

INTERRUPTIONS IN KINDERGARTEN AND
GRADE THREE CLASSROOMS:
A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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HELEN EVANS



INTERRUPTIONS IN KINDERGARTEN
AND GRADE THREE CLASSROOMS:
A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

by



Helen Evans

A Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate
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Abstract

The theoretical background of the investigation is Blumer's (1962) symbolic interactionist interpretations of George Herbert Mead's beliefs about social order. Research on schooling (e.g., Jackson, 1968; Martin, 1976; Woods, 1980; and Delamont, 1976) within the symbolic interactionist theoretical orientation is used to identify substantive issues in classroom research. These issues are addressed as part of the hidden curriculum of the classroom. Specifically this thesis investigates interruptions in kindergarten and grade three classrooms. It is designed to uncover specific dimensions of the complexities of an evolving social order and the hidden curriculum of the classroom.

The decision to select a non-participant observation approach was shaped by theoretical perspectives, data requirements, administrative accessibility and technological efficiency. Fieldnotes of twenty three and one half hours of classroom interaction were recorded. By simultaneous collection and analysis of data eight categories of interruptions were extracted:

(1) Obtrusive/Rude, (2) Observer Related, (3) Accepted/Excused, (4) Accepted/Unexcused, (5) Unnoticed/Ignored, (6) Environmental/Routine, (7) Point of Order/Direction, (8) Patterned/Question-Response. These interruptions were further analyzed for situational contexts of seating, types of periods and actors.

Through comparative analysis of the interpretations by the actors of these interruptions in context similarities and differences between the teachers' and students' interpretation of interruptions were found. Situational contingencies attendant upon the interpretation of interruptions in kindergarten and grade three classrooms were also revealed. For example, kindergarten students were observed attempting to relate to the researcher in the classroom as they might relate to a teacher while in the grade three classroom deliberate attempts on the part of the observer to disguise teacher-like behaviour left students displaying confusion and disorientation.

The importance of situational context to these interruptions point the way to further research into classroom situations. The overall findings of the present research suggest that teacher sensitization to the interruptive process could enhance teaching/learning.

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CHAPTER I

A SOCIOLOGICAL ORIENTATION TO INTERRUPTIONS

By definition social interaction is the fabric of all social life and exists in one form or another in all social settings. The present study focuses on teacher-student interaction. More specifically attention is given to one feature of teacher-student interaction, namely interruptions. Before outlining the research problems of the present study of interruptions in teacher-student interaction, the first task in this chapter is to give an overview of the sociological orientation which provides the framework of this study. Then selected studies of teacher-student interaction in the classroom and the hidden curriculum are discussed. Finally, special attention is given to interruptions as an integral part of classroom interaction in general and as part of the hidden curriculum in particular.

An Interactionist Perspective

A distinction of human beings is their capacity to define each others' actions not merely react to each others' actions. The response that is made to these actions is based on the meaning attached to such actions. The process by which plans of actions, and definitions of actions take place has become known as "symbolic

interaction". Among various other scholars such as Charles Cooley, William James and John Dewey; George Herbert Mead put forth the symbolic interactionist view of society, although that label as such awaited the writings of a student of Mead's, Herbert Blumer (1962).

According to Blumer the key feature of Mead's analysis is that the human being has a self. The self is described as having two parts, the "I" part and the "me" part. The "I" part is the active part, the initiator of action. The "me" part is the passive part. The "me" is the values and norms which an individual has learned from others in one's life. This is an oversimplified description, because the "me" part, once norms and values become a learned part of self, can also act as initiator. The thrust of the concept is that human beings can be the object of their own actions. They can take the position of others and see themselves as objects in the way that others see them, thus becoming self conscious and conscious of consciousness. The individual's conscious life then is a continual flow of self indication, giving meaning to situations and thereby disposing themselves to action. The "me" becomes, through the use of shared significant symbols, capable of taking the viewpoints of others. These significant symbols can be language, gestures or objects. Symbols have learned meaning and value for an individual and that individual will respond to the symbol in terms of its meaning and value.

Society, then, is a human construction. The visible act is but one aspect of a continuous process. Only to the degree that individuals can assume the attitudes of other individuals in a social group do they become members of that group. Individuals progress from viewing their own behaviour in terms of significant others, for example those in the primary socialization group, to viewing their own behaviour in terms of generalized others. The concept of the generalized other is that which makes the link between the individual behaviour and behaviour as a social product. It is the link which, as Raymond Murphy (1979: 139) describes, evokes "the perception of the cow as a sacred object or as a potential steak".

The interactionist point of view therefore involves the concepts of the "I", the "me" and the significant and generalized other, as individuals construct meanings in acting and reacting to one another. The interactional process is continuous, for society also reacts upon the individual but in this interaction process some interactions become habituated; that is, they take on common definitions through the process of common understandings. It is these generally held definitions of a situation which enable people within a certain context to become a group rather than a collectivity of individuals. The commonly held definitions are the difference between the group which sees the "sacred cow" and the group which sees the "steak".

Symbolic interactionists are concerned with the processes which take place within specific groups. The writers to whom this study refers have dealt with interaction chiefly within schools. Some of the researchers describe specific examples of interaction in detail, others examine the symbols themselves in classroom interaction while still others examine the strategies by which symbols become habituated. Since these three elements are present in the interactionist process described in this study, the subsequent reports are pertinent.

Teacher-Student Interaction

Teachers and students interact in schools and especially within classrooms. This interaction is a direct concern of research in the process and content of education in the classroom as this interaction focuses on teachers and students as "creative, active beings" (Murphy, 1979: 141). A review of British, American and Canadian research indicates a recent growth of interest in classroom interaction and in a wide spectrum of hopes and concerns with this interaction as such. John Eggleston (in Delamont, 1976: 7), editor of a series of volumes published in England, writes that the past decade has brought "understandings of the complexities of societies...in the light of a range of newer

interpretative approaches in which the realities of human interaction have been explored". In that series Sara Delamont (1976) devoted a volume to interaction in classrooms. Additional books referred to as "readers" have been added to the series beginning in 1984. Then Eggleston reported that since the original volumes research by sociologists, anthropologists and ethnographers in classrooms has expanded rapidly but so has the relationships between children and teachers and children and children changed as new curricula, teaching methods and different ethnic distribution have appeared in classrooms. Among these more recently reporting on a variety of features of interaction in British classrooms is Peter Woods (1980a; 1980b) who as well as other symbolic interactionists are in the words of Geoff Whitty (1977) in the "interpretative" rather than the "normative" tradition. Canadian researchers including Wilfred Martin (1976; 1985), Robert Stebbins (1971; 1975; 1977) and Mark Novak (1975) have focused on particular problems in teacher-student interaction in this country. The American authors writing in the micro level domain of sociology of education include Mehan (1979), Gumperéz (1981), Green and Wallat (1980).

Taking a closer look at what goes on in classrooms involves disentangling a vastly complicated web of interactions. Researchers have utilized different methods and designated different areas of concentration. For

example, Mehan (1979) chose non-participant observation to gather data. His study, carried out in a combined, first, second and third grade classroom recorded nine hours of classroom interaction on audio-video tape. These observations and recordings began the third day of school in September and recorded the first hour of interaction in the classroom approximately every third week up to the middle of April. With the aid of the video-tape to supplement the transcription for speakers identities, non-verbal behaviour and some talk, the audio portion of the recording was transcribed. From this record Mehan (1979) set out to describe the organization of teacher-student interaction in the nine lessons. Mehan's analysis found that a recurring phenomenon in the interaction, designated by the researchers as lessons and oriented to by the participants as such, could be described. A small set of recursive rules governed the setting up of these lessons. The organization of the lessons, according to Mehan, revealed two important aspects: First, regarding theory it "will be instructive for understanding the negotiation of meaning, the use of language and the construction of behaviour in a social context" (Mehan, 1979: 33). Second, since lessons are a basic event in school, it is a systematic description of how "the process of learning unfolds naturally" (Mehan, 1979: 33). By this Mehan refers specifically to the interactional process whereby the participants react to the language, gestures and

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objects of one another so that the structuring of the lesson becomes an event in the construction of the classroom culture.

The construction of behaviour for teachers and students is also a major concern of the Martin studies. Negotiation is one aspect which Martin extricates from that interconnected web. Analysis of the means by which teachers and pupils negotiate with each other over work, behaviours and other aspects of classroom interaction takes form in his book The Negotiated Order of the School (Martin, 1976). Martin found that there were differences in the negotiability of students. However, Martin does contend that one aspect which has affect on the disposition on the part of students to negotiate, is the teachers designation of the student as more or less negotiable.

In more recent writing Martin (1982; 1983; 1984; 1985) has turned to results of studies which have indicated student's perceptions of their own concerns, homework, rules and the attitudes of teachers towards students to name a few. In this area there has been a dearth of research so that the subjective interpretation of classroom interaction has issued from the teacher side. An attempt to redress that imbalance has resulted in these most recent reports.

While a good deal of Martin's work relies on students perceptions, Ned Flanders (1970), using a different

theoretical orientation and different methodological tools from Mehan and Martin, presents what Flanders terms a progress report on interaction analysis. Flanders sets out to devise a code whereby events in the classroom can be categorized and tabulated so that a researcher can determine, for example, how much teacher talk is carried on or how much pupil talk there is in classrooms. The findings can then be correlated with results of learning outcomes, specifically test results of various kinds, with a view to determining among others, teacher effectiveness.

One of the positive outcomes of the Flanders document according to Edwards and Furlong (1978: 2), as they try to penetrate the "smoke screen" of technical writings and attempt to deal with the "extreme difficulty of seeing what is familiar and recurrent", is the confirmation that there is a large amount of talk. They agree with Flanders that teachers tell "pupils when to talk, what to talk about, when to stop talking and how well they talked" (Edwards and Furlong, 1978: 4) only to the extent that it describes a coping strategy which is highly institutionalized in the school. Their research, in a school which utilized the resource-based concept of learning as opposed to the traditional "chalk-talk" classrooms of Flanders and which Edwards and Furlong refer to as the "transmission model", led them to that conclusion. They observed that teaching differed less than surface analysis might suggest. However, Edwards and

Furlong (1978: 5), in their words, "did not set out to prove essential similarity of old and new methods of teaching". What they hoped to do was explore "a particular way of making sense of classroom interaction in very diverse contexts". The conclusion is that attention to language and meaning of actors is an avenue toward this end.

Two Canadian writers who do place emphasis on school type are Novak (1975) and Stebbins (1974); Novak in his choice of a Free School in which to conduct his research and Stebbins in his comparison of Newfoundland and West Indian schools. These two researchers, however, relate the interactions to the society outside the classrooms.

One of the major reasons for examining the British literature in interactional research, as Michael Stubbs (1976) does, is so that what teachers learn from the use of that perspective can again be applied to their own situation. Sara Delamont (1976) also considers teacher education a major outcome of present and further research in interaction. Stubbs focuses on language and meaning, especially as language relates to cultural socialization, and advocates an interdisciplinary approach employing different specialists such as psychologists, linguists and anthropologists. Delamont (1976: 28) is concerned with strategies of students and teachers and how they go about the "generating of shared meanings".

Peter Woods (1983) uses the research studies of Delamont as well as those of Hargreaves (1972; 1978) and Hammersley (1980) as a background to his own reporting. Woods describes in detail how contexts, perspectives, cultures, strategies, negotiation and careers have been considered within the school situation. Indeed Woods suggests that the realities behind what teachers and students are inferred to be doing, that is teaching and learning, might be something quite different. For example, Woods (1980b) refers to Hargreaves' teacher-coping strategies in which Hargreaves argues that these strategies have sometimes quite unintended consequences both for teacher control and for student identity formation.

