of language will also be limited to discussing the level of language already attained by the children when they enter school. A detailed explanation of the phonology, lexis, and grammar of the language are not considered necessary for this review.

Nystrand (1977) states that "language, once acquired to

any degree, is an event which imposes order on world and self, which gives structure" (p. 1). He also uses metaphors to suggest new ways of viewing language when he refers to it as "a map we make of our experience" or "a voyage of discovery and exploration" (p. 3). These metaphors help us to view language in relation to its power to help us know.

One view of language is that of Sapir (cited in Wilkinson, 1971) who states that "language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires, by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols" (p. 14). Language is primarily a system of agreed sounds because the words used to symbolize objects are purely arbitrary, such as 'dog' in English and 'chien' in French. As The National Association for the Teaching of English (1976) suggests, however, "language should not be thought of only as communication" (p. 7). There are other key functions of language which will be discussed in a later section.

The view that language is a vehicle for expression and communication is also expressed by Fillion et al. (1976) who see it as different from isolated words or sequences of words that are intended simply to exemplify language or language rules. It is their contention that "individual words or groups of words that have no context are devoid of meaning" (p. 742). This view has far reaching implications for student learning.

To continue the discussion of the importance of meaning to language, it is the view of Smith (1982) that language is

a two level system, that of sound and meaning, and the learner of the language has to construct a set of rules that will help to relate one level to the other. He refers to the two levels of language as surface structure and deep structure, with syntax, or grammar, as the set of rules that allows the language user to operate between the two. Smith (1982) regards surface structure as "the part of language that exists in the world, however transiently, outside the minds of language users. We produce surface structure when we speak or write; we interpret surface structure when we listen or read" (p. 48). One main difference between the two levels is that surface structure is measurable but deep structure is not. He says that meaning exists in our minds - in the nonverbal, inaccessible theory of the world in our head - underlying the language we produce and making sense of the language we understand.

We are usually not even aware of the surface structure because we look beyond the printed or spoken word to the meaning that is reflected there. According to most theorists, however, there is no one-to-one correspondence between surface structure and deep structure. As Smith (1982) explains, "Meaning can be represented by more than one surface structure and every surface structure can have more than one meaning" (p. 48). To bridge the gap between the two levels of language, Smith also proposes the view that language is understood by having meaning brought to it. He

says that we do not understand words by deriving meaning from them, but by bringing meaning to them.

The above view of the nature of language seems to agree with that expressed by Britton (1970) where he sees language as a way of representing experience. He says that

> we construct a representation of the world as we experience it, and from this representation, this cumulative record of our own past, we generate expectations concerning the future; expectations which, as moment by moment the future becomes the present, enable us to interpret the present. (p. 12)

In light of this view people's different representations of the world influence the meaning that they derive from the surface structure. A similar view is expressed by Fillion et al. (1976) as they state that "any concern with language learning and development must entail a fundamental concern with what individuals know already and how they make sense of what they are expected to do" (p. 743). The message for teachers in that statement is quite clear.

That Halliday (1973) realizes the close relationship between students' experiences and their language development is evident. He states:

> A minimum requirement for an educationally relevant approach to language is that it takes account of the child's own linguistic experience, defining this experience in terms of its richest potential and noting where there may be differences of orientation which could cause certain difficulties in school. (p. 12)

The teacher must be willing to bridge any possible gap

between the students' existing experiences and their new experiences for them to cope with the learning situation.

While reviewing the literature on the nature of language, an obvious question would be What is language? Halliday (1973) has an interesting and meaningful reply to this question, as he says:

> The child knows what language is because he knows what language does. The determining elements in the young child's experience are the successful demands on language that he himself has made, the particular needs that have been satisfied by language for him. (p. 2)

He continues to respond to the question by saying that "language is, for the child, a rich and adaptable instrument for the realization of his intentions; there is hardly any limit to what he can do with it" (p. 2). He concurs with other authors who maintain that language is dependent on meaning. He believes that "for the child all language is doing something; in other words it has meaning" (p. 12). This notion of language as doing is also expressed by Doughty (1979) when he reminds us that "language, in a free situation, is never an end in itself, but always a 'means by which', something which causes things to happen" (p. 65).

In considering the nature of language, it is important to understand the general view of language as a structural system. The first major premise of Destefano (1978) concerning the nature of language is that it is patterned, while some theorists rely heavily on imitation to explain

language learning. Divesta (1974), however, suggests that "language is not learned solely by imitation. The child forms rules to generate new sentences rather than only imitating the sentences used by others" (p. 53). This view is also expressed by Britton (1970) who states that "it seems that it would be nearer the truth to say that they [children] imitate people's method of going about saying things than to say that they imitate the thing said" (p. 42). All children process the speech to which they are exposed so as to obtain from it a latent structure.

It is true that most children by the age of six have mastered the basic syntax and phonology of their language. It is the view of Destefano (1978) that "when children reach school age, they have already developed quite a variety of language skills. They are producing compound-complex sentences and are proficient in making certain social distinctions in their language behavior" (p. 47). He believes the teacher's task is to build on this basic language and refine it. In his words, this refinement "can make all the difference between an inarticulate person and a Winston Churchill" (p. 47). Francis (1977) agrees that most 4-year-olds have mastered the essential grammar of their language, but she points out that there is need and opportunity for further language development during the school years.

There is widespread appreciation for the investigations

of Chomsky (Britton, 1970; Marland, 1977; Wilkinson, 1971) and his associates on transformational-generative grammar. Their theory sheds much light on the internal organization of the language system, making it possible to understand how human beings can produce language they have never heard before. Some authors, however, caution against an overemphasis on form. Wells (1981) cautions against an overemphasis on abstract knowledge of linguistic form at the expense of an interest in the way people actually communicate with one another in meaningful contexts. He thinks that understanding language involves more than attending to the words and sentences that are spoken or written. In his words:

> Unless we look beyond the forms to the intentions that they realize, the experiences that are referred to, the purposes that give rise to them and the situations in which they occur, we shall not achieve a full understanding, either of the sentences themselves or of language as a human phenomenon. (p. 23)

Even though the view expressed by Wells warns against an overemphasis on form, it is not entirely unlike Chomsky's view (cited in Thorn & Braun, 1974) of the deep structure of language which has its emphasis on meaning. It seems that both would emphasize the importance of language as a medium of interaction. This view is also made clear by Wilkinson (1975) when he explains that children acquire the rules of language quite quickly. He recognizes that the acquisition of grammar precedes that of meaning.

It can be seen that a similar belief about language is held by Stubbs (1976), as he maintains that the ability to speak a language is not only the ability to produce grammatical sentences. He says that "knowing a language involves knowing how to say the right thing in the appropriate style at the right time and place. It involves complex knowledge of how to say what, to whom, when and where" (p. 28).

In discussing the nature of language, another factor which needs to be mentioned is its changing quality. Thorn and Braun (1974) maintain:

> Language is not a static thing - it changes, adds, deletes and modifies as conditions in time and place demand. Interestingly, then, the child not only acquires the language of his or her society - he or she becomes part of a potent force that is instrumental in the evolutionary process of language change. (p. 5).

Destefano (1978) also writes that "language change is a matter of fact, not a sympton of decay" (p. 8). Language has changed over the years, as is shown by the radical change that is evident from Old English to Modern English. Such changes help to maintain the vitality of language because, as Destefano says, "when language change is mandated or decreed to stop, it may mean that a particular language is doomed to become 'dead'" (p. 8).

A section on the nature of language would not be complete without reference to the four general language

skills - speaking, listening, reading and writing. Each of these modes has distinctive qualities that must be recognized and given special consideration. Fillion et al. (1976) express the view that lack of skill in one does not necessarily reflect lack of skill in another. It is their contention that "each skill appears to be developed through practice of that skill, although development of one skill will increase the potential of the individual for development in other skills" (p. 742). The fact that these skills are closely related facets of the communicative process should always be reflected in the language programs of our schools. As Thorn and Braun maintain, "the four arts, once learned, are inevitably meshed in practice" (p. 57).

Functions of Language

In order to emphasize the power and scope of language this section will be devoted to a discussion of the various functions of language as they are seen by various authors. Two major functions of language, its effect on thought and its influence on learning, will be dealt with in separate sections.

Teachers are sometimes unaware of the variety of language functions which children employ in their everyday discourse. Tough (1975) has pointed out that all children have already learned to use language for a number of different purposes by the time they enter nursery school. From some of her examples it can be seen that some functions

appear to demand and reflect more complex mental activity than others. In one short record of a conversation between two 3-year-old boys, Tough (1973) has shown that language functioned for the boys in several of the following ways: to maintain a working relationship between them, to express intentions about actions to each other, to secure co-operation, to co-ordinate action, to defend each child's rights and status, and to monitor the child's own activity. She has pointed out, however, that most teachers on hearing a similar conversation between two children "would remark on its poverty of expression and its lack of complexity in structure, rather than on the complexity of the mental activity which makes it possible" (p. 17).

Tough (1975) has also shown that perhaps the most important function of language would be in allowing us to recall things from the past or things which are remote from us. It allows us to reflect on and re-examine situations which may never recur, but it also permits us to examine the possibility of an event before it happens. If, as Tough has shown, preschool children begin to use language to express complex meaning, then the possibilities for language use as each child progresses through school would seem to be unlimited. It should be remembered that there is much in the child's natural learning method that can be transferred to school learning.

A conversation between 4-year-olds was used by Wilkinson

(1975) to show a variety of language uses. In just a short time the two children used language to carry on a relationship, to maintain identity, to control the behaviour of another, to give reasons, to explore, to speculate, to enter into the feelings of another and to give information. He points out that even though there might be an overall purpose in a passage of language, at the same time there are likely to be a number of other functions carried out as well. He classifies language according to three main categories. One deals with the self-expression of the individual and is concerned with the question Who am I? A second deals with the relationships with others and is concerned with the question Who are you? A third kind of language is concerned with exploring, describing, analysing, reflecting on, and explaining the world that was, that is and that will be. The question, then, pertaining to the last category would be Who or what is it, was it, will it be?

Lewis (1969) recognizes the existence of both a communicative and a private function of language. With regard to the private function he speaks of using language to recall, to record and to solve problems, but he also sees language as serving the needs of our orectic life. He believes that "language within ourselves may help in forming our picture of ourselves as we are and as we may become" (p. 27). This function of language is also recognized by Ede and Williamson (1980), who acknowledge the importance of the cognitive area in the classroom but who say that "we do a

great disservice to the child as a developing human personality if we neglect that language with which he is struggling to realize himself as a feeling individual" (p. 217). Lewis divides the communicative function of language into the manipulative and declarative functions. He sees the manipulative function as that which causes another person to engage in some action. Included in this category would be things like instructions, information, commands, requests and advice. On the other hand, the declarative function would occur when the main intention is to induce a communication between the speaker and the listener, or the writer and reader. It comes into effect when one attempts to establish a rapport with another person or, as in literature, between the author and the reader.