As it relates to sex roles, identity formation is also the subject of a film The Pinks and the Blues (Nova, 1980) in which American researchers, among whom is Jeanne Block of the University of California, discuss behavioural differences between boys and girls. Teachers reprimanding girls softly and boys loudly is an example referred to as reinforcing the image of boys as being more disruptive and girls more sensitive. As well, these researchers maintain that teachers see differences for the future of boys and girls therefore interact differently with them. These teachers attribute academic success of girls to their being lucky or trying hard whereas these same teachers encourage boys more.

This is not to imply that there is a concerted effort on the part of teachers to produce a male dominated society or in Wood's (1980) examples a "willful deception" on the part of teachers and students of what goes on in classrooms. These unintended messages are said to be part of the hidden curriculum as are other signs, symbols and strategies which can be interpreted by the individuals in classrooms. Interruptions of various kinds are another aspect of the classroom interaction process and include verbal, silent, teacher initiated and student initiated interruptions. - - These will be developed as part of the hidden curriculum in the following section and more fully later in this study.

The Hidden Curriculum

The hidden curriculum has been described as all those aspects of schooling which are not included in the official curriculum. As a topic the hidden curriculum has recently received some notoriety as well as a variety of interpretations. The word "hidden" would suggest that it would not be a description of that curriculum which is laid down by curriculum guidelines or policies as official. However, there are those who suggest that even that narrow definition of curriculum itself yields still a hidden curriculum (Apple, 1981). The term hidden, therefore, is problematic. If it is hidden then does it

defy definition or is it hidden from some and not hidden for others? Description indicates that the hiddenness has been revealed to the descriptor. Descriptors, though, are unlikely to be persons who either dispense curricula or receive curricula. For some sense of from whom the hidden curriculum is hidden, by whom the hidden curriculum is hidden, how the hidden curriculum is hidden and why it is hidden, Meighan (1981) has written an overview including various descriptions of the hidden curriculum. By so doing Meighan contends that even ambiguous ideas have value in that they stimulate further ideas and connections because of their lack of precision. Ambiguity also surrounds the word curriculum. Some revelation about curriculum, hidden or otherwise, would be expected to arise from the shared proposals of the writers on the subject.

There are two paths taken by advocates of the hidden curriculum. These are not mutually exclusive but have sidetracks where overlapping and intermixing is both possible and probable. One path relates the hidden curriculum to the macro aspect of society. Proponents of this view see education as a reflection of society and its economy. Michael Apple (1981), using what he refers to as a neo-Marxist point of view, describes the hidden curriculum as an historical artifact in the United States, having been "the" curriculum when the culture was coping with, and catering to, an emerging industrial society.

With the emergence of a new psychological, sociological orientation to individualism those factors about the curriculum designed to produce good workers, stratified class systems and reproduce "cultural capital" became hidden. Factors such as the propagation of school knowledge as definitive and the socializing agency of the school as it shares the normative rules of society in distributing this predetermined knowledge are those elaborated by Apple. Bowles and Gentis (1976) develop much the same kind of correspondence theory of the hidden curriculum, stressing the hidden curriculum's role in engendering attitudes in social relations which are work place preparational in direction. Displacement of values, termed "alienation" by Holly (1973) in Britain, is another aspect of the hidden curriculum. By this suggestion the organization, context, methodology and values become the means to the end. That end is the examination result. The meaning becomes separated from the activity which has an alienating effect. While the proposition of Apple, Bowles and Gentis and Holly shed some light on "what" is being hidden and from whom these aspects are believed to be hidden, namely the actors in the situation such as teachers, students, administrators, and others, there is the suggestion that there is a purposeful hiding of aspects of schooling, which would do well to be revealed. Who is doing the hiding is not fully addressed.

The other path along which writers have proceeded reveals that aspect of interactions by which self takes on the attitude of others by determination. In other words, the actors themselves are directing the hiding. It is the outsider for the most part from whom the curriculum is hidden. This aspect denies a purposeful hiding but the process of the interaction by having symbolic meaning to a greater degree for those who are interacting excludes those for whom the symbols are less meaningful. By this orientation the situation becomes paramount. The context of the situation in education is the school and especially the classroom, therefore these writers are concerned with interactions within these contexts.

Some writers refer directly to parts of this interaction as "hidden curriculum" (e.g., Meighan, 1981; Stubbs, 1976) others do not (Martin, 1976; Mehan, 1978) even though they are addressing particular features of the hidden curriculum. Meighan (1981: 55) reports on the Tippet and White study which he terms the "classic study illustrating the hidden curriculum". In that study four groups of ten year old boys were observed at a craft making tasks under three different regimes. Each behaved differently under regimes described as democratic, authoritarian and laissez-faire while the craft work remained constant. Meighan (1981: 55) says "The official 'curriculum' consisted of the tasks of craft work. All

the other learnings, are unintended, or incidental or otherwise 'hidden' in some sense or other."

The amount of learning which takes place beside, or perhaps instead of, the official curriculum in classroom is only beginning to be understood. From the point of view of people such as Hoffman (1975), even the official curriculum is not doing the job it is designed to do, especially as she comments on sex education giving misdirected and outright erroneous information in some cases. Relatedly, sex biases as well as cultural biases are other messages that are carried by curriculum materials according to Lobban (1975).

Communication takes place not only through written materials but by objects, gestures and language. Michael Stubbs (1976) discusses language and meaning and the myths that are propagated due to cultural differences of actors within schools especially between speakers of different language varieties such as dialects.

Martin (1976) and Woods (1978) discuss the actions which take place within the classroom and the perspectives of the actors about these actions taking into account the idea that all actors impact upon the situation in some way. Martin (1976) refers to the activities which take place between individuals in the classroom, over interests of these individuals, as negotiation. Negotiation is not part of the official curriculum but is entered into as part of the social order of the classroom, hence a part of

the hidden curriculum. Woods (1978) also describes negotiation as one of the strategies used by pupils and teachers in classroom interaction. Other aspects of classroom interaction described by Woods are rules, contexts, careers, cultures and perspectives. All of these are interwoven in the consideration of teachers and students as constructors of their own realities within the classroom.

The fact that all of these and many more aspects of classroom interaction have been described attests to the many facets of classroom interaction. Because some of these are hidden from those outside the sphere of the classroom but are not hidden from the actors, because some are hidden from both researchers and actors and because others are hidden from actors but known to researchers one quickly becomes aware of both the diversity and the problems of identity of that which is termed hidden curriculum.

The work of both Martin and Wood as well as others in separating out some of the mechanisms that are part and parcel of the classroom interaction has moved to dispel some of the hiddenness of the classroom situations. There have been an illumination of those things that the actors know, but discussion and approbation of these can, as Meighan (1981) points out, both lead to the explication of these already known or point the way to others.

In his description of the unofficial three R's of Rules, Routines and Regulations that must be learnt by pupils in order to survive comfortably in most classrooms, Jackson (1971: 14) talks about pupils having to learn to cope with "delay, denial and interruptions that accompany learning experiences in school". If as Jackson suggests pupils must learn these strategies, then investigation of these phenomenon and how the learning process takes place can only add to the understanding of classroom interaction in general.

Interruptions in the Classroom

Classrooms differ tremendously from one another. The differences maintain in all aspects as those studies which have sought to typify classrooms have found. For example, in Canada, Novak's (1975) "Free School" differed in many ways from Stebbin's (1972) elementary school. Some of the differences were curriculum material and presentation of material, physical attributes of classrooms and reactions to these physical attributes. Martin (1970) found differences in architecture (open and closed classrooms) and organization (team-teaching and non-team teaching) in the schools he investigated. Despite all of these and many more differences there are commonalities. Some of the most obvious ones are physical: there are the actors - teacher or teachers and students; spatial - whether with

walls or without these actors occupy a space in proximity to one another; and temporal - there is a specific time both daily and yearly when these actors come together.

However, classrooms are very dynamic places. The students and teachers come together for a teaching/learning event. This event does not necessarily proceed smoothly. Interruptions occur: some interruptions are related to time; for example, most classrooms operate on a time schedule regulated by a bell and that bell often interrupts events in the classroom. Other interruptions are related to the actors; not all of these individuals are engaged in the same activity at the same time. Some of the competing activities interrupt others. An obvious example is the interruption of one person's talk by another's speaking. Interruptions are also related to physical space; the entry and departure of individuals as they leave an activity in which they are participating or join one which is already in progress are examples.

These interruptions are part and parcel of all classrooms. They are a commonality but for specific classrooms the numbers of interruptions, kinds of interruptions, who interrupts whom and why has bearing on that classroom as a social unit. In other words, the interruptions could facilitate or interfere with the teaching/learning event.

Since communication can take the form of gestures, actions or language, interruptions, to have meaning for

actors, will also take these forms. The extent to which there is consensus on the part of the actors in a classroom about interruptions should therefore give indication about the learning of these symbols as they carry out their day to day activities, hence, the need to study the many facets of interruptions. The present research is designed to focus on particular features of this process in the teacher-student interaction in Kindergarten and primary classrooms.

The Research Problem

Where education is viewed as a process rather than a product there attains a necessity to shift direction of research from studies of content and volume carried out across regions and between schools to studies relating to the question of context within schools and classrooms. The development of shared meanings within that context is paramount to communicative competence.

Many factors predispose students, teachers and administrators to sharing meanings within the school or classroom. Upon entering school a child makes a transaction from his primary socialization unit - the family, to a typification of society at large. This step in the expansion to the generalized other is an important area in the socialization process. Despite the "cultural baggage" of all the students, whether complementary or

not, a certain official curriculum is expected to be learned. Enhancement of competence among such diverse factors leads to the Meadian question of how is social order possible in the midst of constant change? The suggestion of the present study is that an understanding of the complex social order, which has developed, is developing and always evolving in the classroom, necessitates a micro level analysis of the different features in teacher-student interaction. One of these features is the process of interruptions. Thereby separating out interruptions as an aspect common to all classrooms, investigation of interruptions in some classrooms could illuminate some of the factors relating to the maintenance of social order by addressing strategies, hidden curriculum and communicative competence. The present research attempts to get at the process of interruptions in kindergarten and primary classrooms. The first task of the research was to define and develop categories of interruptions. Since these tasks were addressed during the process of collecting and analyzing the data, it is appropriate to outline the research process in more detail before discussing interruptions as such.

CHAPTER II

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

As discussed in the preceding chapter with examples of studies from various researchers such as Mehan (1979), Martin (1976), and Edwards and Furlong (1978), when research follows the comparative and interpretative mode there accrues an emphasis on qualitative data. In the present study that emphasis not only had bearing on the data itself but on the collection and analysis of that data. Related to these two processes and arising from these processes are the social setting of the school, the selection of classrooms, and the research method. Description of these aspects of the research will be included in the present chapter as well as the ways in which quantitative enumeration in the collection of data led, by simultaneous analysis, to addition and consideration of further detail in developing categories of interruptions.

The Setting

Situated in a suburban yet somewhat rural setting close to a large city, the elementary school in which the observations and data collection took place houses approximately five hundred and forty predominately middle working class population. Classes from kindergarten through grade six are taught in the two story building.

At the kindergarten level there are four classes divided between two teachers with each teacher teaching a class in the morning and another in the afternoon. Each kindergarten teacher alternates her morning and afternoon classes weekly. That is, one class attends in the morning one week and in the afternoon the following week. All other grades in the school have three classes each. There are three Special Education classes as well as a Trainable Mentally Handicapped class. Included in the staff of thirty-one are a principal and vice-principal, a music teacher, library resource teacher and physical education teacher.

While the main reasons for selecting the school include the researchers familiarity with it and its accessibility to the researcher, the school is typical of many primary/elementary schools in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially those serving medium sized towns in the province.

Selection and Description of Classrooms

The grade two year is the mid-point of the primary level. A kindergarten class and a grade three class were therefore selected as representative of the beginning of the school career and the last year of the primary level. Since the observer was a grade two teacher, it was decided to study the other grades of the primary level to try to

assess the continuity of the primary level by chronological stages as well as to try to gain some insight into the process of curriculum implementation at different grade levels. Selection of the kindergarten and grade three classes for observation was also made on the basis of teacher co-operation and accessibility, after permission for the observation was requested and obtained from the superintendent of the School District and the principal of the school.