While separating the functions of language for clarity, Lewis would agree with Tough and Wilkinson in emphasizing the fact that a variety of functions may be ongoing at any one time. At the same time he places the responsibility on the teacher to recognize this diversity of language functions as he believes that "the teacher must constantly keep in mind that the different functions make correspondingly different demands on him and on the children" (p. 43).

Both Smith et al. (1970) and Nystrand (1977) speak of language function in the light of helping one construct his view of the world and reality. Smith et al. (1970) say that "the basic and primary role of language is to embody reality,

to be the carrier of the world image" (p. 4). They feel that an important part of a new experience is naming and classifying it, which also destroys a certain fear of the unknown. Nystrand (1977), too, feels that language facilitates our entry into new experience and therefore we develop new language to cope with new experience. Like Lewis, Gusdorf (in Nystrand, 1977) sees both the private and communicative aspects of language. He states that the function of language is "to maintain or re-establish a balance, to assure the insertion of the person in the world, to achieve communication" (p. 47). Nystrand (1977) seems to express a similar view as he states that language in use is "powerful in so far as we use it to dominate our world, make it ours and use it for our purposes" (p. 104). He feels that language plays a vital part in bringing us in line with those around us.

It is the opinion of Halliday (1973) that children have difficulty with language in school because they are required to accept a stereotype of language which is not in keeping with the insights they have gained from their own experience. He also sees the character of language as being shaped and determined by what it is used for. Thus, his investigations into language have led him to establish his models of language use which, if seriously considered, "should aid the teacher in assessing the individual learner's language skills and consequently in providing situations to strengthen areas of weakness" (p. 41).

A summary of Halliday's models, which should have crucial implications for teachers, follows. The first is the instrumental model where language is used for the satisfaction of material needs. It is the model whereby children become aware that language is used as a means of getting things done. Next is the regulatory model which refers to the use of language to manipulate the behavior of another. The interactional model demonstrates a sense of the person in relation to others but not in the sense of demanding anything of each other. The personal model is the model through which the child discovers his or her own individuality. Halliday maintains that "for the child, language is very much a part of himself and the personal model is his intuitive awareness of this, and of the way in which his individuality is identified and realized through language" (p. 6). In contrast to the personal model is the heuristic model which is an aid to the child in discovering about the external world. It deals with the use of language to learn. (This point will be expanded in a later section of the review.) The next model, the imaginative, also relates the child to his environment but in a different way. In this model the child uses language to create his own environment as he feels inclined. It is the model where children lose themselves in a world of rhymes, songs and stories. Finally, the representational model describes the use of language as a carrier of information, or a means of communicating about

something. Halliday warns teachers against making this become the dominant model to the extent that they are unaware of what the other models mean to children. By developing these models, his aim is to point out that, for the child, all language is doing something; in other words, all language has meaning.

Britton (1970) also presents an interesting theory which stresses the difference between two kinds of language-using behavior. He makes a distinction between necessary and unnecessary talk, thus indicating two different functions. One function is using language to get things done in a more active sense, which he calls the participant use of language. In his words, "As participants we use language to interact with people and things and make the wheels of the world, for good or ill, go around" (p. 8). The other function is using language for pleasure in a more passive sense, which he calls the spectator role. He says that "as spectators we use language to contemplate what has happened to us or to other people, or what might conceivably happen" (p. 8). This could be a way of using language to enrich our world. Examples of the participant uses of language are informing people, instructing people, persuading people, arguing, explaining, and planning. On the other hand, make-believe play, day dreaming aloud, gossiping, drama, poetry, and fiction constitute examples of the uses of language in the spectator role. These examples also stress the complexity of language and its functions. It is obvious that children use language

in specific ways to make sense of their world.

The division of language into the roles of participant and spectator has been particularly significant to the writing area. Bullock (1975) explains that the three main categories of writing which have been superimposed on this prior division are transactional, expressive, and poetic. In his description of the categories, he describes the expressive category as the central one because it is language 'close to the speaker' and provides the tentative stage through which a pupil's new thinking must pass on its way to the comparative certainty of knowledge. Thus, the continuum from expressive to transactional covers language in the participant role, whereas the continuum between expressive and poetic covers language in the spectator role. He considers it important that the teacher first direct and encourage writing in the expressive area. From there children will gradually move out into the other modes in their own various ways and at various times.

That children can benefit from being shown the different ways in which language is used in the world around them is a strong belief of Dawson (in Funk and Triplett, 1972). She maintains that children should be led to observe how such people as advertisers and politicians use language to their advantage. This knowledge would help children progress to an analysis of how they themselves use language to persuade, to convince or to repel. As a conclusion to this section of the

review, the following statement by Dawson will again emphasize the power and potential that language has when its functions are considered. She states:

> Language can be made truly interesting to children when their attention is directed to ways in which others try to make their language more pleasing, more beautiful; learning what is or is not effective; what is a desirable model of language or one to be avoided will help to add to their own power in speaking, writing, listening and reading. (p. 44)

The Relationship of Language and Thought

Because of the ways in which thought and language are so intimately intertwined, it is perhaps more appropriate to use the term interrelationship than relationship when discussing the two. Not all theorists agree about the exact relationships between language and thought, but there is a general consensus that there does exist an important and significant relationship which has vast implications for the classroom teacher. As Stubbs (1976) suggests, "the precise relationship between language and thinking is complex and little understood and has provided philosophical controversy for centuries" (p. 14).

Since Piaget has been a notable theorist on language development, it seems appropriate to take a brief look at some of his main premises. One of his outstanding contributions is the outlining of the stages of cognitive development. According to Piaget (cited in Thorn and Braun, 1974), "The child progresses mentally from simple thought

processes dependent upon the objective environment to a more complex mental organization that is increasingly independent of concrete reality" (p. 30). It is Piaget's premise also that the developing of these thought processes is aided by the forces of assimilation and accommodation. Thus, a child interprets and applies new linguistic information in terms of what he already knows.

According to Marland (1977), Piaget's theory of cognitive development has provided powerful new insights, and because of this theory a valuable conception of language development is emerging. This development, Marland believes, "proceeds through the interaction of active experimentation by the child and the internalized cognitive structures he possesses at a given stage" (p. 39). Simply stated, Piaget's major premise concerning the relationship of language and thought is that thought precedes language and that language is only one mode of symbolizing thought. Church (1965) states that "thought takes shape independent of language and that language is merely the vehicle, the container of an already accomplished thought" (p. 147). Thorn and Braun (1974) point out that "Piaget stresses that the symbolic structuring must come first and that this structuring occurs independently of the development of language structures" (p. 31). Piaget does admit, though, that the two structures frequently occur almost simultaneously, but he views them as separate operations. He sees thought as a precursor of

language.

One point made by Piaget that teachers need to consider is the fact that sometimes they confuse children by presenting in adult language the idea to be learned. Piaget thinks that the teacher must begin with the child's spontaneous structures; otherwise, as Smith et al. (1970) believe, "he is likely to confuse the child's thinking or allow him to settle for a verbalized statement of an idea without knowing what it means" (p. 113). Piaget, then, would place the emphasis on inventing and discovering and would caution against teacher language and textbook language that can be assimilated at nothing other than a verbal level.

In contrast to Piaget's notion of the structuring of thought symbols prior to language, Vygotsky (1962) believes that "the language of the environment, with its stable, permanent meanings, points the way that the child's generalizations will take" (p. 68). Smith et al. (1970) say that "Vygotsky's emphasis is on the language of the children and the adult teacher in the creation of thought" (p. 114).

Marland (1977) says that to Vygotsky "it is the interaction of language and situation in a social context....which gives the child the capacity to organize his mental activities" (p. 39). Vygotsky (1962) shows great concern for dialogue between children and adult teachers. Through dialogue with adults, children are exposed to more elaborate patterns of language. The internalization of these forms of speech will then lead to the development of higher

forms of intellectual capability in the children.

The views of Vygotsky (1962) regarding the relationship of language and thought resulted from his investigations comparing development of the scientific concepts the child learns in school with that of his informally acquired or spontaneous concepts. He found that children could deal more readily with 'because' and 'although' thinking in scientific concepts developed in school than in everyday concepts developed spontaneously. Vygotsky (1962) maintains that in comparison to scientific concepts, the child becomes conscious of his spontaneous concepts relatively late. He says that the scientific concept "starts its life in the child's mind at the level that his spontaneous concepts reach only later" (p. 108). Thus, as Smith et al. (1970) observe; "the development of thinking is enhanced by the presentation of scientific concepts (collective adult statements, knowledge) to children as the child's spontaneous concepts become organized in relation to the adult structure" (p. 115).

Smith et al. (1970) suggest that from an educational point of view it is not necessary to decide on an extreme position taken by Piaget or Vygotsky. Since both theorists have postulated and described several stages in the development of thinking, there are ways in which their theories are not at great odds, thus permitting teachers to take a middle position. A logical means of bridging the gap

between the two positions is described by Smith et al. (1970) in the following statement:

> This middle position embraces a concept of 'dialogue' in which language of children and the language of the adult teachers are brought into interplay at every stage of the development of language and thinking, including an initial 'discovery period'. The collective language of the adults in a society is as potent a factor in the development of thinking as the child's own spontaneous formation of structures of relationships drawn from experience. (p. 116)

Thorn and Braun (1974) concur with this middle position as they state that "whether the educator subscribes to 'thought as a precursor of language' or 'language as a creator of thought', there is no doubt that the two processes interact with and complement each other, at least after the child has passed the sensori-motor stage of mental development" (p. 33). Sapir (in Davies, 1975) recognizes the complex process of the interaction of language and thought as he states that "the instrument makes possible the product, the product refines the instrument" (p. 76).

The positions stated above suggest a need for adult dialogue with the children and dialogue among children in the classroom as an aid to both language and conceptual development. An important point that should be stressed, though, is the need for the adult's teaching language to be congruent with the child's learning language at each stage of this development.

The interrelationship of language and thought is a

subject which has necessarily interested more leaders in the field than Piaget and Vygotsky. The work of Jerome Bruner, an educational psychologist, has also been of great importance to our understanding of the relationship of language and mental development. According to Marland (1977), "Bruner sees the development of analytic thinking as one of the major contributions of secondary schooling but he stresses that it is through strenuous pressure on language development that this capacity is gained" (p. 18). Bruner (cited in Davies, 1975) explained that the principal feature of analytic competence was that "it involves the prolonged operation of thought processes exclusively on linguistic representations, on propositional structures, accompanied by strategies of thought and problem solving appropriate not to direct experience with objects and events but with ensembles of propositions" (p. 72). This is the sphere in which he sees language as an instrument of thought which permits the child to go beyond the immediately obvious and manipulate language in thought for long periods of time.

Gusdorf (in Nystrand, 1977) also recognizes the importance of language to thought and hence to the establishing of reality. He sees language as accompanying the creation of the world, as an agent of that creation. His theories have common elements with those of Vygotsky and Bruner for he says, "It is by speaking that man comes into the world and the world comes into thought" (p. 49). It is his belief that each word mastered by a child increases that

child's universe and helps to determine his future. He says, "To name is to call into existence, to draw out from nothingness" (p. 47).

A similar view about thought being influenced by words is expressed by Bullock (1975). He sees language as crucial in making statements about the world and in organizing our experiences. If we put an experience into words, he sees this as a "spelling out" to which we may return in the light of further experience and in search of further possibilities. He states, "It is probably true to say that the higher thought processes become possible to the child or adolescent who in this way learns to turn his linguistic activities back upon his own formulations" (p. 49).

Barrow (1982) also sees language as a set of symbols by which we file our experiences of the outside world and which are thus a necessity for thinking. It is his contention that if you do not have a language of some sort you cannot think and, furthermore, that how you handle language is an index of thought. He believes that "when new insights about the world are gained, they are perpetuated in language" (p. 26). He recognizes that one's language to some extent dictates how one perceives and conceives the world. His most immediate concern, however, is the fact that, in general, people's ability to think is reflected in their use of language. This view of language is shared by Wilkinson (1971) who says that "the language we use to express our concept has a

considerable effect on our view of reality and our consequent behavior" (p. 91). He believes that if thought is possible without language, it is only on a very primitive level. Language, in his opinion, profoundly transforms thought, thus enabling man to create the world in which he lives.

The various views on thought and language are in effect summed up by Smith et al. (1970) who maintain that "language and thinking are so interrelated in most forms of sophisticated thinking that they must be dealt with together" (p. 109). Barrow concurs with this view when he states that "language and thought go hand in hand and we should nourish language in order to develop thought" (p. 32).

Margaret Donaldson (1978) advocates a use of language to develop thought. In the following statement she seems to summarize the views above:

> If the intellectual powers are to develop the child must gain a measure of control over his own thinking and he cannot control it while he remains unaware of it. The attaining of this control means prising thought out of its primitive unconscious embeddedness in the immediacies of living in the world and interacting with other human beings. (p. 123)

Educators should be aware that language is the main vehicle by which control over our thinking will be accomplished. Indeed, in many instances language is more than just a mere carrier of thought. It is thought.

The Importance of Language to Learning

It has already been mentioned that one of the key roles of language is its use for learning. Therefore, there is a constant need for teachers to recognize the importance of language not only in all facets of the language arts program but as well in all other subjects in the curriculum. Nancy Martin (1975) suggests that "most subject teachers realize that language is a means to learning. The shortfall in their view is a failure to realize its potential" (p. 210). Smith et al. (1970) say that "language is the very core of the teaching-learning process rather than a necessary evil that teachers and pupils are forced to use" (p. 84).

In order for teachers to use language to help children learn, they must constantly observe ways in which children learn and, more particularly, how they learn through language. Fillion (1979) accepts the basic premise that intention and use are necessary elements in the development of language. For this reason he says, "It becomes important to examine the school as a language environment which promotes or inhibits development" (p. 56).

As a rationale for suggesting that language and learning cannot be independent of each other, Bullock (1975) looks back to the preschool years of a child. He points out that a child accomplishes the complex task of learning to speak before he is five. He suggests that during the same period the child makes more rapid progress in learning than in any other similar time span. He believes that the learning of

language must be aided by a satisfaction with learning. Conversely, language should be instrumental in helping a child progress from helplessness to independence. For this process to continue throughout the years of schooling would be both logical and necessary, and if it is to continue, Bullock (1975) maintains that "the teacher must create in the classroom an environment which encourages a wide range of language uses" (p. 188).

The link between language and learning, which is so obvious in the early years of the child, is seen by Britton (1970) to be relevant throughout the years of schooling and even in adult life. It is his belief that in school teachers cannot afford to ignore all that has gone on before. In his view "the processes of school learning must merge into the processes of learning that begin at birth and are life-long" (p. 129). The stress must remain on language through which children learn.

To realize the importance of language to learning, it is necessary to understand the actual role of language in the process. Language is described by Bullock (1975) as one of the prime means by which we construct generalized representations. It is language which enables the individual to classify his experience. When he learns the name of an object, he uses that word to gradually store successive experiences of the object and thereby build a representation which he can apply in future situations. In his words, "We

have to generalize from particular representations of past experiences in order to apply them to new ones, and language helps us to do this by providing a ready means of classifying these experiences" (p. 48).

As an individual develops language to organize his experiences of the world, he is enabled to make statements about the world. This in turn helps to impose some order on the experiences, which is why talking and writing are so important in the learning process. Bullock (1975) states that "language used in that way is the language of hypothesis, the formulation of possibilities" (p. 49). Formulating a hypothesis and putting it into words enables the individual to return to it later and re-examine it in the light of further experience. Francis (1977) emphasizes the close and reciprocal relationship of language and learning in her view that language development is itself a product of learning. It is her view that "from the immediate here and now the child extends his involvement into the distant, the past and the future, building his knowledge of language as he builds his knowledge of living" (p. 24).

It is important that students be given the opportunity to formulate their own hypotheses, for this is the crux of the learning process. The National Association for the Teaching of English (1976) states, "If a learner at any level is able to make his own formulations of what he is learning, this is more valuable to him than taking over someone else's pre-formulated language" (p. 8). Smith et al. (1970) share

this view as they say, "In order to expand language there must be no artificial exercises in recitation or copying someone else's language from the board but actual opportunity for children to use their own language to communicate" (p. 166).

The importance of the home environment to learning leads to a consideration of the relationship between social class and language development. Allen and Brown (1976) report on research in this field by Bernstein and his colleagues who have developed the sometimes misinterpreted concept of restricted and elaborated codes. According to Allen and Brown (1976), when Berstein uses the word 'code', he is not referring to the form of language used, but rather to the way the language is brought to bear on a particular context. They explain that "a restricted code is one that employs language in a relatively context-bound fashion, expressing particularistic meaning. The elaborated code facilitates the expression of universalistic meaning in a fashion not tied to a given context" (p. 23).

It is Bernstein's opinion that the lower class uses a restricted code most of the time while the middle class could use both restricted and elaborated codes. According to Bullock (1975), "Bernstein has emphasized that linguistic 'codes' are not related to social class as such, but to the family organization and the interaction between the individuals within it" (p. 52). He thinks that in lower

class homes there will be less opportunity to explore in a verbal manner. The child there is not required to express his thoughts and feelings in words to the same degree as in the middle class home.

It is commonly agreed that more research is needed in this field and that in the meantime caution should be taken to avoid jumping to the wrong conclusion regarding the relationship between social class and language development. According to Stubbs (1976), "no critic of Bernstein has ever denied that there are social class differences in language, or that these differences are somehow related to educational problems faced by working class children" (p. 50). He says that it is the nature of the relationship which is in dispute. Even though there is controversy over the exact details, it is clear that teachers need to assess the widely differing experiences and language which each child brings to school and plan activities on the basis of their observation.

Barrow (1982) realizes that we must accept the language which children bring to the classroom, but he also sees some merit in bringing about a transition from the child's personal language to a more public language. He believes that there are different languages and all are not good for any and every purpose. He states, "Though all may have some value of their own and need to be understood on their own terms, some can nonetheless be clearly seen to be inferior as vehicles for sophisticated, descriptive, analytic and informative rational thought" (p. 29). If this is the case,

a logical role of the teacher would be to attempt to gradually develop a capacity for analytic thinking. This should then ensure maximum learning.

In developing a child's capacity to think analytically it is important for the child to see a purpose for learning. The importance of meaning as the key to learning cannot be overemphasized. If the writing the child is engaged in has no meaning for him, he will not want to write. If the reading material has no meaning for him, he will not want to read. Meaning and learning will more naturally ensue if the child is permitted to bring his own language to bear on both processes. As Marland (1977) says, "Language helps learning and learning helps language and the more closely the two are related, the more effective the total process" (p. 17).

Student-Teacher Interaction

Since it is in the classroom that findings and suggestions from research have to be implemented, this section is devoted largely to research on what actually occurs in classrooms. This research into teaching behavior is important since all the influence which teachers have over students in the course of their thirteen years of schooling must be funnelled in the right direction.

It is the view of Flanders (1970) that "teaching behavior is the most potent, single controllable factor that can alter learning opportunities in the classroom" (p. 13).

He contends that for all except the most gifted teachers, there is a gap between fairly good intentions and the teaching behavior which actually occurs. He thinks that in many cases teachers know what they ought to do but their aspirations are not reached as consistently as they wish. This observation leads him to conclude that, "the study of classroom interaction may improve the quality of teaching simply because it would reduce the gap between intent and action" (p. 5)

Exploratory Talk

There seems to be growing evidence in the research (Tough, 1973; Flanders, 1970; Stubbs, 1976; Barnes, 1975) that student talk is of crucial importance to their learning. As Stratta et al. (1973) point out, talk pervades our very lives. From a very early age we are saturated by it and continue to be for the most part as long as we live. Tough (1973) maintains that "the persistent exposure to particular uses of language as part of the way of life in his home has already built within the child a disposition to go on using language in the same way" (p. 49). She thinks that children should be helped to retrieve details from earlier experiences as a means of adding meaning to the present experiences.

Wilkinson (1975) concluded from the lessons which he observed that the type of learning must be suited to the task. In one of the lessons he was particularly impressed by the way the teacher had told the pupils nothing, but had

nicely prepared the way for the discussion. The teacher had facilitated the learning by bringing into sharp focus the problems involved, so that the pupils could attempt solutions of them. He felt that the lessons he observed succeeded in varying degrees and concluded that "it is probably the case that least is being learnt where the teacher seems to be teaching most and having a bigger share of the words spoken" (p. 83).

Stratta et al (1983) reported the results of a workshop in which they considered two tape recordings of work in English lessons. The first was of a teacher working with the whole class and the second of a small group of pupils working together who were asked to keep the tape recorder running. They concluded from their observations that "talking things over is a fundamental way whereby we learn from each other, providing there is a mutual respect and a willingness to listen to others" (p. 162). They found that a proper social relationship was crucial to the learning situation, particularly in small groups. There needed to be a climate of toleration, order and co-operation for pupils to talk about personal experiences.

Although the extracts examined by Stratta et al. (1973) suggested both possible advantages and possible limitations of small group discussions, the authors report that "on the tape one hears a spontaneous flow and enthusiasm that the more formal and public address to thirty other people (and the tendency to teacher direction) will almost always quench"

(p. 169).