In the kindergarten class, selected there were seventeen students, nine males and eight females. These students are heterogeneously grouped and randomly selected for the four classes at registration. The kindergarten classes are housed in a self-contained, ground floor section of the school with two classrooms, washroom facilities for males and females, a storeroom and a preparation room for teachers as well as cloakroom stalls for the students. The classrooms themselves are separated by a folding wall but both have, instead of doors, open access to the other facilities. Exits are through doors at each side of the section to corridors of the main part of the building. A representative diagram of the kindergarten classroom is included in Appendix A (Figure 1).

In the observed kindergarten classroom there were several tables of varying sizes and shapes arranged in informal patterns. Some of these functioned to display

games and toys of differing interest and skill levels and some for curriculum oriented games and materials. There were four tables spaced more or less at one side of the room. Students sat at these tables to work at individual seatwork or to work at group activities requiring writing, gluing or coloring.

The grade three classroom selected has seventeen students, twelve boys and five girls. The classroom is situated on the second floor of the school where it is one of two grade three classrooms, the third being on the first floor. The classrooms on the second level of the school are individual rooms on the peripheral walls of the school but with folding walls between every two adjoining rooms. The folding wall in the case of the observed grade three classroom adjoined another grade three classroom. All the classroom doors on this level open into an open area library/resource center.

Student desks in the grade three classroom were single combination metal desks arranged in four rows--each row having arranged one behind the other (Appendix A, Figure 2). However, in the intervening time between the observer's first and second visits this seating arrangement had changed by centering two rows of fours to have one row of four pairs of students. Parts of two other rows were combined in pairs to make a row of three pairs. That left a single row of three desks at one side. All students desks faced the chalkboard and the teacher's

desk was at the centre front of the chalkboard facing the students. Several other tables and desks were arranged around the walls of the room and used to display games and activities as well as reading materials, science and social studies activities (Appendix A, Figure 3).

For classes in music and physical education as well as library, students move to these specialist teachers in their particular classrooms. For example, for music classes there is an equipped music classroom. There is also movement between classrooms where students go for remediation. In the case of integration of students from the Trainable Mentally Handicapped (T.M.H.) class, the movement is from that classroom to other classes in the school.

Data Collection

The method of non-participant observation was chosen as the means of observation and data collection. Several reasons precipitated that choice. The observer's familiarity with the school and classroom situation was an asset in that the routine was generally not difficult to follow and the interaction could be recorded efficiently and without reference to outside information such as curriculum guides and syllabus or by teacher confirmation. Timetabling and class movements were also familiar so that observation of the interaction of the participants could

be attended to without diversion. This was particularly the case when students entered and left classrooms at midpoints in sessions. The observer, having knowledge of the routine and in many cases familiarity with the students, was not left pondering or questioning who these students were or why they were moving between classrooms. Full attention could therefore be given to the attendant interactions rather than monitoring the changing classroom populations.

There is, however, an awareness of the potential liabilities in this type of familiarity especially that to which Edwards (1978) refers in describing that the feeling of commonplace things, in the classroom is particularly obstinate and there are dangers of omission as well as commission in observation and data collection because of this familiarity. Stubbs (1976), on the other hand, is an advocate of the classroom observer for reasons that this observer embraces. These reasons were made apparent during the trial observation period of this study. In the daily routine of classroom interaction the preoccupation with the immediate leaves little time for recording or reflection. Salient information unless recorded by audio or audio-visual equipment could be irretrievably lost.

While problems of detachment are noted the quality and quantity of data were seen to compensate for these. The ability of the observer to record continually from one observation point meant that a holistic view of the

interaction, could be recorded without giving the observer's presence an inordinate amount of visibility. In that respect the familiarity of the observer to the participants was also hoped to be an advantage in lessening the disruptive influence of such an outsider on the classroom interaction.

Continuous writing also brings a problem of its own since actions are undoubtedly taking place more frequently than can be recorded. Some interruptions could therefore have been missed. An attempt was made to record almost all verbal activity. Review of these notations immediately after each session led, along with side notes, to recall and description of the circumstances of that activity and the interruptions involved.

Twenty-three and one half hours of classroom interaction were recorded. Included in the record were samples of sessions for each day of the week Monday through Friday, samples of both afternoon sessions and morning sessions from each of the classes and samples of the interaction of both the kindergarten and grade three groups as they attended classes taught by specialist teachers. Both classes were observed during recess break when they were inside because of weather conditions.

A journalistic style of writing was employed whereby a running commentary on the interaction was written. Where an overall pattern of activity was detected this was indicated by a type of improvised short hand. For

example, when students were working at their desks and the teacher was supervising and monitoring that activity by walking around, that activity was designated by the phrase "T. circulates." In that way, if an interruption occurred that phrase signalled to the observer where all the actors at the time and the events observed to be taking place. Verbal activity, where possible, was recorded verbatim except in instances where there was an overload such as during free time activity when as much a sampling as could be heard or distinguished from actors closest to the observer was recorded. Students were identified by code and first name so that if necessary gender or other personal data could be retrieved for analysis. Appendix B displays a copy of field notes for one session where coding, writing style and post-observation addenda are exemplified.

Since movement in the kindergarten classroom is often fluid, tables were designated numbers by the observer. Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 were given to tables where students sat to work on individual or group activities and the number 5 was given to another student-height table in the centre of the room where students' worksheets were kept and at which table the teacher periodically sat. Corners of the classroom were designated by letters A, B, C, and D. In both cases interaction between one area and another or one table and another could be efficiently recorded and was easily recalled by reference to the diagramatic

representation of the classrooms included in Appendix A (Figures 1, 2, 3).

Observation points in each of the classrooms were chosen so that the students and teachers could be seen and heard by the observer. At the same time the locality needed to be convenient for notetaking yet out of the direct line of vision of the students. A desk or table which would not be needed in the usual classroom activities was selected. In the case of the kindergarten classroom the teacher's desk was chosen after consultation with the teacher revealed that it was rarely used except to store some materials and records. The desk was situated in the corner of the room designated D and from that point all activities in the room were visible and audible. The exceptions were that the students' faces were not visible when the students sat on the floor in a semi-circle at a point in corner A and while they were seated before a portable easel (Appendix A, Figure 1).

As in the kindergarten class, corners of the grade three classroom were designated A, B, C, and D. Although less fluid than the kindergarten class there was considerable individual and group movement at times in the grade three classroom. Students were seated at individual desks for seatwork and their desks were designated numbers 1 through 17 inclusive. Other tables around the room were numbered 18 to 23 and table 18 in corner D was chosen as the observation point for that classroom. This was a seat

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at a table used to display Math games. When the students and teacher moved close to that point to sit in a semi-circle on the floor the observation point was moved to a similar table, number 22 (Appendix A, Figure 2).

Originally the plan had been to follow a route of participant observation whereby the data would have been collected by way of audio-taped sessions of the observer's grade two class because of accessibility, familiarity and administrative co-operation. The taping method was abandoned for technical reasons after some trials. The class selection was then reconsidered and the non-participant method took the place of the participant method. Also transcription of material from tape proved to be very difficult so that the analytical procedure of the written data outlined in the following section evolved.

Data Analysis

There are three separate yet interrelated parts to the analysis of interruptions in the present study. One part is the strategy of simultaneously collecting and analyzing data. A second part attempts to isolate the commonalities, uniquenesses and situational features of interruptions. Counting, categorizing and noting relationships, for example types of interruptions to the gender of the initiators of the interruptions and role of

interrupters, whether student or teacher, are the methods involved in the third part. The aim is to become sensitized to the processes whereby these interruptions become accepted and indeed expected in the culture of the classroom. To elaborate on the data analysis it is appropriate at this point to look at the process of identifying themes in interruptions and the frequency of interruptions and to elaborate on the idea of simultaneous collection and analysis.

Themes in Interruptions

That the official curriculum encompasses diverse subject matter in all grades would lead to the supposition that there are different interactional segments within sessions in all classrooms. Although it was sometimes difficult especially in the kindergarten class to discern when the transition took place from one type of interaction to another, there appeared to the observer a sense of change in the interaction. Each session was analysed for changes in interaction situations. These sometimes, especially in the case of the grade three class, followed subject area changes but not always. For example, a Math lesson could have a teacher instructional segment, a discussion segment and a seatwork segment. There were also periods of transition when students and teachers were changing from one activity or subject to another. This transition sometimes involved changing

classrooms or the partial change of classroom populations. Changes occurred in the spatial arrangements as well. Sometimes students moved freely about the classrooms at other times were stationary either seated on the floor or on their chairs.

A list was also compiled of each session of the types of segments, the dominant characteristics of these segments and when there were discernable transition segments these were also noted. Each listing therefore included, from the beginning to the end of the session, the progression from one segment to the next, including transition segments. It was indicated whether these were discussion, student dominated, collective seatwork or teacher instructed segments; and the numbers, types and origins of interruptions during these interaction segments were analysed. To illustrate, the segments in one of the observed sessions are recorded in Table 3 (Appendix C).

Frequency of Interruptions

Following each session of data collection in the classroom, data were studied as soon as possible and the instances of interruptions were highlighted from the main text so that these instances were easily recognizable. The highlighting was done immediately after the collection session so that the circumstances surrounding the incidents were easily recalled by the observer. Any mitigating circumstances which had been deemed worthy of

note by the observer and had not been recorded in the actual writing of the data were added. After highlighting the interruptions they were further analysed and each was assigned a number in progression beginning with the number one for the first highlighted interruption in the data for each session through to the last. Each of the nine sessions was assigned a letter. The letters are P through X inclusive.

Further study of the data led to the analysis of the interruptions with a view to assigning these instances of interruptions to categories. Accompanying each collection of data from a session was a category sheet (Appendix Q, table 1). The number assigned to each interruption for the session was placed under a heading on the category sheet. For example, the interruption number 27 of session U was an instance of a teacher interrupting a student's action as the student was taking part in a game. The teacher named the student and redirected the student's action. When this occurred the student's action itself was interrupted as well as that of the other participants who stopped and watched. Number 27 was assigned to the category under the heading point of order/direction.

Number 27 interruption for that session had several aspects and discussion will serve to point out why this particular category has the twin aspects of point of order and direction. During the course of the teacher's naming that student two things were noticed in the interruption.

All the students were familiar with the game and little explanation of the rules of the game or the format were given at the outset. Because the students began the game without questions or hesitation it was evident that further explanation was unnecessary. With that assumption it seemed reasonable that the student who was named knew the format of the game and how to play. The misplay therefore was either deliberate or accidental. By calling the student by name and giving the student specific directions as to what to do the interruption could be classed as a direction. However, in that particular situation it was obvious that the student knew what to do and had temporarily ceased to do that. If the teacher had ascertained that to be the case then the interruption could be termed point of order even though it was given in the verbal terms of a direction. The other participants stopping their action did not appear to be an intended consequence of the interruption. The other students could have stopped to assess their own actions in terms of the designated student or they could have been interested to see if the student was going to be removed from the game or if the student was going to be given some information by way of direction which they did not already possess. In other words, the teacher's interruptive action directed at one student had consequences or the interaction of all the students and a reaction emanating from that interpretation.

Even though that interruption was placed in the point of order/direction category without the observer's being absolutely clear about which of these designations the interruptions could be classified under, that category appeared appropriate as the interpretation of either would be left up to the student.

The interruption of the process of the whole game rather than that of just one student added another dimension to that interruption. That dimension encompasses intent of interruption. If the teacher had wished to stop the whole game there were other mechanisms available to her at the time. These were demonstrated in other instances where signals were given and acceded to by students. By not using these signals it appeared to the observer that the interruption had that consequence quite unintentionally.

When all the interruptions had been weighed and categorized in this manner some aspects of classroom interruptions became immediately apparent. The overall number of interruptions for each session, which categories contained more or less interruptions and how many incidents of interruptions could not be reasonably included in any of the categories were already available.

While numerically and cumulatively these data were interesting and revealing they served to confirm some intuitive feelings such as the large numbers in the point of order/direction category and to debunk other observer

held ideas that there would be a large number of accepted/excused instances of interruptions. This quantitative data also left questions begging. Questions such as with whom do these interruptions originate and in what situations do these interruptions occur cannot be answered by the tabulation of the number of instances of interruptions. Mehan (1979: 14) elaborated on just such inadequacies of quantification schemes when he reported that "this approach (quantitative) minimizes the contribution of students, neglects the interrelationships of verbal to non-verbal behaviour, obscures the contingent nature of interaction and ignores the (often multiple) functions of language." With a view to supplementing some of these inadequacies further analysis took the form of determining who or what was doing the interrupting.

Each interruption which originated personally was designated a male, female or teacher mark on a color coded scheme. This gave an overview of the numbers of each, male, female or teacher in each of the interruption categories for each session. In a broader sense, therefore, the question who is doing the interrupting and in which categories these interruptions fall can be ascertained (Appendix C, Table 1).

Simultaneous Collection and Analysis

As the data collection proceeded a sensitization on the part of the observer to the subtleties of the

classroom interaction aided the analysis in some instances, in others it necessitated adjustments and rearrangements of procedures and inclinations. When actions were apparently on the surface identical, such nuances as mood or tone of the situation rendered the meanings different. Comparisons for consistencies and inconsistencies became easier as the observation and analysis proceeded so that further investigation where indicated took place leading to further adjustment for deeper or more dominant meaning. Immediate references from memory of other similar instances of interruptions or dissimilar interruptions with similar reactions enabled the observer to make referential notes at the time of collection. In this regard, the process whereby grounded theory referred to by Glaser and Straus (1967: 5), is derived from data and is then illustrated by characteristic examples of that data, is exemplified.

All of these considerations came into play as categorization schemes for interruptions were developed. Samples of specific incidents, the manner in which the situation, the actors and the uniqueness or commonalities issuing from the analysis bore on the assignment of the categories will shortly be demonstrated.

Developing Categories of Interruptions

Suspecting that interruptions occur in the course of classroom interaction, but not being able to make any kind of definitive statements about interruptions posed empirical problems at the outset of this research. Basic to the observations to be made was the problem of deciding which aspects of the classroom situation are interruptions and which are not. To be observed and recorded as interruptions, actions or behaviours will therefore have certain definable attributes. By way of describing the decision making process whereby interruptions are categorized in the present research, it is necessary to point to the assumptions held before doing any field work and then to describe the actual field experiences in this regard.

Pre-Fieldwork Assumptions

Leaning on Oxford (1952: 625) definition of "breaking in upon (action, process, speech, person speaking, etc....) or "breaking the continuity of", something suggested that there were going to be identifiable interruptions. There are observable instances of speech, actions and continuing activities in the classroom and breaking into the continuity of these speeches, actions, and processes could be classified as interruptions. The idea of classification implies that interruptions are of different types. Further that one type of interruptions

which seemed universally socially familiar was instance of a person breaking in on the actions, process or speech of another. The convention of asking to be excused or pardoned or the expression of regret after the interruption occurs implies this is an identifiable type. For reasons of clarity this type was called accepted/excused interruption. Labelling, then, indicated a point of departure for classification, the implication taken that if the request for pardon or to be excused on behalf of the interrupter occurred, the interruption is easily identifiable and can be classified. But consideration led to the opinion that even this type of interruption has different aspects. The interruption which occurs when the interrupter does not ask to be pardoned for the interruption appears more obtrusive than the interruptions when the interrupter does ask or imply a pardon. Indicated as a form of classification, thereby might be a scale or continuum of interruption types. There was the realization that there is a probability that many factors will be brought to bear on the shades of obtrusiveness or interference. These factors could extend beyond the ability of one individual to discern. But by reasoning that there will be some observable instances of obtrusive interruptions, this classification was placed at one end of the continuum with the assumption that rudeness would be one of the factors by which these could be identified.

It is immediately evident that there are interruptions outside these two classifications- accepted/excused, and obtrusive/rude interruptions. Some occur when an excuse or pardon seems neither to be indicated or expected. Anyone familiar with classroom interaction would realize that during the course of a lesson, for example, there will perhaps be teacher initiated or student initiated questions or responses. This classification labelled patterned/fixed was placed at the opposite end of the continuum with the rationale that if an apology was not indicated it would appear to be the least obtrusive of interruptions. In other words, it is part of the routine of classroom interaction. The continuum emerged as having a classification of accepted/excused as the perhaps most identifiable interruptions in the middle and moving outward to one end a point where the obtrusive/rude placement appeared. Toward the opposite end the patterned/fixed designation was placed.

From the Fieldwork

At the first observation session additional classifications were immediately evident. There was on the continuum no classification for such instances of interruptions as bells rung as a signal of dismissal times or for changes of periods. Public address systems were also sometimes used for this purpose as well as to give

information or make requests. Hence, the classification environmental/routine was added to identify these types and placed on the continuum mid-way between the accept/excused classification and the patterned/fixed.

Another instance of interruptions was also observed which had no identification on the continuum. This was classified as point of order/direction. The dimensions of these types of interruptions identifiable in interactions were that they occurred for the purpose of directing attention toward, or away from, something, someone or some activity.

The redirection aspect of these interruptions bore on the teacher-student situation and appeared to be part of the pattern of the classroom therefore placed toward the patterned/fixed end, although separate from the patterned/fixed classification already distinguished.

Wrestling with the intuitive placing of these two, the patterns/fixed and point of order/direction, classification on one end of the scale involved searching for other identifiable characteristics of these. One thing which emerged was that in no way could either of these be labeled fixed unless there was a specific interruption which occurred precisely the same time and was designed to interrupt the same activity each time. Therefore, the word "fixed" was dropped but patterned/question-response was retained.

Another analytical distinction which surfaced was the difference between patterned in manner, as a question and response situation, and patterned in time, as in the bell ringing. The bell ringing had already been classified as environmental/routine in that it happened regularly within the school environment and being used as a signal it might be supposed that it would continually interrupt what is going on in the classroom. However, that apparently simple action had varying interruptive characteristics so that it could overlap into varying classifications. The bell ringing could at a specific time of day in one classroom have different interruptive characteristics.

For example, it was observed that every day the school bell rang at 1:05 p.m. In the kindergarten class whose session began with the bell ringing at 12:35 p.m. the 1:05 p.m. bell appeared not to have any particular implication and was, so far as could be determined, rarely noticed and if noticed then ignored. It therefore would not be termed as interruption. Another day at 1:05, while the kindergarten students were sitting in the same spot around the teacher engaged in the same type of activity, the bell rang. Several children together shouted, "recess! recess!". The teacher explained that "no, that's not recess that's for the big boys and girls to come in from lunch". In fact, that class in the afternoon does not have what could be termed a regular recess. They eat lunch at varying times over about a fifteen minute period

from about 1:55 to 2:10. A bell rings at 2:05 while some might be eating, some playing, some working and in all sessions observed this bell was either not noticed or was ignored. Bell ringing illustrates the importance of situational meaning. It is only an interruption when seen as such from the perspective of the actors.

The instances of giving explanation of the description of an interruption as being not noticed added another facet to some interruptions. There were observable samples when an action appeared to the observer to be instituted to interrupt an action or situation and the interruption went unnoticed during that process, ceased or recurred at another time. Examples were hand raising by one student while the teacher was engaged in individual instruction at the desk of another student; questions asked by students during a teacher explanation period; or a student's physical or verbal action toward another student and that target student's activity continued without the student overtly acknowledging the verbal or physical action. It was always difficult, sometimes even impossible, to determine when the interruption or attempted interruption was deliberately ignored or missed the target. The feeling that these instances, even if they did not become full-fledged interruptions might be relevant because of their intent, meant the addition of a category for these. The classification was labelled ignored/unnoticed to

accommodate both types with the idea that the more important facet might be the intent of the interrupter.

One of the most difficult problems encountered in developing categories of interruptions relates to the question of intent and whether the intent can be gleaned from observation of the situation. It posed problems but in fact seemed to be less difficult to determine in the situation than at first suspected although one has to allow that some interruptions were inappropriately labelled as such. Placing this particular classification on the continuum was much more difficult to wrestle with. The impact of an interruption does not appear to be discernable if the interruption does not have its intended effect. To resolve this problem the classification system became categories and the placement on the continuum became irrelevant. That is not to conclude that a scale of obtrusiveness cannot later be developed or that the categories are mutually exclusive. In fact, as mentioned above the overlapping meant assigning some interruptions arbitrarily as they exhibited aspects of more than one category.

The assignment to categories also solved the problem of assigning observer intrusion to a category as there were instances where an interruption occurred directly related to the observer. There became apparent the need for a category for interruptions that were acknowledged, even though they were not excused, but were interpreted as

being not rude. These were apart from the patterned/question-response type but they could entail a response. For example, during a time when the kindergarten teacher was talking about the calendar she mentioned that in beginning a new month she also needed to begin a new page in the green book (class register). A child interrupted the teacher's discourse with the question "What's in the green book?". The teacher gave an explanation and returned to discussing the calendar. This interruption was assigned the accepted/unexcused category as the child neither raised her hand nor asked to be excused. It was judged not to be a patterned/question-response in that it was not anticipated. It occurred during a teacher explanation rather than an obvious discussion period. The question was also off the topic as the calendar was being explained rather than the green book per se.

After going through this drop and add routine eight categories eventually emerged into which the observed interruptions were placed. These were accepted/excused, unnoticed/ignored, point of order/direction, environmental/routine, obtrusive/rude, accepted/unexcused, patterned/question-response, and observer related.

Now that the research setting has been described and the research methods have been outlined, a categorization scheme for interruptions has been developed, and the fact

of segments of periods identified, the time has come to analyse the situational context of interruptions.

CHAPTER III

THE SITUATIONAL CONTEXT OF INTERRUPTIONS

By way of outlining the situational context of the two classrooms observed in the present research and pointing to the interrelationship between this and the extent of interruptions in these teaching-learning environments, the first task of this chapter is to give an overview of the social settings in these two classrooms. This is followed by an outline of the seating arrangements and a discussion of the types of class periods associated with teaching-learning at this level of schooling. Finally, particular aspects of the actors in these settings are addressed as they bear on interruptions there. While separated into sections in this chapter the interrelatedness of social setting, actors and seating arrangements in the process of classroom interactions means that overlap occurs in the discussion of these aspects. However, as with the problem of separating the salient features of interruptions in the categorization process, the simultaneous collection and analysis served to point up to the observer the facets which could arguably be placed under these headings. Of these facets more will be said when the interruptions themselves are discussed.

An Overview of the Social Setting

Classrooms are very dynamic places. The interaction of eighteen or more individuals with a variety of predispositions and meanings during the course of a particular classroom session, from assembly bell to dismissal bell, spread throughout the different periods and segments of periods can be phenomenal. A large amount of the interaction is controlled, intentionally or otherwise, by the types of class periods that obtain and the proximity of the actors. Groups of friends, for example, particularly in the grade three classroom had less opportunity to interact in periods other than recess. At that grade level, especially at recess, they formed into groups of three or four centered around an activity or game, always by gender. These groups which formed at recess tended to be made up of males from separate seating spaces. That is, seating appeared not to reflect friendship groups. An exception to this group formation was the presenting of a particularly desirable toy. In that case most of the boys were interested in joining the group with that owner. They did not, however, obtrusively interrupt the play in progress but rather stood on the periphery until the natural course of events included them or until diversion gave them an opportunity of taking part.