Rosen (in Barnes et al., 1969) sharply critizes the classroom where there is no dialogue. He contends that it is through the enormous variety of dialogue with others that we gather together the linguistic resources to think through our problems. He says, "Restrict the nature and quality of that dialogue and ultimately you restrict thinking capacity" (p. 126). It is his belief that "it is as talkers, questioners, arguers, gossips, chatterboxes, that our pupils do much of their important learning" (p. 127) and he continues, "when pupils are free to talk, teachers are free to observe and to understand what kind of learning is going on" (p. 127).

It is the view of The Schools Council Working Paper 59 (1977) that teachers should create the content which is conducive to talk. According to this paper, in a large group or class discussion, the time available for each student to participate is strictly rationed so that most members are merely listening for large portions of the time. Thus, a small group is more effective in that it provides a face to face contact between the members and makes it easier for each speaker to obtain feedback from other members of the group. The paper states that "this enables the speaker to read off the effects of his language on the 'other', thus gathering the essential data for building up his language and for forming some notions about the appropriateness of his reaction to reality" (p. 138).

The Schools Council Working Paper 59 (1977) also contains a report of a geology lesson which appeared to have a serious educational content but which was so one-sided in favour of the teacher in both thinking and speaking that there was little opportunity for the students to expand their thinking or language capacity. In this situation the pupil was "denied choice, interest and curiosity, as well as opportunities to rehearse his own experience and to get his own language round this 'new' knowledge" (p. 146). Quite often the student was being asked to understand another person's language and no attempt was made to mediate between the teacher's language and that of the student. The authors advocate that

> the pupil should do more than remember parrot-fashion, he should be connecting new experiences with past experience, be internalizing complicated patterns for structuring new knowledge so that he may approach new situations with greater understanding and more comprehensive strategies. (p. 147).

In order for this to happen, students must be given the opportunity and encouragement to talk about what they already know in an attempt to relate it to the new knowledge being examined. As Britton (1970) suggests, "we habitually use talk as a means of modifying each other's representations of experience" (p. 19).

Barnes (1975) contends that "to become meaningful, a curriculum has to be enacted by pupils as well as teachers, all of whom have their private lives outside of school" (p.

14). One part of his research included a close look at four groups of 12-to-13-year-old children talking while they were engaged in tasks set by their teachers. He sees talking as something more than communicating ideas already formed. He says, "It is as if the talking enabled us to rearrange the problem so that we can look at it differently" (p. 22). From the observations of these lessons, Barnes (1975) also recognizes that there are times when because what children working in groups discuss may be superficial or inclusive, the teacher has a tendency to rush right in and take over. He cautions that "taking the initiative out of the pupils' hands may reduce their learning from an active organizing of knowledge to a mere mimicry of the teacher" (p. 77). He thinks that teachers "should avoid on the one hand a teacher domination that discourages pupils from active learning, and on the other the abandonment of pupils to their own devices" (p. 78).

Teachers still have a responsibility for what their pupils learn in the classroom. Barnes (1975) sees classroom learning as an interaction between the teachers' meaning and that of their pupils so that what they take away from the lesson is partly shared and partly unique to each of them. The fact that teachers know something does not mean that they can give it to their pupils just by telling them. Children have to find words to express their ideas and feelings to others, thus rearranging their thoughts and reshaping the

teachers' knowledge in the light or their own experiences. It cannot be assumed, though, that this reshaping will occur automatically just because the pupils are put into small groups. Careful planning and close observation by teachers are required in order for students to obtain maximum learning from group discussions.

A report conducted by Rosen and Burgess (in Davies, 1982) on a study of language and collaborative learning in schools shows that pupils can give mutual support to each other's learning and that "in talking things over the pupils' understandings may be refined by the pressure of formulation and reformulation" (p. 13). They believe that in most classrooms there are ways to encourage pupils' support for the learning of each other which are not as yet being realized. In that paper they give a short excerpt of a conversation between two 11-year-olds. They show that it is through support that the children give to each other in conversations such as the one between these 11-year-olds and, as importantly, through the habit of talking that "development towards more precise concepts may be fostered" (p. 13). Destefano (1978) seems to have had similar ideas when she states that "if we provide experiences, students can think and talk about them, thus expanding both their thinking and their language abilities" (p. 67).

Cashdan (1979) in the introduction to her book observes a common message running through all its chapters:

> The job of the teacher in the 1980's demands an application and a degree of technical expertise considerably in advance of what has been required in the past. (p. viii)

It is her opinion that the teacher has to move away from the role of classroom tyrant and controller to a mode of interaction that allows pupils to make their own understandings and achieve their own learning. She sees this as adding considerably to the work of the classroom teacher who must plan, record and diagnose as well as know when to stand back and when to intervene.

Torbe (cited in Cashdan, 1979) gives examples of pupils making the first tentative steps into understanding and learning by making connections between the new ideas they were meeting and what they already knew. He also sees it as extremely difficult for the teacher to set up a situation where pupils are able to talk freely and purposefully while the teacher remains silent so that they may recognize the importance of their own formulations. He thinks it is crucial that teachers encourage purposeful talk among pupils for "pupils remember and learn what they themselves formulate rather than what is presented to them preformulated" (p. 109). Pupils indicated to Him that after discussion they could recall what they themselves had said better than what the teacher had said. In addition, they could also remember the discussion immediately preceding and following their own contributions. Torbe reported that research evidence from students in other schools also confirmed this.

The above findings by Torbe that vocalization of ideas is an aid to remembering are very closely related to the opinions of Barnes (1975) on classroom learning. He advocates that in order to solve the problems of learners, we have to know what it is about their existing knowledge that has to be changed in order for them to cope with the new knowledge being presented. Barnes says that only the learner himself knows this, but he might not know he knows. He makes the very important point that "this is why it is important for the learner to talk or write or otherwise represent the problem to himself, and why his active participation is crucial" (p. 83).

Britton (1970) alludes to a similar concept of learning as the above when he talks about people in their roles as spectators and participants. He says that "as participants we generate expectations from past experience, put them to the test of actuality, and modify our representation of the world. . .in the light of what happens" (p. 118).

Gagne and Smith (1962) did a study on the effects of verbalization on problem solving which showed the importance of talk to learning. Significant differences were found between the scores of those groups who were required to verbalize and those who were not. Those who verbalized during practice were able to think more effectively and thus solve problems more easily.

Barnes (1975) looked closely at four groups of 12-to-13-

year-old children talking while they were engaged in tasks set by their teachers. As a result he makes very interesting observations concerning the importance of talk as a way of controlling thinking. He observes that "the more a learner controls his own language strategies and the more he is enabled to think aloud, the more he can take responsibility for formulating explanatory hypotheses and evaluating them" (p. 29). Another of his observations is that "re-articulation of thought is more likely to happen in discussion than in the silence of individual thought, because in discussion all pupils have at least some awareness of the need to frame ideas so that others can understand them" (p. 56).

Hoether and Ahlbrand (1969) presented a chronological review of formal and informal classroom observational studies from the turn of the century to about 1950. They found that teachers have been quite reluctant to change. In their words:

> The studies that have been reviewed show a remarkable stability of classroom verbal behavior patterns over the last half century, despite the fact that each successive generation of educational thinkers, no matter how else they differed has condemned the rapid-fire, question-answer pattern of instruction. (p. 163)

This seems to indicate that a significant change toward more language oriented teaching and learning is not easy to initiate.

Fillion (1979) in reviewing the quality of English

teaching in Ontario suggests that extensive changes are needed for any serious implementation in school of the language policy that the situation calls for. In the 1977-78 school year he was involved in three successive inquiries in Toronto schools where it was found that too much attention was focused on direct instruction and teacher correction rather than on the larger problems of language functions, intentions and use. He says that "until teachers examine carefully the relationships of language to learning, understanding, and intellectual development, they are unlikely to take seriously their own responsibilities toward language development or to realize the potential of language for all learning" (p. 57).

In Cazden's (1977) view

> responding to real or imagined community pressures, able and conscientious teachers all over the country are providing abundant practice in discrete basic skills, while classrooms where children are integrating those skills in the service of exciting speaking, listening, reading and writing activities are becoming rare exceptions. (p. 41)

Even though there is not enough student talk in our schools, more teachers are becoming aware of its importance as a way of learning in all aspects of the curriculum. One of the main findings of this literature review, however, is that being aware is not enough. According to Lewis (1979), "it seems that many classrooms are still largely places where children are more or less passive listeners, and that as a

culture we devalue talk in school" (p. 65). It is his contention that talk is by its very nature meandering, seemingly circular and rich in digression, and should therefore be developed positively in children. He also believes that the children will be more likely to expand conversations when they are responsible for initiating them. In his opinion, "a warm, open approach seems best suited to elicit such speech, and it involves the teacher in a preparedness to accept language close to the child's home and playground idiom" (p. 72).

In an article on group talk, Barnes et al. (1971) discuss extracts from tape recordings of secondary school pupils discussing a novel in small groups. One of the aims of the project was to examine the kinds of talk the pupils engaged in. The authors concluded that "informal talk in small groups can under certain circumstances be a valuable way to enabling pupils to develop their responses to a work of literature" (p. 73). They found that pupils in small groups can explore and give shape to initial responses as a preparation for a more explicit and public discussion in full class. The authors point out that they were not by any means arguing for the abdication of the teacher. They argue that in spite of what students can manage on their own, the teacher's help is often required in achieving greater explicitness and more attentiveness to the viewpoints of other people.

Wade and Wood (1980) report a study in which recordings

of a science lesson were used to examine the role of talk in the learning process. In the opinion of the authors, "the students used talk for a variety of learning purposes as well as to maintain their motivation and to provide a focus on the tasks" (p. 212).

A report by Watson (1980) on a study involving the observation of ninety secondary English lessons in New South Wales also reveals some interesting facts. He found that teachers frequently deceived themselves about the nature of their discussion lessons and about the proportion of pupils actively involved. Several teachers who had said that they tried to ensure that almost every pupil had a chance to speak, rarely involved more than 50% of their students in the discussion. These researchers conclude that although teachers are using more small group methods than previously, whole class discussions are still the preferred teaching method. Therefore, they emphasize the need for teachers to be aware of the effects of different kinds of conversational control.

Exploratory Talk and Writing

It can be readily seen that there is a very close link between exploratory talk and writing. Torbe (in Cashdan, 1979) says, "Just as important as recognizing that we can learn by talking is recognizing that writing can be a way of learning, as well as a way of expressing what has been learned" (p. 113). He continues his discussion of

exploratory writing by saying that "the tolerance for expressive talk needs to be extended to written language, so that polished, neat, correct public essays are not seen as the only kinds of writing. Of the three kinds of writing discussed by Britton (1970), it is the expressive writing that he refers to as 'written down speech'. It is his view that "we would hardly expect a child to do otherwise than to draw upon his speech resources when he wants to write" (p. 165). It is the expressive writing that allows the pupil to think aloud on paper without having to worry about form or correctness.