Even in the less structured activities of a session, such as learning centre activity, overt interaction

between male and female students appeared minimal. Female students were so few comparatively, almost two and a half to one, in the grade three classroom that one loosely knit group formed of all females at recess, but females tended to more individual activities such as reading or puzzles where interaction was reduced. When females engaged in these individual activities, interruptions did not occur.

Males and females were almost equally divided in the kindergarten classroom. While groups formed loosely during the less structured periods these groups were very fluid and tended to centre around the activity rather than pre-formed groups of friends. Though not exclusively male or female these groups tended to be predominately one or the other. Interruptions between males and females in groups have been observed and female initiated interruptions directed toward males and male initiated interruptions toward females are also present in the kindergarten setting.

The teacher in the primary classroom is usually the sole adult although there are occasions when other adults are present. The interaction between the student and the teacher is generally position related. In other words there are few times within the classroom when the teacher has the opportunity to interact with individuals other than students or students with other adults than the teacher. When interruptions by other adults occurred these interruptions not only interrupted the teacher's

action and plans of action but very often the activities of students as well.

Seating and Interruptions

Between the first and second observation sessions in the grade three classroom, seating arrangement changed. This change is noted in Figure 3 (Appendix A). Before the change students sat singly in rows with aisles for walking between the desks on each side. There were two rows with four desks in each row and three rows with three desks in each. Appendix A includes also the illustration (Figure 2) of the grade three classroom showing this seating arrangement.

After change and during following observation sessions the grade three class had two seats placed adjacent to one another to make a set. This arrangement had two sets of paired females, four sets of paired males, one set of paired male and female and three individual males. When seated in this formal arrangement overt interaction tended to be mainly between students and teacher either collectively or individually. Interruptions reflected this trend. There were few interruptions of the student-of-student type.

Interruptions initiated by the teacher dominated the situations when the students in grade three were seated in the formal seating arrangement and these interruptions were predominately directional in type. That is to say,

there were more of these directed toward the class as a group than directed toward individual students. The teacher initiated interruptions directed toward individual students during the formal lessons were two types under the same category - direction or point of order. The more public interruptions, when the student was named, appeared to the observer to be in the point of order inclination. The more private interruption, when the teacher interrupted by action such as presence at the student's seat overlooking worker, inclined toward direction. There were some instances when it was difficult to access. An example would be in Session V interruption 38. The following entry takes from the field notes describing that incident follows:

Time 1:10 p.m.

35. T: Take your health books out please, page 71. Let's see who's good at putting away
36. and taking out. (flurry of activity)
37. (F) silently reads with her
38. feet on chair of ____ (m). Teacher walks down and whispers to her (obviously to put her feet under the table as she does that)

In session X interruption 53 another chair related incident occurred. The incident took place about 10:15 a.m. during a seatwork segment of a period which had just begun. Reporting of the incident in field notes went this way:

52. As teacher circulates, she says: "If you're stuck on one go to the next one and try that."
53. Chair squeaks
54. T. Is that your chair, _____ (m)?
_____ (m): "Yes".
55. T. Keep it on the floor, please.

Though both these incidents occurred in the same classroom with the same teacher the interruptions had very different aspects.

During the segments of periods when the grade three class was seated informally on the floor, interruptions tended to be student initiated. Differences were observed between types and numbers of student initiated interruptions in the students' homeroom segments with this kind of seating arrangement from when the students were in other classrooms using the same kind of seating arrangement. For example there were more teacher initiated interruptions where the student was publicly named: students initiated fewer interruptions during this kind of seating in homerooms and there were more individual interruptions in specialist rooms whereas there were more collective interruptions in homerooms. The interruptions were initiated by different students than those initiating interruptions in the homerooms.

The teacher's desk in the grade three classroom was situated at the front of the classroom. The teacher rarely sat at the desk. When individual correction, redirection or reinstruction was given at the desk the teacher usually stood using the desk as a base where the

students collected for this activity. The teacher also stood at the desk for activities such as taking attendance and for instruction related to textbooks such as math or reading. The chalkboard was used sometimes simultaneously with this type of instruction but more often alone at the beginning of an instruction segment or originating from some perceived difficulty which the teacher discovered from circulating around the students' desks.

When the students sat on the floor the teacher sat on a low chair in front of the students. Interruptions during this type of seating were largely student initiated mostly involved more than one student simultaneously. These student initiated interruptions, both collective and individual, were spontaneous interruptions arising from the activity in progress and were evenly divided between male and female.

When students assembled in kindergarten they sat at their tables. At no session during the observations did the students remain at their tables for more than a couple of minutes after the teacher arrived. Their first activities, which have been named "opening exercises", took place in Corner A while they were seated on the floor. The students were usually asked to go there from their tables by the teacher when she arrived from the cloakroom. On one occasion this routine was not followed due to the non-arrival of one bus. The interaction was recorded as follows:

1. 12:35 Bell rings
2. Hi, Mrs. _____ (some students start. Others join in. They are giving the observer the teacher's name even though they have been told observer's name several times.) Discussion among students about who is not here:
3. X (m): I'm not X (m) I'm Y (m) (shouting). X and Y have exchanged seats.
4. T. turns off light as she enters - all students are seated.
5. _____ (m). Only eleven people are here - T. counts.
T. Oh! the bus must be late. All the people from _____ are not here.
6. Some students: The bus must be late.

The shouting indicated in interruption number 3 drew attention to the fact that the two students had exchanged seats. Also it indicated that a student or some students had counted the students who were seated and had also observed that students were missing.

Even the regular seating arrangements in the kindergarten class were somewhat informal in that while students did have assigned seats at tables they were free to exchange seats around the tables. Three of the four tables in the room had two males and two females each. A fourth table had five students, three females and two males with a specific arrangement at that table to accommodate a student who used a wheelchair.

Interaction among individuals from different tables continually occurred as well as interaction within the table groups and also between students and teacher. Though the times spent at tables were usually short there could be two or three segments of periods spent at the

tables each day. Also, during the time spent at the tables students were not always engaged in the same types of activity. When students finished the work they were assigned they moved on to something else so that in any one table group although students began the same activity at the same time they progressed to other activities as they finished the initial one. Interruptions between students were very often related to the activity or discrepancy between activities. Teacher initiated interruptions during seatwork activities were usually of the point of order/direction type. Those between students sometimes took that form as well.

During the more informal seating (informal in this case taken to mean non-assigned seats) segments when students sat on the floor in a group around the teacher more of the interruptions were student initiated and the teacher interruptions were many times point of order interruptions. These point of order interruptions were used by the teacher to manage interruptive behaviour of students. There were differences between student initiated interruptions in classrooms outside the homeroom and those in the homeroom during the same kind of seating arrangement. That is, when students were outside the homeroom but seated informally in other classrooms teacher initiated interruptions outnumbered the student initiated ones.

Free play, seatwork and lunch as well as individual instruction were usually carried out simultaneously, especially in the afternoon sessions. Free play, when students chose their own activities and place of activity within the classroom, followed lunch which followed completion of the particular seatwork activity assigned for that segment. Correction and redirection or reinstruction was carried out individually by the teacher as each student finished. During this combination segment of the session there were more interruptions than during other segments in the students' homeroom, even when the time spent on these segments were comparatively shorter than others.

Segments of seatwork alone at times other than the combination segment also had a high incidence of interruptions. As with the combination segments students usually kept their seats constant. When they did change within the table group the change took place at the beginning of the session. However, students frequently left their seats to either go to the teacher or to other tables while the seatwork activity was in progress. Interruptions generally were related to this movement. The teacher initiated interruptions were of the point of order/direction type and the student initiated interruptions were of other students. These were different types but predominately obtrusive. The numbers had not a large discrepancy between student and teacher

interruptions but with the teacher interruptions usually slightly more.

Though the teacher's desk was in the corner of the kindergarten classroom, it was used by the observer as an observation point because the teacher reported it was rarely used by her. The teacher sat at table five (Figure 1, Appendix A), a student-size table near the centre of the classroom when the seatwork or seatwork-lunch-free play, segments were in progress. The teacher circulated on occasion during these segments overlooking the activity in progress. Teacher initiated interruptions generally were verbal, emanating from table five, and were publicly directed toward students, that is students were named out loud. There were few teacher initiated interruptions of the private type as well as few by action. For example, the teacher rarely left table five to go to groups of students who were interacting in different areas of the classroom at that time.

When students sat on the floor for the formal instruction segments the teacher stood to one side of the room usually using chalkboard or some other visual instructional medium. For the segments of story telling and discussion the teacher sat on low chair in front of the students.

There were less student initiated interruptions when the teacher was standing to instruct than when she was seated for discussion and less overall, seated or

standing, than when she was sitting at table five, the table in the centre of the classroom. Of those student initiated interruptions there were more during the other segments when the students were informally seated. Both student-to-student interruptions and student-to-teacher interruptions during this period took mainly the form of obtrusive.

Types of Periods

As indicated above, types of periods were related to seating arrangements for the most part especially in the kindergarten class. However, given the importance of types of periods in the process of interruptions in the school it is appropriate to address types of periods and interruptions at this point in the analysis. In much the same way as Mehan (1979) arrived at the designation "lessons", periods came to be the designation in the present research. Mehan, although constrained by technical apparatus to the type of teacher-led activity recorded, named the activity "lesson" only after it was referred to as such by the teacher and in the latter part of the year by the students. In the present research the pre-field work plan was to record interruptions in the sessions observed. Sessions are so designated by the Department of Education in the Schools Act (1970), assembly and dismissal times arranged by the District

School Boards. From the data there emerged a discernable pattern of activities in each classroom that could be detected for each session. The detection of these changes came about from the analysis of the data. Beginning usually with a point of order/direction type of interruption, but sometimes by signal and other times by movement to a specified area of the school or classroom, the parts of sessions were discernable. The interruptions themselves became markers. Examples would be the teacher's verbal direction to the students take out a particular text book from their desks or the direction to line up at the door. These periods were not self contained "lessons", as Mehan's appeared to be, although they sometimes contained a segment with elements resembling Mehan's lessons. Teacher-instructed segment was used as a designation of part of a period as well as discussion and seatwork. During the period a theme or subject usually followed through but not always and sometimes especially in kindergarten a theme followed the whole session even to specialist classrooms. The circus theme illustrated by the movement of the animals in gym during a segment is a case in point.

Since overlapping continually occurred it was difficult to specify, by subject material, exactly when a particular subject began and ended. Mention has already been made of the overlap during the seatwork-lunch-free play in the kindergarten class. Often the only indication

of a change of segment type was the movement of the students or the teacher from one area to another. While this movement indicated the change of an activity it did not indicate a change of subject matter. For this reason it would have had little meaning to designate periods by subject as, for example, Math period. The same routine was followed for each subject area of the curriculum. This form followed the pattern of discussion first, then instruction, then seatwork. At times the one series of discussion, instruction, seatwork integrated concepts from different fields.. The underlying instructional base of the curriculum revolved around themes and activities which were designed to teach concepts through these themes. Reference by both students and teacher during sessions indicated that the students were familiar with this routine even though they moved through the sessions with an air of informality. Transition segments were therefore short and consisted mostly of movement from one area of the classroom to another with some distribution or collection of materials done by designated students. Few interruptions occurred during transition segments and those were teacher initiated again of the point-of-order/direction type.

With the students in grade three there was a more discernable transfer between subjects. This transfer for the most part did not involve movement unless it was to other classrooms although it sometimes involved different

seating arrangements and movement of part of the classroom population. As in kindergarten, there was an overlap between subjects as some students while beginning the same type of activity at the same time did not always complete it at the same speed or with consistent accuracy. In these cases some catch-up work of one subject type might be going on when another subject related activity had been completed. Instruction was usually carried out simultaneously with discussion and given to the group at the beginning of a subject segment if the segment was not a continuation of an activity started in some previous session.