In a classroom situation it is virtually impossible to separate talk and writing while at the same time expecting optimal learning to occur. Britton (1970) points out that every new field of interest for the student is likely to be investigated, explored and organized first in talk. Because of this importance placed on talk, the teacher should allow for this process to occur and to be naturally followed by expressive writing. In this way students can put more of themselves into their writing rather than give back to the teachers information which they have already given to them. Torbe suggests that if students were allowed to bypass the expressive in talk and writing, it is possible that learning would be bypassed too.

In Australia, Turbill (1982) has carried out research on the 'conference approach' to the teaching and learning of

written expression. In the 'conference approach' children are given freedom in choosing their topic and are helped more individually by discussions between teacher and child, not just at the marking stage but at various stages of the writing process. The impressive results achieved by the twenty-seven teachers participating in her project were due in no small measure to their recognition of the importance of talk to the writing process. In her books, Turbill (1982, 1983) shows how the children were given more control over their writing than in the more traditional approach where the teacher had a tighter control of the what, when and how of writing. The concentration of her work is in the primary area but she maintains that

> the child who has discovered in these early years an individual writing process, as these children have done, is only going to develop in degree thereafter, whether in primary or secondary school, gradually lifting quantity, content, style, and control of a variety of modes year by year. (p. 6)

Teacher Talk and Teacher Questioning

Research on teacher talk in the classroom could be somewhat disturbing to some teachers. As Barnes (1975) suggests, they do not "perceive themselves as dominating, as unresponsive to their pupils' viewpoints, or as carrying out ritual patterns of communication" (p. 172). Flanders (1970), on the basis of his many analyses of classroom interaction, determined that two-thirds of every lesson is made up of talk and two-thirds of the talk comes from the teacher. According

to this rule, during a forty-five minute lesson each pupil in a class of thirty will have an average of twenty seconds of talk at his disposal.

From his research on classroom behaviour, Bellack (1966) summarized the results in terms of the rules of the language game of teaching. Probably the most prevalent rule of the game, according to Bellack (1966) and Barnes (1975), is the teacher soliciting - pupil responding - teacher reacting pattern of instruction. This evidence suggests that the quality of teachers' utterances also needs investigating in order to further promote language learning in children.

In a review of relevant research, Hargie (1978) examined the importance of teacher questions in the classroom. He concluded that the type of questions asked by the teacher and the purpose of teacher questions are both crucial to the learning process.

Harrod (1977) reported on an attempt to explore discourse in junior and middle school classrooms using interaction analysis and intuitive contextual analysis to examine interactions between teachers and children in a variety of learning situations. In these lessons he found a tendency towards a predominance of factual over reasoning questions. He also observed that teachers tend to teach as though their tasks were more concerned with transmitting information that with encouraging thinking. Data from one lesson showed that seventy percent of pupils made no verbal

contribution at all. Another of his findings was that only nine percent of the questions asked by the teachers in these eleven formal lessons were of the open type.

A study reported by Blackie (1971) suggests another problem associated with the questioning of students by teachers. This study involved the tape recording of lessons in which she taught poetry to 11 and 12 year-olds in tutorial groups. She states that "all the tapes show horrifying and abundantly clearly that I tend to pause for far too short a time between question and answer, or statement and follow up" (p. 92). This tendency to have someone talking and to eliminate uncomfortable silence could decrease the amount of time allowed for student replies and therefore decrease the opportunity for exploratory thought and talk.

Analysis of Classroom Teaching

A common element arising from the research on the use of language in the classroom is the need for more study and observation of teaching practices. Teachers are for the most part unaware of their shortcomings in developing language in their students. Barnes (1975) states that what is clear from his study "is that teachers would gain from a more sophisticated insight into the implications of their own use of language, and into the part that language can at best play in their pupils" (p. 75). Wade and Wood (1980) endorse this opinion when they state that "the recording, transcribing and analysing of classroom talk, although not without their

problems, do bring rewards of increased insight to the teacher" (p. 212).

Teachers need to be brought to a point where they begin assessing the language interaction in their own classrooms. If more of this were done, with a purpose of maintaining a balance among group work, exploratory talk, and teacher talk, then surely the student would benefit.

In Conclusion

An acquaintance with the existing body of literature related to the role of language in learning and with future studies on teacher-student interaction is essential for teachers to create a classroom environment rich in a variety of languages uses.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In spite of the research that has been done over the years on the importance of language development to learning, it seems that in some classrooms much has yet to be done for language to become a facilitating force in our day-to-day teaching.

The purpose of this study was to review the literature pertaining to the relationship of language and learning. On the basis of the review, a set of guidelines was compiled to help teachers promote learning through language in the classroom.

The literature reviewed revealed the complexity of language as well as its importance to learning. A study of the nature of language showed that it is more than just a form of communication. It is also a means by which people can impose order on their world and classify their experiences. by the time they reach school, children have a command of the language in varying degrees. They have gained insights into language from their own experience. It is the role of the school to merge the children's existing knowledge with their new experiences as a way of extending and expanding their world.

The literature on the relationship of language and thought showed that the two processes interact with and

complement each other. To explore new ways of nourishing language is to develop thought. Since language has a variety of functions, the onus in on the teacher to create an environment which encourages a wide range of languages uses.

Talk was found to be a fundamental element in the expansion of language and hence an aid to learning. There was evidence to suggest that talking helps children to explore, analyse, and reorganize their thoughts and formulate new knowledge.

The research also indicated that aspects of student-teacher interaction such as the quantity and quality of both student and teacher talk have a significant impact on the amount of learning which takes place in the classroom. Students with teachers who enrich the linguistic environment and provide ample opportunity to practise language are the students who are probably learning most.

The guidelines were developed to broaden teachers' views of language so that they could incorporate a greater variety of language uses in their teaching. In these guidelines emphasis was placed on allowing students to formulate their own language rather than just to repeat what someone else has said.

The guidelines for teachers are not prescriptions for actual classroom practice. Teachers will have to adapt them to their own situations. In the final analysis, it is the teacher who knows the capabilities and limitations of the

students as well as any physical limitation of available facilities which would impede the implementation of these guidelines.

The study is arranged in two parts. Part One consists of three chapters, the first of which provides a general introduction to the subject. It includes a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the need, the methodology, and the organization. A review of the literature related to language and learning is the focus of the second chapter. It is reported under the following headings: The Nature of Language, The Functions of Language, The Relationship of Language and Thought, The Importance of Language to Learning, and Student-Teacher Interaction. The present chapter contains a summary of the study, together with recommendations based on the findings.

Part Two, a booklet for teachers, consists of two chapters. Chapter one is a set of guidelines for the classroom teacher on the use of language to increase learning in students. There are guidelines for exploratory talk, small groups, teacher questioning, large group discussions, and writing. Chapter two consists of suggestions for the implementation of the guidelines. The booklet also provides a selected bibliography.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the writer makes the following recommendations.

It is recommended that:

1. teachers familiarize themselves with studies on the analysis of classroom interaction.

2. schools, through subscriptions to professional journals and the purchase of books, provide teachers with material on language and its power to promote learning.

3. inservice sessions be provided so that teachers can view videotapes of classroom interaction and become involved in an analysis of the quality of teaching.

4. teachers become involved in the analysis of their own lessons. This could be done with the help of other professional personnel with expertise in the field, for example, the language arts and early childhood development coordinators.

5. courses in language and its relationship to learning be incorporated into the education of teachers of all grades.

6. teachers receive cooperation and encouragement from the administration when they arrange to have speakers visit their classrooms or when they arrange to take their students on field trips.

7. teachers receive help and encouragement in arranging the physical conditions of the classroom or school to facilitate small group work or other activities which promote

learning through language.

8. portions of the annual school budget be used annually to purchase audio-visual equipment to help students use language in a variety of ways to increase learning.

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PART II

PROMOTING LEARNING THROUGH LANGUAGE:
GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

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CHAPTER I

GUIDELINES

Introduction

Over the years a great deal has been written about language and its influence on learning. Studies have shown both the importance of language, for example, talk, in promoting learning and the negative effects of the paucity of its use in classrooms. It seems that in spite of such research many teachers, and therefore many students, remain untouched by the research findings. It seems that at the school level and, more importantly, at the classroom level, much has yet to be done in order for language to become the facilitating force that it should be in our day-to-day teaching. This booklet, "Guidelines for Teachers", is an attempt to reemphasize the importance of language in learning and to provide suggestions for its promotion in the classroom.

One aim of these guidelines is to help teachers develop a broader understanding of language which is necessary for their helping students increase their learning. Such aspects of language as exploratory talk, small and large group discussions, as well as the type and quality of teachers' questions are discussed. The guidelines are not designed for any particular grade. If their implementation is ongoing throughout the primary and elementary years, it will continue more naturally in the high school grades. At any age,

children can share their personal interests and learning discoveries with others.

The guidelines are not designed for any particular subject because language is a part of all subjects. Nor are the guidelines complete as prescriptions for actual classroom practice. Teachers will have to adapt them to their own situations. In the final analysis, it is the teacher who knows the capabilities and limitations of the pupils as well as any physical limitations of available facilities which would prevent the implementation of these guidelines. It is important to remember that all suggestions will not apply to all situations. Some may be impossible to implement in a particular situation, while others may already be in practice. If, however, there is one guideline which fosters greater learning in a child, then the compiling of the guidelines has been worthwhile. It should be remembered that these guidelines have been prepared by a teacher who is aware of all the reasons why they may not work but who is willing to admit that there is a need to improve students' learning through language and there are ways to work toward it.

Background Material

A brief summary of some of the related literature is provided as background material for the guidelines.

The London Association for the Teaching of English has been influential in focusing attention on the importance of

language to learning. Such educators as Douglas Barnes, James Britton and Harold Rosen have made significant contributions to our understanding and improvement of language learning. The Bullock Report, published in 1975, also gave many schools the direction required to begin a language for learning policy. Since many studies in classroom behavior and learning have been completed over the years, however, the background material for "Guidelines for Teachers" has not been limited to the work of these educators.

The need for more classroom activities to promote learning through language was evident in Bellack's (1966) study of the teaching process through analysis of the linguistic behavior of teachers and students in the classroom. The summary of his results showed that pupils and teachers follow a set of implicit rules with few deviations. They found, for example, that "the soliciting-responding pattern comprises the core of the classroom game and accounts for slightly more than three-fifths of all moves made" (p. 240). Flanders (1970), on the basis of his many analyses of classroom interaction, determined that two-thirds of every lesson is made up of talk and two-thirds of the talk comes from the teacher. Bullock (1975), in referring to this "two-thirds" rule, concluded that during a forty-five minute lesson each pupil in a class of thirty will have an average of twenty seconds of talk at his disposal. Halliday (1973) says that "language is, for the child, a rich and adaptable

instrument for the realization of his intentions; there is hardly any limit to what he can do with it" (p. 2). The above studies show that the limits are imposed not by the pupils, but by the teacher. The studies show a definite need for more exploratory talk in the classroom. As the Bullock Report states, "For such talk to flourish, the context must be as informal and relaxed as possible, and this is more likely to occur in small groups and in a well-organized and controlled classroom" (p. 189).

Studies of language suggest that students need to play an active role in the formulation of new knowledge on the basis of their existing knowledge. They must be given the opportunity to do this through talking, which helps them to assimilate the new with the existing. Barnes (1975) maintains that "it is more likely that the pupils have learnt from their schooling that their knowledge is irrelevant in a context determined by teachers, examinations and school syllabuses" (p. 127).

Barrow (1981) expresses a concern for teaching procedures related to language development when he says:

> What we have to do is get people into the habit of substituting thought for rhetoric, of articulating coherent ideas and arguments rather than mouthing words as talismen and ritual grunts in a permanent game of appearances, and above all of critically questioning their assumptions. (p. 134)

He maintains that this would make students more powerful critical thinkers.

In order for our students to achieve a level of thought as profound as Barrow requires (and indeed as all teachers should require), the thought processes of students will have to receive much attention. Barrow put the onus on teachers to take responsibility for this development of language as an aid to learning when he says that "to some extent the path would be easier if from the beginning we succeeded in cultivating a better control of language, as I have argued schools should seek to do" (p. 135).

Gagne and Smith (1962) conducted a study on the effects of verbalization on problem solving which showed the importance of talk to learning. Significant differences were found between the scores of those groups who were required to verbalize and those who were not. Those who verbalized during practice were able to think more effectively and thus solve problems more easily.

According to Hoether and Ahlbrand (1969), teachers have been quite reluctant to change. They concluded:

> The studies that have been reviewed show a remarkable stability of classroom verbal behavior patterns over the last half century, despite the fact that each successive generation of educational thinkers, no matter how else they differed, has condemned the rapid-fire, question-answer pattern of instruction. (p. 163)

This statement seems to indicate that a significant change toward more language oriented teaching and learning is not easy to initiate.

In a classroom observation study Barnes (1975) looked closely at four groups of 12-to-13-year-old children talking while they were engaged in tasks set by their teachers. As a result he made some very interesting observations concerning the importance of talk as a way of controlling thinking. He observed that "the more a learner controls his own language strategies and the more he is enabled to think aloud, the more he can take responsibility for formulating explanatory hypotheses and evaluating them" (p. 29). Another of his observations was that "re-articulation of thought is more likely to happen in discussion than in the silence of individual thought, because in discussion all pupils have at least some awareness of the need to frame ideas so that others can understand them" (p. 56).

Fillion (1979), in reviewing the quality of English teaching in Ontario, suggested that extensive changes are needed for any serious implementation in school of the language policy that the situation calls for. In the 1977-78 school year he was involved in three successive inquiries in Toronto area schools where it was found that too much attention was focused on direct instruction and teacher correction rather than on the larger problems of language functions, intentions and use. He said that "until teachers examine carefully the relationships of language to learning, understanding, and intellectual development, they are unlikely to take seriously their own responsibilities toward language development or to realize the potential of language

for all learning" (p. 57).

Cazden (1977) expresses a view similar to that of Fillion when she points out that:

> Responding to real or imagined community pressures, able and conscientious teachers all over the country are providing abundant practice in discrete basic skills, while classrooms where children are integrating those skills in the service of exciting speaking, listening, reading and writing activities are becoming rare exceptions. (p. 41)

"Rare exceptions" may present too pessimistic a view in describing the number of those classrooms in our schools today. The point is, however, that in light of the research reviewed, it is undoubtedly an area for concern in many classrooms.

Statements About Language

The following are general statements evolving from the review of literature. They are intended to provide a framework for the guidelines, as well as make the reader think about the role of language in learning.

1. When children reach school age they have already developed a variety of language skills. One way to help children continue this development is to provide larger language samples for them to hear. At the primary level, for example, when a child looks outside and says, "The sun is shining," the teacher might reply, "Yes, and it makes everything

look so much brighter," rather than "Yes, the sun is shining." The teacher's building on the basic language of children in this way should continue throughout the elementary and junior high school grades. At each level the teacher should encourage students to expand their language by following each question with another or by repeating in a more elaborated form what the students have said.

2. Teachers must take into account the children's linguistic experience. Before they reached school, children used language as a way of exploring their world. As they went about their play, they provided a running commentary on what they were doing as an aid to regulating and organizing events. At all levels of school, children should continue to make sense of their world through language. They should be encouraged to talk about what they are doing instead of being kept quiet. In the higher grades, as well as in the primary and elementary grades, small group work would help to accomplish this language development in students.

3. Since language is the main vehicle for the teaching of thinking and reasoning, teachers should constantly try to improve the children's command of the language. One way to accomplish this is by

encouraging children to ask questions about what they are experiencing. In the primary grades this happens more naturally, but in the higher grades more encouragement is needed to get the more reticent students to speak. Care must also be taken to ensure that children are not ignored when they do ask questions.

4. Some of the children's difficulties with language arise because they are required to accept a stereotype of language which is contrary to what they have been experiencing in the home. Teachers, especially in the primary area, should try to bridge these differences between the language of the school and that of the home by talking informally with students as much as possible. Reading to children could also help to alleviate this problem.

5. At all levels there must be an attempt to encourage children to connect new experiences with past experiences. All children perceive things differently from one another in the light of their past experiences, so it is important that they be permitted to talk about those experiences. This sharing of experiences shows children that what they know is important. The experiences which the students at any level relate provide the teacher with valuable and useful information.

6. Students must encounter situations where they have to explore, recall, predict, plan, explain and analyse. In this way they will learn about language by experiencing it and experimenting with its use. If children do not come to school with the ability to use language in these ways, it does not mean that they do not possess the necessary capabilities. These uses of language become more refined as children progress through the elementary and junior high school grades.

7. Teachers should be aware of the changing quality of language. Some words that at one time were not acceptable become gradually incorporated into the language while other words become archaic. This adds a vitality to the language which should be of interest to students, especially those at the higher levels.

8. Teachers should be aware of the need to integrate the four language skills - reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Each skill has its own distinctive quality that must be recognized, but development in one skill increases the potential of the children for development in the other skills. The close relationship among the four skills is perhaps more evident in the primary and elementary

grades. In the higher grades care must be taken to ensure that each of the skills is not treated as a separate subject. It is necessary to plan activities which require that the skills be interrelated.

In the primary and elementary grades the thematic approach to teaching language arts provides a thorough integration of the four language components. If a class is studying whales, for example, the teacher could gather together all available material on the subject. Children could also be encouraged to bring relevant material from home. The teacher and children would then talk about whales and an opportunity would be provided for all the children to tell what they know. Reading material on the children's reading level should be obtained, taking into consideration the various reading levels in the class. Films and film strips as well as pictures should also be provided. Various types of writing could be done and, along with other interesting material pertaining to the theme, displayed on a bulletin board.

In the higher grades also an integration of the language skills is possible. During the prewriting stage which is as important at this level as in the lower grades discussions could be held and reading

done on the subject of interest. While the students are progressing through the writing process, they should talk with the teacher and other students about their ideas and how to present them. After they have finished the final draft, there are various ways of sharing the writing with an audience. It can be read silently by one or more classmates or it can be presented orally to a group or the whole class. A collection of writing can also be prepared for other classes or for the school newspaper.

9. Teachers should ensure that new terms are introduced gradually with plenty of exploratory discussion. It is important that new terms be related to language with which they are already familiar.

Guidelines for Exploratory Talk

James Britton (1970) believes that "anyone who succeeded in outlawing talk in the classroom would have outlawed life for the adolescent: the web of human relations must be spun in school as well as out" (p. 223). This statement shows the importance which he places on exploratory talk by students. The following are other general statements pertaining to the importance of exploratory talk among students. Most of the statements apply to all grades but specific references to grade levels are made throughout:

1. For exploratory talk to flourish the environment must be informal and relaxed. In order to share their ideas the children must have a sense of freedom and they must not sense that what they say is being evaluated. This relaxed atmosphere seems to occur naturally in most primary classes, but teachers beyond that level often find this type of environment more difficult to maintain, perhaps because older students tend to sit in rows of seats facing the teacher. Such a seating arrangement should not be permanent but should be changed to suit the activity.

2. Students should develop control over their own thinking, but this type of control is harder to accomplish if they remain silent. Control is

attained through aarticulating thought in the process of interacting with other human beings. This guideline would pertain especially to older students who are discussing problems. They will find that their thoughts become clearer as they articulate them.

3. Exploratory talk helps students to go back over events and interpret them, thus making sense out of them in a way that they were unable to do when the events were taking place. This could especially be applied to reading a story, a poem, or any other piece of literature. The interpretation of the material becomes clearer during a discussion.

4. Children are likely to maintain convetsations which they initiate and for which they feel responsible. If the atmosphere in the classroom is conducive to discussion, the children themselves will initiate talk about the subject being studied. Language is developed more naturally in this type of situation than if the child has to be prodded for every statement.

5. Students in all grades should be encouraged to elaborate on their statements. If in reply to a teacher's question "What causes rain?" a student replies, "Clouds", then the teacher should encourage

the student to elaborate on the statement. If the student knows more about the water cycle, then the teacher should accept the reply "clouds" but lead the student to elaborate.

6. Students, especially those in elementary and junior high school, should begin to make demands on each other for things like audibility, provision of adequate examples, relevance, and clarity of thought. This level of discussion will take time to develop and proficiency in it should not be expected of all in the early years.

7. Teachers should not always insist on the correct terminology during a discussion. This could deemphasize the content of the contribution and attach more value to appropriate language. For example, if a child familiar with the woods in his area made an intelligent statement about the amount of rainfall in Africa contributing to the heavy woods, the teacher should praise his observation rather than say, "You should have said jungle instead of woods."

8. Exploratory talk provides a way for students to modify each other's representations of experience, but it is first and foremost a way of working things out for themselves. Junior high school students

could find discussion helpful in coming to terms with concepts such as death and God. While discussing these subjects with others they might achieve a clearer understanding of the concepts.

9. Students should be encouraged to use language in meaningful ways for a variety of purposes. They should use talk to solve practical problems as well as to come to terms with more complicated ideas. For example, in primary school, children can be shown the use of language in learning how to answer the telephone properly as well in learning why we have day and night. In elementary grades children can be shown that language can be used in determining how much carpet is needed for a room, as well as in determining what causes tides.