Seatwork followed instruction usually and could be a written, a reading, or a project type of segment. There were differences in segments during the seatwork activities. For example, spelling seatwork was written individually while a list was called by the teacher to the group as a whole and students were evidently expected to write their lists without conference with other students. For the project type seatwork, referred to as "Centres", students were relatively free to confer and move to other parts of the classroom for materials. At these segments one-third of the class remained in their home rooms the other two-thirds consisted of a third from each of the other two grade three classes.

Interruptions during transition periods were generally related to movement or change and were teacher

initiated and of the point-of-order/direction type. Interruptions during the different subjects followed a pattern relative to the type segment of the subject rather than the subject itself. For example, the seatwork segments of all areas of the curriculum had more interruptive incidents than the instruction or discussion segments.

Teacher initiated interruptions predominated and these were mainly of the point-of-order/direction type. These were, however, not greatly outnumbered by the student initiated type. The student initiated type was predominately of the student of the teacher direction and either unnoticed/ignored, obtrusive or unexcused in that order.

The subjects which occasioned the students moving to other classrooms had relatively more incidents of interruption than other subjects both for kindergarten and grade three. Teacher initiated interruptions dominated with point-of-order/direction type leading the types. The student initiated interruptions had more incidents of obtrusive interruptions and the teacher initiated interruptions had more incidents of excused interruptions than during subject areas of the curriculum carried out in homerooms.

Actors

The actors in primary classrooms were fairly consistent over sessions and indeed over time. In other words, few children leave or are added to the class and occasions of teacher change are infrequent. Within the classroom the teacher, with the exception of being joined occasionally by another teacher or volunteer, is the only adult. This situation applies for homeroom or for special classes outside the homeroom. Students spend an average of one half hour segment a day outside the homeroom and for this segment would have contact with the specialist teacher in that teacher's classroom. Students in the present study spent two half-hour segments with the physical education teacher per week, two half-hour segments with the music teacher and one half-hour segment with the teacher-librarian.

Changes in the student population are also minimal. The exception being that which occurs when a student is either transferred in or out because of family relocation. Within the school students sometimes leave homerooms for remediation in subject areas and return to the classroom when that subject portion of the timetable is over. Students from other classrooms occasionally either join the class or exchange students.

One male student in the grade three classroom was transferred into the class between the first and second observation. Three male students left during the Language

Arts segment for remediation. The class was joined for the segment in classrooms other than homeroom by one female from the T.M. H. class. During the Centres segment, one-third of the students remained in the classroom and two-thirds came from each of the other two grade three classes. This exchange was pre-arranged and decided by group designation. These designations were either chosen or assigned earlier in the term and at the beginning of the segment the group was named and instructed by the teacher as to the classroom in which they would be working.

Males outnumbered females in the grade three class almost two and a half to one. This proportion of the population was not reflected in the numbers of student initiated interruptions within different sessions. For some sessions the numbers of student initiated interruptions were equal for boys and girls and in other sessions either the boys or girls dominated interruptions. However, over the total observed sessions there were more male initiated interruptions than female initiated ones but not in proportion to the population.

Some males in grade three class initiated at least one interruption over a session, others six or seven. One male student did not initiate an interruption over the entire observation session and one male student initiated one interruption only. Four male students dominated the list of male initiated interruptions with the same number

each over the observation period. Types of male initiated interruptions varied over the observations with some periods having more of one type, some more of another type.

Two females dominated the list of interruptions on the female initiated interruptions. Each of the females initiated at least one interruption over the observation sessions, however, one female initiated one interruption only. The female initiated interruptions varied with sessions. Sometimes there were more of one type, sometimes more of another. Overall the most frequent female initiated interruption was of the obtrusive type.

During the homeroom segments of the session observed one teacher was present for all of the sessions. The teacher was joined occasionally for short periods by a teacher from the adjoining room but with the exception of the observer was the only adult in the classroom. The teacher initiated interruptions, however, outnumbered the total male and female initiated interruptions for the sessions and for some sessions teacher initiated interruptions were twice that total.

The teacher initiated interruptions were predominately in three categories; point-of-order/direction, environmental routine and patterned/question response in that order, but the majority in the point-of-order/direction category. For the segments outside the homeroom the teacher initiated interruptions were

predominately in the point-of-order/direction category but were proportionately more for that segment than for the homeroom segments.

Observer related interruptions were few for each session. The point of observation was behind the students and the presence of the observer was deemed to be an interruptive event when students overtly showed recognition of the presence of the observer. For the most part this tended to be in the form of a look or action toward the observer which interrupted that student's action at the time. Observer response was to ignore the action or respond only when necessary. Others occurred when students from other classrooms came to the room and on one occasion during an argument the observer was referred to directly. Recording of that occasion was in the following way:

- T: I wonder if some would like to _____ by themselves
....
101. Some boys: "No way! No way!"
102. T: Excuse me! I didn't say shout.
(All continue with the action which was in progress.)
Female student gets up from chair.
103. T: I realize we have a visitor in class but that's not the way we behave people getting out of the chairs and all. (delivered in stern voice)

That reference to the observer occurred about ten minutes after the beginning of the segment which was begun

at ten forty five. The interruption 103 was the twenty-ninth interruption for that segment (Category sheet-Table 1, Appendix C). Eleven of these were student initiated of the obtrusive type, eight by males and three by females. Fifteen were teacher initiated, nine point-of-order, four excused, one obtrusive and the one recorded above, observer related. For frequencies of interruptions for all observed sessions see Table 2, Appendix C.

There were a total of seven observer related interruptions for that particular session, none of which were initiated by the students who were regular attendants in the class but by various students who visited the class for various segments. Only one of these students was in attendance during that particular segment described above and one observer related interruption initiated by that student had occurred previous to that incident. That interruption took the form of a glance backward at the observer described. The remaining observer related interruptions for that session occurred in the homeroom segments.

In the kindergarten class the observation point was in view of most students when they were seated at their tables but not when they were seated on the floor in any of the locations where that kind of seating generally took place. The observer related interruptions in kindergarten ranged between one and four per session. These generally were student initiated although there were some teacher

initiated observer/related ones. The student initiated interruptions usually took the form of including the observer in action which was in progress at the time. For example, students came to the observer requesting help with lunch equipment and reading names on papers which they were distributing. During one combination segment the teacher came to the observation point to make some remarks about "readers" being used in the class. While teacher's interruption of the observer's note taking was in progress the teacher in turn was interrupted by a student asking permission to use a particular item in the classroom.

Apart from the observer, the kindergarten teacher was joined by older students in the classroom over the observation period. These students from a grade four class, through a pre-arranged schedule, chose stories appropriate to kindergarten and visited the kindergarten class to read them. During these segments the teacher sat at table five and the older students were given control of the class which was seated on the floor in Corner A (Figure 1, Appendix A). During recess in the morning sessions and during the arrival times of the sessions, kindergarten students were also supervised by older students of the school.

Occasionally the kindergarten teacher was joined briefly by another teacher but for homeroom segments and for segments other than those in the homeroom the teacher

was the only adult. Teacher initiated interruptions in only one session very slightly outnumbered the total student interruptions. For the other sessions observed student initiated interruptions outnumbered teacher initiated ones. The teacher initiated interruptions were predominately in the point-of-order/direction category followed by environmental routine, patterned/question response with a few in each of the other categories.

Male initiated interruptions in kindergarten outnumbered female initiated interruptions in all sessions observed even though the number of females was one more than the number of males. However, of these male initiated interruptions in each session one male consistently initiated more than twice the number of interruptions than any other male in the class. Three other males followed with about one-third as many total interruptions each as the predominant male interrupter. The remaining three were also close to one another in total number of initiated interruptions. The numbers of individual initiated interruptions from the males in that third group numbered about half of those initiated by the males in the second group.

The types of interruptions initiated by males were predominately obtrusive, followed by unexcused and ignored/not noticed in that order. There were male initiated interruptions in the other categories for the sessions observed but the numbers were few.

Two females were at the top of the list for numbers of female initiated interruptions. These two initiated more than twice the number of those in the second group of which there were three females, and the remaining four initiated individually about half the number of those in the second group.

Obtrusive interruptions led the categories of female initiated interruptions followed by unexcused and ignored/not noticed. As with the males, there were female initiated interruptions in all categories but in some categories female initiated interruptions were few.

By way of summarizing the findings concerning the situational context of interruptions reference is made to Appendix C and the quantitative data which pointed the direction for situational analysis. Segments of sessions were a significant situational consideration because of the relationship between segment types, seating arrangements and proximity of actors. The recess segment was particularly instructive about friendship groups, types of interest activities carried on by males and females at that time and lack of discernable interruptions. Differences in gender of students initiating interruptions during other segment types as well as the activities pursued during these segments were also noted. Gender considerations were brought out in the deliberation on private and public teacher initiated interruptions as well as consideration of overall numbers

of interruptions in the two classes. It was found that interruptions in the form of visits emanating from outside the classrooms interrupt not only teachers but student activities, as well. The situational content of specialists' rooms affects the numbers and kinds of both student initiated and teacher initiated interruptions in both the kindergarten and grade three classes; there being more of both during these times. As well, different from those doing so in the homeroom initiated interruptions in specialists' rooms. Teacher initiated interruptions in these specialists' rooms had more of the excused interruptions. In particular the differences in the nature of interruptions in different situational contents occasioned the detailed analysis and description which follows in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF INTERRUPTIONS

One of the basic pre-field work assumptions in this study was that interruptions form an important part of teacher-student interaction in kindergarten and grade three classrooms. Now that the process whereby interruptions have been categorized in this research is outlined (Chapter II) and situational dimensions of interruptions have been pinpointed (Chapter III), the present task is to report examples of interruptions in each of the categories outlined earlier.

Interruptions are a common occurrence within classrooms. Students in the classrooms observed in the present study continually acted with, and reacted to, the situation, that is the social, physical and temporal features of these classrooms. Eight categories of interruptions were arrived at as being representative of the types of interruptions observed in kindergarten and grade three classrooms. These could well have been further subdivided for specificity, however, certain overt aspects of these interruptions dictated their placement in particular categories.

Extrapolation of meaning from situational aspects and reactions of actors is easier in some cases than in others. The meanings which teachers and students have for

certain observer defined "interruptions" could not be ascertained by the observer. These cases point up the complexities of particular interactive events and the desirability of real or vicarious experience in the day-to-day progression of classroom events. Although some writers such as Stubbs (1976: 12) and Gumperz (1981) describes some events (particularly language events) which are recognizable as classroom extracts even by non-participants. The writers maintain that just as the voice of a newscaster will identify that particular setting so will questions and answer sequences identified with most classrooms identify that setting because of almost universal familiarity with classrooms. To categorize interruptions initially it was seen by the observer as an asset to have some background information about classroom life in general. This information would constitute what Jackson (1971) refers to as the "Rules, Routines and Regulations" by which the school operates. Further discussion on that point as well as of the actual methods of observation of classroom interaction will follow in chapter V. Meanwhile, interruptions in each of the eight categories including specific examples will be outlined here beginning with environmental/routine interruptions and continuing through point of order/direction, accepted/excused, accepted/unexcused, patterned, question/response, obtrusive/rude and unnoticed/ignored to end this chapter with the observer related category.

Environmental/Routine Interruptions

In the environmental/routine category of interruptions, observer familiarity precluded having to become adjusted to the simple routine events such as; times of bell ringing for dismissal and assembly, of the import of public address system messages and the general school routine of moving students and teachers.

Activities relating to the students and their seating arrangements have been noted specifically here along with references to environmental/routine interruptions because of the implications concerning aspects of the hidden curriculum mentioned by Meighan (1981: 65). Meighan discusses space in educational buildings and the "silent language" of classroom arrangements, while Jackson (1971) sees routines as exercises in students' learning to cope with "denials, delays and interruptions". Since the present category under discussion encompasses both environmental and routine interruptions, it is appropriate, as examples are presented, to reflect on the presentations of these writers as well as others as the process of interpretation of such interruptions as assembly bells occurs and observations of students' interactions with the physical environment of the classroom are recorded.