Guidelines for Small Groups

There is no intention in these guidelines to suggest that the widespread use of small groups is the only way that students can learn. Even though the benefits of exploratory talk have been pointed out, it is not recommended that all a teacher has to do is put students in small groups and leave them to learn. Small groups can be a valuable aid to learning if carefully planned and guided by the teacher. The following are guidelines for using small groups:

1. Small-group work should begin early in the year so that students will see it as a natural part of the learning process.

2. Because it takes time for students to learn the appropriate behavior for small-group work, teachers should use grouping on a regular basis. If the students are put in groups only a few times during the school year, each time they will see the group work as a novelty and may not settle down to deriving the possible benefits from the group.

3. The size of the group is important. If the group exceeds four or five, some members are confined to a listening role for considerable stretches of time and, therefore, cannot learn by talking. In a small group the face-to-face contact provided enables

students to see the effects of their language on others.

4. Teachers should try to maintain a balance between telling the students too much, for example, writing notes on the board for them to copy and memorize, and leaving them completely on their own. Of course the maturity of the students would have to be taken into consideration. Primary children would need more supervision than older students. At any level, if we interfere too much, we interpose ourselves between the children and what we want them to discover. If we intervene too little, they might tend to stray too far from their purpose.

5. It is often beneficial for the teacher to join in, ask for conclusions or clarification and attempt to take the discussion a little further.

6. In the time alloted for group work teachers should attempt to give students time for the reorganization of their thoughts to occur. Students should be encouraged to consider their original statements. They must have time to ponder, but not unlimited time. Goals and deadlines have to be set.

7. Small-group work gives the opportunity for teachers to build up the students' confidence by showing that they value the contributions of their students.

Students should also be taught to value each other's contributions.

8. It is important to make the task for the group discussion relevant to the lesson as a whole. It is sometimes helpful to have something concrete, such as pictures, poems, films or the statements of others for the students to discuss. Describing the likenesses and differences could be a group task which would stimulate language at any age. In a primary class the children could have to point out the likenesses and differences of a group of leaves or plants whereas with older students the same type of task could be used with two poems.

9. There should be an attempt to allow for a spontaneous flow of ideas, which might not be as easy to accomplish in a large class. Small groups provide an excellent opportunity for students to come to terms with their ideas and for a reshaping of their knowledge to occur.

10. Small-group work is a good preparation for a more public discussion of the same topic. By the time they return to the large class, the students are able to participate more readily because they already have organized the information in their minds. Reporting back to a larger group also gives

purpose to the discussion. Care must be taken, however, not to restrict the freedom of exploration. It is when teachers occupy a backseat but intervene sensitively that the conditions are most ripe for creative language to grow and learning to take place.

Guidelines for Teacher Questioning

Since teacher behavior could be called the most potent single controllable factor that can alter learning opportunities for the student, and since teacher questioning is such a crucial aspect of that behavior, the following guidelines are proposed:

1. While questioning the students, there is a danger of fostering a notion of classroom language which is too narrow. Teachers should not depend totally on the solicit-response pattern of questioning; that is, where the teacher asks a question, the pupil gives a reply and the teacher reacts to the reply. Too much emphasis on this type of discussion will not result in learning to any great depth. One way of varying the approach is by encouraging students to ask more questions both of the teacher and of each other.

2. In their questions, teachers should not use terminology or abstract language which is unfamiliar to the students. The use of words such as "expensive", "moral" and "transparent" at the grade one level, for example, might act as a barrier rather than as an aid to learning. The writer is not suggesting that the pupils should not be challenged, but that they should not be

unnecessarily frustrated.

3. The technique of responding to initial pupil responses with further clarifying questions is a useful aid in developing the language of a student at any grade level. For example, a teacher who has just completed a unit on Holland might ask, "What do you remember about Holland?" If a pupil replies that it has a good climate the teacher should not stop there but should ask, "What do you mean by a good climate?" This use of probing by the teacher is an important feature of questioning. Sometimes teachers can move students along by a question about the validity of their argument, thus challenging them to find new evidence.

4. In order to reduce teacher talk, it is sometimes effective to redirect questions from one student to another. This redirection recognizes the fact that students also possess relevant information and knowledge which can make an important contribution to the discussion. For example, when Billy asks the teacher a question, the teacher could reply, "What do you think of that, Susan?" or "Would anyone else like to answer Billy's question?"

5. Increasing the 'wait time', both before and after pupil responses, can also increase the length of the

responses. If the pace of the teacher's questions is too rapid, the students are not encouraged to search, to elaborate, or to clarify.

6. The quality of teacher questions is also a major concern. Sometimes the student-teacher dialogue has an artificial tone because the students usually tell the teachers what the teachers already know. For this reason, students get the idea that the teachers know everything and, therefore, as students they have nothing new or significant to offer. To improve this situation, teachers could include more questions of the type, "What do you think?" or "What is your opinion?"

7. Teachers should increase their use of thought-provoking questions. If there are too many factual and recall questions, students will get the idea that information is more important than original thought. For example, teachers should reduce the number of questions such as, "What is the capital of Newfoundland?" or "Who were the members of the group?" in favor of more questions like "Will you describe for the class what you saw in the tree?", "Compare the climate of Norway with the climate of Newfoundland," or "How does the setting affect the atmosphere in this story?" The terminology in the questions would be determined by the maturity of the

students. Primary teachers, for example, would ask their pupils how one thing is like another rather than ask them to discuss the relationship between the two. At all levels the teachers have to ensure that the vocabulary used in the questions is not confusing for the students.

8. Teachers should try to eliminate a common practice of repeating the students' contributions to the discussion. This repetition may give students the idea that they do not have to listen the first time.

9. Since research shows that in a class discussion, a large percentage of students make no contribution, teachers should constantly seek to decrease this percentage by including more students in their questioning.

10. Teachers should attempt to decrease the number of closed questions during a discussion. These are questions which require only one answer. For example, teachers should ask more questions such as "What is another way to approach this problem?", "Would you give me more examples of what you mean?", "What do you think might have happened if Peter had not seen the hole in the ice?", or "Write another ending for this story."

11. Students should be encouraged to react to statements made by teachers. Often students, especially in the higher grades, have the idea that they only speak when the teacher questions them. If the teacher, during a lesson, casually remarks that a character in a story is a mean person and the students disagree or want to know why, they should feel that they can question the teacher. Teachers should attempt to build this feeling of confidence in children by creating an atmosphere of acceptance rather than one of rejection and criticism.

12. Teachers should be constantly aware of an atmosphere in the classroom which is conducive to discussion. Students will not respond readily to questions or statements in an environment that they find threatening.

Guidelines for Large Group Discussions

Since whole-class discussion seems to remain the generally preferred teaching method, teachers should give some thought to the effects of different sorts of conversational control. The following is a list of guidelines for more effective class discussion:

1. Group discussion should be used only when it is the best method of achieving instructional objectives, not just because it is a good thing to do. A good discussion would be assessed on the basis of whether it promoted students' learning.

2. In order for discussions to be more effective, the teacher must attempt to create a climate of toleration, order and mutual respect. Courteous and co-operative behavior is very important, especially if the more reticent members in the group are expected to get involved.

3. Teachers should prepare the way for discussion by bringing the problems involved into sharp focus so that students can attempt solutions to them.

4. Developing competence in group discussion is a slow process. It might take months to ensure an atmosphere in which all contributions, whether by student or teacher, are treated with equal respect.

It must also be recognized that leadership in discussion can pass easily from teacher to student and back to the teacher again.

5. In a class discussion, it is important for teachers to reply to students' questions, not just assess or evaluate them. Teachers should reply by encouraging a deeper development of an idea through a question or comment, in an attempt to promote critical thinking in the student.

6. Teachers should take the physical organization of the classroom into consideration. If a class sits around in a circle there is more opportunity for talk across the circle in all directions. This face-to-face situation is more beneficial than having a student talk at the back of someone's head.

7. If possible, it is a good practice for the students to know the topic of discussion in advance. In that way they can bring materials or do previous research for the discussion. If a teacher is starting a theme on whales, students should know a few days in advance so that they could begin collecting pictures and magazine articles on whales. They should not, however, feel pressured into bringing materials.

8. To develop the students' competence in discussion,

it would sometimes be helpful to tape it. In this way teachers could point out strengths and weaknesses to the students. The students could also work independently on this type of activity.

Guidelines for Writing

These writing guidelines are concerned mainly with the relation of writing to talk and the role of writing in the extension and development of language to promote learning. The aim of this section is not to provide a detailed description of the writing process. It is necessary, however, for teachers to understand that the writing process involves leading the students through stages which include pre-writing experiences, draft writing, revising, editing, and the post writing or publishing stage. The success of the writing process as a logical and meaningful approach to the teaching of writing could very well depend on some or all of the following points:

1. Since talk is one of the best means available for the generating of ideas, it is an obvious tool to be used as the basis for a good writing program. A discussion of ideas, whether in a small or large group enables writers to draw upon the opinions and contributions of others. It also enables them to talk out and organize their own ideas and assimilate these ideas into their writing.

2. When it is possible, the students should write to satisfy their own purposes. Their language becomes more complex and effective when they have to talk about situations which are important to them and

which have arisen from their own direct experience of the world.

3. Care must be taken to enable the students to become involved in the three types of writing during the total program from primary to high school. Expressive writing is closest to the everyday speech of the students and, therefore, would be the first type of writing which they experience. Expressive writing is usually intended for the children's own use because it allows them to freely express their thoughts. Transactional writing is writing to get things done. It includes writing to inform, advise, persuade, or instruct people. Children in primary school should be introduced to this type of writing but it becomes more widespread in the elementary and junior high school grades. Poetic writing is used as an art form which pleases or satisfies the writer. It is more formally patterned than expressive writing but it is more imaginative than transactional writing. At the junior high school level where subject teaching might be the practice, teachers in the content areas should also take some responsibility for the development of the students' expressive and transactional writing.

4. In short conferences with the teachers, students should choose their own topics. Then, with the

continued guidance of the teachers, students should be responsible for their writing at all stages of its development. Of course, as students move through the grades, the writing assignments will be more closely related to the actual topics covered in such subjects as social studies, science and literature. In the higher grades expressive and poetic writing will become largely the responsibility of the language arts teacher.

5. In writing, especially in the content areas, students need to go beyond tasks employing simple copying and paraphrasing to those tasks requiring critical thinking and thoughtful exposition. Writing of this nature allows students to wrestle with their thoughts and work on reformulations of their knowledge.

6. No expository writing should be expected before the students have engaged in preliminary explorations in talk and writing.

7. Students in all grades should be given the opportunity to engage in journal writing. This type of writing, which is usually done for a short period each day, allows students to write without restrictions because it is not corrected or evaluated. It is only read by the teachers when the

students request it. Sometimes teachers will respond to a journal entry if they think it is necessary or if the students request it. The journal entry serves a variety of purposes ranging from comments about the students' personal life to short reports of work.

CHAPTER 2

IMPLEMENTATION OF GUIDELINES

Language for Learning in the Whole School

To improve the students ability to use language is the collective responsibility of all teachers in a school. Different approaches will be appropriate for different teachers in different situations, but the common goal should be to place the emphasis on language as a medium of interaction for the purpose of promoting learning.

Teachers have to be aware of the specialized language of their subject and to appreciate the fact that much of this language could be misunderstood by or incomprehensible to the students. For example, all teachers, but especially subject teachers in junior high school, should be aware that a word such as "solution" could be used differently in science from the way it is used in mathematics or literature. The word "relief" could have a special meaning when used in the context of a geography lesson. Sometimes teachers take it for granted that students have a working knowledge of words like "establish", "examine", "compare", and "development", whereas such words could be inhibiting the students' understanding of the material being studied. In all subjects it is not enough for the students to learn definitions of words by rote memorization. They will learn new vocabulary only through use, and the use must be in a variety of real

situations.

In all subjects, care should be taken to expose students to real situations which employ a rich range of language use. For example, students should have the opportunity to discuss the results of their science experiments. They should also interview people in their family or community to answer questions provoked by a social studies lesson. In mathematics, students could be asked to make up word problems for their classmates, and to solve those made up by others. There has to be a balance maintained between teaching the language of a specific subject while maintaining an emphasis on general language use.

Teachers need to give thought to both the quantity and kinds of writing being done in their subject area. They need to take time to teach students the kind of writing they require and, where necessary, provide them with models of appropriate writing. Instances where children just copy from books without actually understanding what they are writing should be non existent.

In order to ensure that students use and produce a variety of language activities to increase their learning, teachers could also ask themselves the following questions:

1. Do I make enough use of small groups to help students shape and reformulate their ideas?

2. Do I talk to individual students often enough for them to feel secure and relaxed enough to ask for

help?

3. Do I supply additional material to supplement the textbooks?

4. Do I give students an opportunity to make effective use of the library?

5. - Do I use a wide variety of media to help children learn?
   - Do my students use tape recorders?
   - Do I use the overhead projector to illustrate a point more clearly?
   - Do I search for interesting films in order to spark enthusiasm for a certain subject?
   - Do I videotape relevant television programs and play them for students to view and analyse?
   - Do I allow students to videotape things themselves, for example, a story which they have dramatized?
   - Do I involve the students in preparing slide tape presentations on topics being studied?
   - Do I attempt to bring in resource people from the community to talk with the students about specific topics?
   - Do I take students out into the community on field trips and allow them to learn from experiences in the real world?

6. Do I attempt to enrich the students' experiences by reading to them, whether they are 5-years-old or 13?

By using the above questions to make any necessary changes in their teaching methods, teachers could increase the power of their students over language and thus increase their learning power.

Key People in Implementing the Guidelines

Although all teachers are ultimately responsible for the language learning in their own classrooms, it is especially beneficial for them to have the backing and support of other teachers in the school. A policy on learning through language (in effect in the school or at least among a group of teachers) would greatly facilitate the implementation of these guidelines.

The exact details about how each school promotes language through learning will vary according to the nature and size of the school. In a primary school, for example, the staff is usually smaller and one teacher is responsible for all subjects in the regular curriculum. In a junior high school the subjects are more specialized and there could be a number of teachers responsible for teaching the same group of students. There could be a number of departments operating under different department heads. Regardless of the size or nature of the school, the approach to implementing a language

policy would be basically the same. Some of the following material apply to all levels of schools equally, while other comments refer specifically to one type of school. The desired outcome for students in all schools is the same - an increase in their learning because of an increase in their ability to use language.

It is extremely important that the principals understand and support the initiation of the policy to increase learning through language. The extent of their enthusiasm for the policy could very well determine its success or failure.

Since principals of most schools have very busy schedules, they might not find the time to coorinate the activities of the language-for-learning committees. After careful consideration of all the possible candidates, the principal must choose as leader of the committee the person who is best suited for the task. A senior staff member who is interested in the promotion of language would be a good choice, especially if he or she had been successfully involved in curriculum innovations. While the head of the English department could certainly be a member of the committee, he or she would not necessarily be its leader. The person chosen to be leader must have the respect of the other members of the staff, especially those on the committee. The leader should also have prior knowledge of the role of language in learning.

The committee in a primary school would consist mainly

of classroom teachers with the possible addition of a remedial or specialist teacher. In the junior high school all major areas of the curriculum should be represented on the committee. Members of this committee do not have to be department heads but they should have a keen interest in promoting language development. They must also have a good rapport with other members of the staff and a desire to share ideas with them.

Coordinators from central office could also be helpful in initiating a language-for-learning policy. The language arts coordinator, and, in primary school, the coordinator for early childhood development could provide valuable assistance. Care must be taken, however, that teachers do not perceive coordinators as pushing something new at them. More success might be attained if the impetus for increased language learning came from the school level while the help of outside personnel, including that of coordinators, were acquired later. It is not the intention of the writer to minimize the role of the district coordinators. They would attend meetings, provide information and work closely with teachers. Because of their special knowledge, they could add valuable insight and direction to the initiation of the language policy.

Key Factors in the Implementation of the Guidelines

When the working committee for the promotion of language

is in place, a series of regular meetings should be planned. If these meetings are not previously scheduled, other seemingly more important meetings or activities may take priority. The meetings should not always occur at the end of the teaching day when everyone is tired. Half-day or full-day sessions could possibly be arranged if they are deemed necessary and beneficial by the committee and the principal.

One of the first duties of the working committee would be to examine the existing situation in the school. This examination would help to determine the extent to which teachers are already using language as an aid to learning. The following are various ways to determine the quantity and quality of language activities currently being used by teachers:

1. Teacher visits to other classrooms should be encouraged so that each teacher can observe and share the techniques used by others. Before visits are made, committee members could agree on aspects to be observed. Such aspects could include the amount of pupil talk compared to the amount of teacher talk, the use of small group work and the types of questions being asked by teachers. Teachers should be involved in the planning meetings for these visits so that they do not get the feeling that they are being evaluated.

2. Some members of the committee could tape their own

lessons. The listening to and analysing of these tapes could then provide a topic for discussion in later meetings.

3. A teacher, principal or program coordinator could observe the activities of particular students for a day to determine their involvement in language activities. This could only be done with the full cooperation of the classroom teachers and the students.

4. Samples of students' writing could be collected and analysed to determine whether the emphasis is being placed on short answers or answers requiring the organization of the students' thoughts. It is important that teachers understand the purpose of this activity and become involved voluntarily.

5. The examinations which teachers give to students could be studied. This study could provide valuable information since the type of examination given usually reflects the type of teaching being done. It should not be difficult to determine whether teachers are emphasizing the recall of facts or the ability of students to think critically.

6. Simple questionnaires could also be beneficial in determining the kinds of talk in classrooms. The

use of long, detailed questionnaires administered and analysed by outside personnel is not being advocated here. The committee members could prepare a questionnaire to be completed by themselves and other willing teachers. Some teacher could be reluctant to return the completed questionnaire. However, just the answering of the questions would help these teachers to focus their attention on the kinds of language experiences they are providing for their students. The design of the questionnaire would allow teachers to indicate what portion of their class time is being alloted to such things as lecturing, whole-class discussions, small-group discussions, teacher-student conferences, writing answers to questions, and personal writing.

Another type of questionnaire could be prepared by the committee members and completed by students. In this questionnaire students could be given a list of teaching techniques and they would have to indicate which of the techniques they find most helpful in learning. The list of techniques could include talking with the teacher, talking in groups, asking questions, answering questions, copying notes from the board, writing in their own words, and examinations. Students' views of the teaching-learning process can sometimes be enlightening to the teacher.

The length of time for the language committee to

establish the existing language practices would vary from school to school. Various types of interruptions, such as other meetings, as well as the heavy teaching duties of the committee members could affect the progress of the committee. Once the existing practices were established, regular meetings would center around a discussion of these practices with possibilities for change. Work of the committee could then expand to a stage involving all teachers on the staff.

Various activities which the committee could organize to present their findings and make suggestions for increased learning include:

1. A series of whole staff meetings where the committee members could discuss their findings about the existing use of language activities in the school.

2. Smaller department meetings involving department heads and coordinators. In these meetings language pertaining to specific subjects could be discussed.

3. Opportunities for teachers to listen to visiting speakers either at regular staff meetings or during a special inservice day. These speakers could talk on a variety of topics aimed at increasing the amount of learning through language.

4. Arrangements to have coordinators and committee members work with individual teachers in classrooms.

5. The preparation of a written document by committee members. This document would include specific suggestions for increasing language use in the classroom.

6. A presentation to parents by the committee members in conjunction with the principal. In this way parents could be informed of the proposed attempts by the school to increase students' learning. The parents' role could also be discussed.

7. A presentation to students aimed at increasing their awareness of the various ways they use language to learn. This activity would pertain mainly to students beyond the primary level.

8. A plan to involve the teachers in an analysis of classroom interaction. As Ede and Williamson suggest, "More access is needed to examples of children talking both with their peers and teachers, so that readers can themselves assess what children are capable of, and explore the linguistic implications of different kinds of interaction" (p. 206).

At least two possibilities exist for teachers to analyse classroom interaction. First, there is the viewing of a tape of another teacher interacting with a class. This viewing and the subsequent

discussion could be included in the inservice sessions mentioned earlier. It would introduce teachers to the whole idea of classroom analysis and provide a means of making them comfortable with the idea without at first focusing on their teaching.

The second stage of classroom analysis would involve teachers listening to themselves. The extent of this analysis would be determined by the teachers in consultation with the principal and/or program coordinators. It could begin with the simple recording of the teachers' lessons, which they could listen to and assess privately. As they become more comfortable with the idea, they could share their recording with others and begin a more detailed transcription and analysis of the lesson. Recordings of actual classroom interaction are better than coding by a researcher because coding is not actually the teacher's language but the researcher's coding of it. The most effective method of classroom analysis is a videotaping of the lessons. In this way teachers could listen to themselves and become more sensitive to the ways in which their language and ways of control are inhibiting or encouraging the development of language in their students.

This list of suggestions for increased uses of language

in the classroom is not meant to be exhaustive. Some suggestions might be beneficial to teachers while others might be too idealistic. By a series of follow-up meetings, the committee members could discontinue approaches that were not working in favor of the more successful activities. It is hoped that teachers, by further study and attempted changes in their teaching methods, would continue the work which the committee initiated.

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