Awareness that "space talks" (Meighan, 1981: 65) forms the basis of architectural designs of buildings and the interior design and decoration of these buildings and

living spaces. Woods (1983: 21) discusses the visual impact of a room and maintains that visual impact can reveal much about the teachers wishes concerning the definition of the situation. In the almost inextricable way in which classroom interactions are interwoven the monitoring of interruptions revealed the routines, rituals and rules. Students and teachers overt reactions to these rules, routines and rituals led to questions of identity and assimilation in the classroom and school environment.

For the assembly time in particular, students were aware that in the morning a bell was rung as a signal to assemble and five minutes later to begin work. That assembly bell sometimes interrupted some processes as well as being a signal to begin other activities. In the kindergarten classroom the students were aware that there were two bells. By the time the nine o'clock bell was rung the students were generally all seated at their own tables, even though the students in all sessions observed were immediately asked to go to corner A (Appendix A, Figure 1) and sit on the floor. In the intervening five minutes between the two bells, students were either entering, and making their way to their seats, or were moving from the activity in which they had been engaged inside the room to their seats. The questions arising at this point related to the routine of sitting and the purpose of sitting in seats for such a short time. One might well ask was the routine established for teacher

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control or by students to define their own territory within the classroom?

In the afternoon sessions for the kindergarten class one bell only was rung for assembly and that bell was at twelve thirty-five. Students were usually all seated or sat immediately when bell was rung.

A male student during observational sessions, even when all the students were seated, immediately after the twelve thirty-five bell announced, "That's not the bell to sit down!" That student's understanding of one of the assembly bells was that it was used to signal seating time. Since all students seated themselves at that time that interpretation of the bell seemed universal within the classroom. Confusion experienced by the male student about there being more than one bell at twelve thirty-five could have meant that he was confused about that session being an afternoon one rather than a morning one. Although that interruption itself was placed in the obtrusive category the content of the interruption seemed to establish for the observer what had been assumed to be the case, that the students had an understanding of the action expected to follow the ringing of the assembly bell. A routine was therefore discernable and adherents to or deviants from that routine could be noted.

An interruption, number ten of session X in the grade three classroom, also exhibited aspects of the routine of

student assembly. An excerpt from the field notes of that session follows:

8:55 a.m. Bell rings.

1. _____ (F) "There's not much people here."

T. "Now! I'd like you to take out your creative writing book. If you're finished, take out your reader."

2. P.A. "Excuse me. Teachers, if anyone knows anything about the black extension cord will you let me know, please."

3. _____ (M) comes in
T. "Pass in your creative writing."

4. Some students take creative writing books to T's desk. (As each does T. says "Take out something to read.")

5. 9:00 a.m. Bell rings.
Some students writing, others reading.

6. T. "O.K. bow your heads for prayers please, children. All repeat prayer together."

7. P.A. (as prayer in progress) With reference to the canteen order we have and Please omit (Prayer continues while announcement made)

8. T. "O.K., Anyone like to order from the canteen, children?"

9. _____ (F) goes to T.'s desk (teacher standing look at children workbooks).

10. _____ (M) (enters classroom), "What's everyone doing in their seats (loudly)? Some children reply "You're late", "Where did you come from?" etc. (Same student as 10) Repeats question "What's everyone doing in their seats?"

11. T. "_____ (naming male student who just asked the question as he came in) You just came in do you want something from the canteen?" Student does not answer, goes to seat, looks around, takes out reader and begins reading silently.

Another M raises hand.

12. T. "____ (M), ____ (M), ____ (M), you don't have to go to the other class today because we're having an assembly."
 ____ M enters classroom.
13. T. "____ (M)" (referring to student who just entered) "You have to finish up your creative writing."

Again, as in the kindergarten example above, even though that particular number ten interruption was placed in the obtrusive category the content of the interruption itself served to point out that there was perhaps an anticipation on that student's part that students were not expected to be in their seats. This was inconsistent with the situation which was observed at all other sessions. That is, either by the time the bell rang or at the ringing of the bell all students in grade three were seated. Confusion, misinterpretation, or reinterpretation on the part of that male student served to point out that there was meaning in the bell ringing for grade three students in that classroom and a routine had been established.

Other interruptions became associated with the environmental/routine category in similar ways. Because the bell ringing originates outside the classroom and is part of the whole school environment it is not unique to any particular classroom. There were interruptions of that type, however, which were categorized as environmental and used in much the same way as the bell ringing but were unique to the classroom involved. This

variety of interruptions was used as signals or became associated with directions. In fact these signals interrupted the activity presently taking place and signalled either that the activity should cease or change direction; examples of these signals were whistle blowing in gym, turning off classroom lights and in music class sounding a musical note.

While these examples have the signalling or directional aspect they differ from the interruptions placed in the point of order/direction category in that they have one dimension. ~~Blowing~~ a whistle, humming a musical note or turning off a light signals only a prearranged action change. These interruptions do not, of themselves, indicate the reason for the interruption so that prior knowledge about the event is necessary for understanding and reaction in appropriate ways.

Interruptions emanating from other sources both outside and inside the classroom even though part of the environmental routine of the classroom and so placed in that category were more specific. Announcements, directions, and questions over the public address system (P.A.) encompassed several categories of interruptions but again because of the commonality among them, is that they are part of the classroom environment were placed in the environmental/routine category.

4 Samples of these interruptions were noted in the following way. From a kindergarten session U:

1. 12:35 Bell rings
Observer enters classroom. Students are seated at tables.
2. "Hi, Mrs. _____!" (Observer is called by the regular classroom teacher's name by most of the students in unison, the calling having been started by a couple and others join in.) Observer sits at T's desk in corner D. Students discuss among themselves who is here and who is not here.
Then 1 (M) and 2 (M) exchange seats at the same table.
3. 1 (M) (shouting) "I'm not 1 (M). I'm 2 (M). (No reply from anybody.)
4. T. enters. Turns off lights as she comes in.
5. 3 (M) calls out "Only eleven people are here!" (as teacher walks toward corner A) T. turns and counts.
T. "Oh! the bus must be late. All the people from _____ (community) are not here."
6. Some children call out "The bus must be late!"
T. "Boys and girls you'll have to take home your worms today (yesterday's seatwork). Other children arrive in cloakroom."
7. T. "Oh, they're here." (stops and looks as she's passing out seatwork).
T. continues to distribute. Students looking at
8. their own and each other's (T. turns on lights)
9. T. (to students out in cloakroom) "Hurry now we have to go to gym and 1 o'clock."
T. walks toward entrance.
10. T. (to students around corner changing footwear) "When you're ready come on in."
11. T. turns off light (stands by entrance)
T. "Sit on the carpet" (all students move to corner A.)
All sit in semi-circle. 1 (M) gets up to move away.
12. T. "1 (M), sit down!"
- 12a. T. turns on light.

Three instances marked by an asterisk indicate that for that session during a transition segment, which was relatively longer than most transition periods taking place at assembly time, the teacher used the turning off of lights as a signal. There is no indication in that report why the teacher was using that signal but during the progression of the sessions it had become evident to the observer that during transition periods when the teacher wanted the students to move to a quieter activity she very often used the turning off of lights to signal her wish. During a segment of the same session when the students were in the gym class a sample of whistle blowing proceeded as follows:

T. "Can you be an elephant in the circus?"
(Indicates to students how to move around as an elephant.)

45. Some students "Ump, Ump, Ump."

46. T. "How about lions?" (Very loud growls.)

47. T. blows whistle. Students stop.
T. "O.K., lions growl. You are screaming."
T. "Can you be a monkey?"

In a music segment of session X the teacher stood at the front of the class waiting for students to be seated. Students chose seats then some changed their minds and exchanged seats or chose others. The teacher remained standing very straight and rigid with her hands folded in front of her. While there was some activity: -

80. T. "oooo" (extended musical note)
 1 (M) talks to 2 (M).
81. T. "1 (M)!"
82. 1 (F) looks at observer.
83. 2 (F) giggles
84. 3 (F) falls off chair (All students laugh.)
85. T. "Excuse me please, raise your hands!"
 T. "We'll sign this song in our heads"
 (names song and sing a few bars)
 T. "One ... two ... ready"
 Teacher directs. Students watch.
 (No sound from students)

Some students interruptions were placed in the environmental/routine category as well. In one classroom students who had completed seatwork lined up at the teacher's desk for assessment of that work. The teacher was usually not anywhere close to the desk but the presence of the student or students at the desk interrupted her work with other students or other activity in which she was engaged at the time. She then moved to the desk to correct the work of the students or students assembled there. Since this routine was observed in all sessions, the interpretation was taken that students used this procedure to signal to the teacher that their work was complete.

Inside some classrooms there are times when activities are audible from adjoining rooms. This was particularly noticeable to the observer in one classroom. During one segment when the observed class was being administered a spelling test, instructions were being

given in the spelling of the same words in the adjoining room. The class in the adjoining room was repeating the spelling of these same words. At other time the voice of a teacher loudly admonishing students could be heard. Incidents of this kind as well as visits from other staff members were also part of the school environment.

Point of Order/Direction Interruptions

The interruptions placed in the point of order/direction category differed from the environmental/routine category in that there was a situational immediacy about the point of order or direction interruptions. Comparison of the interruptions already noted above for session U will serve to illustrate why interruptions in that section of the field notes were so categorized. As described interruption 8 was designated as an environmental/routine interruption, while interruption 12 was placed in the point of order/direction category. The teacher, very sternly and pointedly, directed the statement "_____ m sit down!" toward that student as he left the semi-circle. The student returned to the semi-circle. The teacher at the same time as she was directing the student what to do was ordering him to do it. She had already asked all the students to sit on the carpet and they had all complied, that student included, but he had ceased to comply when he left the circle area. The

student returned to the circle indicating that he accepted that statement as a direction or an order and that his action of walking away from the circle was interrupted.

Interruption number 10 was also placed in the point of order/direction category. The tone of voice in the statement of number 10 interruption as well as the language of the statement, were somewhat different from that of number 12 interruption even though in number 10 the teacher was giving the students in the cloakroom a direction. "When you're ready come on in" was a direction to the students about what action to take. The students complied only after completing the activity in which they were engaged before the teacher's direction - that of changing their footwear from outdoor to indoor.

Examination and comparison of both interruption number 12 and interruption number 10 indicate how aspects of both had a directional quality. There are differences in the point of order dimensions of these interruptions. Both interruptions got results. The tone of voice in which number 12 was delivered could have given the message that the order was to be complied with immediately.

> Whereas, the clause "When you're ready" gives the request a negotiable quality. There was a hint of point of order in that the students were on their way to the classroom. The teacher could have wanted to remind them that activities were awaiting their arrival or that she was aware that they were getting ready and giving them enough

time to do so. Whichever the intended message, the statement was categorized here as an interruption because from the observer's viewpoint all the students in the cloakroom were not visible. The teacher had already made a general statement to the students to hurry and the reason for the need to hurry. Consideration led to the observer's opinion that the teacher was aware that there was a need to make that further statement. That need was precipitated by either some action or inaction on the part of the students thus giving somewhat a point of order quality to the interruption. Some interruptions in that category were more easily defined than others and the lack of overt action made others difficult, if not impossible to categorize.

Some examples of point of order/direction interruptions hold reminders of proposals set out by Martin (1976) about the disposition of actors in classrooms to negotiate. Tonal qualities of the voices of interrupters, when the comparisons of interruptions 10 and 12 for session U were being assessed, were part of the consideration in these processes. Likewise, those authors who see the hidden curriculum as embedding the ideology of the society, Apple (1981) being one of those, come to mind when students for example are given orders or directions without apparent recourse and with little or no discernable motivation.

Accepted/Excused Interruptions

Interruption eighty-five of the excerpt from session X above is an example of arbitrary placement because of lack of discernable reaction. If the pre-field work assumption that the convention of asking to be excused will identify an interruption then the statement "Excuse me raise your hands, please" dictated the placement of that interruption in the accepted/excused category. Also, in the light of that pre-field work assumption, in a kind of converse sense, it is significant that the teacher viewed the statement as an interruption. There was, however, no discernable overt reaction on the part of the students. The statement had no discernable reference point in previous interaction or succeeding interaction. The students did not raise their hands so they either did not interpret the interruption as an order or direction, or, if so, they chose not to comply. If non compliance was the case the teacher did not follow up with further instruction on that point.

Raising the hand to ask a question or make a statement was noted throughout all the sessions observed. Indeed in the above mentioned segment the teacher made the statement "Raise your hands if you know...". Since that statement was a part of the teacher's instructional activity and some students complied, waiting turns to give answers, that statement was not noted as an interruption. It did, however, appear in the interaction somewhat later

than number 85 noted above. Therefore that particular segment of interaction with a specialist teacher, as well as in other segments of session U with the regular classroom teacher, the expectation that students would raise their hands to call attention to their wish to overtly join the interaction was noted.

The statement "raise your hands if you know" gives direction about what to do and the reason for doing it. When hands were raised during the course of a segment without that direction or a similar direction on the part of the teacher these attempts were noted as interruptions and the raising of the hand taken to mean much the same as the conventional expressions "Excuse me" and "Pardon me". The gesture very often interrupted some interaction in progress at the time, but because it was continually reiterated throughout all sessions, it was taken to be expected even if it occurred unpredictably. (An example of explicit direction in sample T, Appendix B is interruption number 30.) The interruptions of that type were placed in the accepted/excused category since the teacher's reaction to the interruption was taken as acceptance and the convention of hand raising was taken to be in this case an expression of asking to be excused or begging pardon.

Somewhat more difficult to assess were the differences between occasions when the terms "excuse me" or "pardon me" were used and the occasions appearing

overtly similar in nature when these terms were not used. When these terms were used interruptions were placed in the accepted/excused category. An example would be the public address system statement noted as interruption number two of session X. "Excuse me, teachers if any one knows anything about the black extension cord will you let me know, please" was made by the same school personnel as number seven in the same excerpt made a few minutes later. In number seven interruption no apology was made.

Accepted/Unexcused Interruptions

As noted in Chapter II, interruptions encountered in the first observation session dictated the present use of categories of interruptions. By quantifying data comparisons between male and female student interruptions could be presented in graphic form (Appendix C, Table 1). On another graph (Appendix C, Table 2) the sessions are delineated by their assigned letters on the horizontal axis while the categories are listed on the vertical axis. Overall totals for each session and each category are presented. At each intersection the type and number of interruptions can be seen. Apart from total numbers of interruptions in each category the portion of that total initiated by male or female student or teacher was also recorded. The subtle, yet discernable differences between those interruptions placed in the accepted/excused

category and those placed in the accepted/unexcused are therefore exemplified in this section. During the field observation interruption number six of session T (Appendix B) was placed in the accepted/unexcused category. The interruption by the children of the teacher's statement about the upcoming party as they shouted "Christmas Party" was overtly reacted to by the teacher. She commented: "No it isn't a Christmas Party". Since she did not comment on the way in which the children answered, that is, not raising their hands, and since she had not elicited a response, this interruption was designated as being unexcused by the interrupters yet accepted by the teacher. The next part of the teachers' reaction was her question: "What kind of party is it?" That question provided an opportunity for an answer, and the answer given by some children ("Circus Party") was not deemed an interruption for that reason.

Patterned/Question-Response Interruptions

In consideration of questions such as that asked and recorded in session T, namely "What kind of party is it?", themes and context of interruptions come to the fore. In the pre field work assumptions the category initially was patterned/fixed. The label fixed was later disregarded. Patterned was retained because an analysis of classroom interaction showed that there were occasions when

interruptions occurred which were related to the routine of classroom interaction, but did interrupt an activity in progress. These interruptions took the form of questions, that is in the phrasing of the question itself, or in inflection of the words used. Sometimes these were teacher initiated such as the following: while the teacher was calling names to check attendance and recording the attendance in the class register, instead of calling I (m)'s name she said "1 (M) did you bring your note?" The male student replied "yes" and left the circle in corner A to go to his bookbag at his table to get it. Other times there were student initiated such as the example in session T, interruption 82 (Appendix B). "Do we need our cans?" was a question asked by a male student. The teacher did not answer the question directly nor was there any indication that the question was directed toward the teacher. The teacher, immediately commented on the tools the students would need to complete the activity being distributed. Some of these tools including crayons were kept in individual cans on a shelf in the classroom. These differed from the accepted/unexcused questions in that at no session were interruptions of this type prefaced by an apology, or was it even indicated that an apology was expected. The interruptions included in the accepted/unexcused category were sometimes overtly very similar to those which were

prefaced by an apology or by some indication of an apology.

Obtrusive/Rude Interruptions

Prior to the present field work it was assumed that classroom interruptions could be placed on a continuum with rudeness as a factor of identification and placement along that continuum. Indeed, there were interruptions which were labelled by some actors as rude.. These were placed in the obtrusive/rude category. Placement was therefore not problematic. What was problematic was the meaning of rudeness for the person doing the interrupting. With the whole categorization process, identification of themes among interruptions played an important part. As mentioned above, situational context was also involved in consideration of these themes. Since consideration of similar situations was an on-going process both in the collection and analysis of data, similar actions such as gestures, similar language such as words or use of words, and similar contexts such as segments of periods, were some of the notions made, both mentally by the observer and by appending comments to the field notes. While even definitive expression of rudeness on the part of the teacher aided categorization the assessment for themes left doubt on the part of the observer about the interrupters' interpretation of that same interruption as

Being rude. In session T, interruption 2 (Appendix B) a student seated among others in the semi-circle on the carpet in corner A (Appendix A, Figure 1) said to the teacher, as she was moving toward the chair where she sat when at that corner, "You with the pink, sit there". The student indicated the teacher's chair by pointing her finger as she spoke. The teacher replied "That's not a very nice thing to say to Mrs. _____ (referring to herself). I wouldn't say to boys and girls "you with the blue or you with the red!". The teacher was wearing a pink sweater at the time that incident occurred. The day before part of the instruction segment of the session S included instruction about color. An excerpt from the field notes for that segment follows: -

T. "Now gray is the color today,"
Teacher signs a little song including
words "Who's wearing gray today?" No
discernable reaction from students.

T. "1 (M), You're in a gray sweater
- stand up... Those wearing gray
stand up. Boys 1 (M) 2 (M)
3 (M) stand up.

115. The three boys who are standing hop
around.

T. We can't do this if you
don't take part.

116. 2 (M) continues to hop.

117. T. Sit down, please.
All three sit.
Teacher instructs about letter O.
Teacher questions about the
letter O using chalkboard.
Students answer, raising hands
for turns to reply.

118. 4 (M) leaves semi-circle, goes to desk picks gray crayon from can and holds up.
T. 4 (M) has a gray crayon.
119. T. 2 (M) Teacher you said you "couldn't find the purple picture but its up there." (Points to wall).
T. I just found it today.
120. 5 (M) What's that there?
122. 5 (M) Ya -- what's that there?
T. That's the purple picture.
T. This is the gray one. (Holds up card). Just look the sky is gray. We'll have bad weather today. (Can't tell if that is on the card or if she is referring to sky outside)

In comparing themes of interruptions the fact that the day before a segment had been concerned with color, and in fact had also been concerned with the wearing of a particular color, left the observer comparing the interruptions of these two segments. Questions arose about the interpretation by the teacher of the student's statement. These questions concern the elements described in Chapter I and the "generating of shared meaning" as expressed by Delamont (1976: 28). These will be addressed in Chapter V. Such discussion will include the noted instances when there were discernable differences in teachers' reaction to male and female interruptions and the implications these present for messages of attitude passed on by a hidden curriculum.

Other interruptions labelled as not nice or as rude by that same teacher were compared. During one observation period the students were sitting in corner A

(Appendix A, Figure 1) while other students were repeating nursery rhymes in unison after the teacher, one male student interrupted other students near him by blowing on them. When the teacher noticed she said " 1 (M); that's very rude. Go to your chair!" 1 (M) went to his chair, sat and lowered his head on his hands folded on the table. After a short time when the teacher was explaining work she recalled him to the semi-circle.

In other classrooms of this observation session different teachers used the terms obtrusive and rude as well. Sometimes reference was made by teachers about the interruption and that reference indicated to the observer that the teacher considered the interruption obtrusive even though other terms were used or the same terms were phrased differently. Interruption 33 and the comment 33a by the teacher of session T is a case in point (Appendix B). At that time the teacher says "Mrs. _____ (referring to herself) doesn't like boys and girls shouting out her name, O.K.?" This incident took place with the same class as referred to above but with a different teacher.

There were interruptions initiated by students interrupting each other on which the student being interrupted commented as well. For example, when in one session 4 (F) was playing with toys on the floor near the bookcase 8 (F) came along and picked up one of the toys 4 (F) said "That's rude, without asking."

There were few interruptions initiated by teachers placed in the obtrusive/rude category, but had students been consulted or in some cases given a chance to overtly react, there perhaps could have been more interruptions. Examples of these instances could include the times when certain teachers entered classrooms while lessons were in progress without apology to teachers or to students. More often than not they were observed apologizing to teachers yet interrupting the listening or speaking acts of students. These instances were placed in environmental/routine because of the observer definition of that category but had these other aspects of interruption related to other categories.

Unnoticed/Ignored Interruptions

Among the interaction observed in kindergarten and grade three classrooms there were some actions, gestures, and speech, and responses to these actions, gestures and speech, or lack of observable responses, which were problematic. The sense that some of the elements of that type of interaction were meaningful for the actors led to the assignment of a category for placement of interruptions determined to be of that type. Perhaps, more so than any other category objective placement in that category was difficult. Being able to determine if the interruption or attempted interruption was unnoticed

could be fully substantiated only by the actor doing the noticing or ignoring. If a behavior or speech became a full fledged interruption then it was categorized in some other way. Making note of instances when behaviors were exhibited which had potential for interruption, gave the opportunity of comparing situations and contexts of overtly similar actions, gestures and speech, some of which interrupted a process while others did not. Subjectively, then, observed instances which had the potential for interruptions were recorded. These which appeared to the observer to be ignored because they registered no overt reaction were sometimes physical. An example from the field notes for session R follows:

15 (F) walks across classroom floor wearing a sombrero taken from dressup section.

98. 4 (F) removes sombrero from 15
(F)'s head.
15 (F) keeps walking.

The action by one student, that is, removing a play thing from another student, was labelled an unnoticed/ignored interruption not because it had no observable interruptive effect on the process of 15 (F)'s walking at the time, but since 15 (F) placed the hat on her own head she didn't appear to have anticipated its removal. It therefore could have interrupted her plans to keep wearing it. If there was an interruption of plans 15 (F) gave no indication of that overtly (or if given was missed by the observer). Comparison with other

instances of students taking play things from other students could take place, however, with the view to determining if there were observable differences between them.

There were instances when the intent of an action appeared to the observer to be interruption but the action went unnoticed. Occasions when students raised their hands, even though these students were behind the teacher and out of her field of vision, were not interruptions as such, but they were noted so as to facilitate comparison about students' attempts to get the attention of the teacher and for comparison of students' own behaviours: for example, comparison of unsuccessful attempts to get teacher's attention and determine if these attempts continued.

Observer Related Interaction

With observer related interruptions the interpretation of the actor, when the observer was the target of the interruption, is one instance when interpretation is not in question. The observer's feeling at the outset of the observation was that the observer's presence should be as inconspicuous as possible, Observation points were chosen with that in mind. Also, discourse with students and teachers was kept at a minimum during sessions. There were occasions when the observer was approached by students and teachers and other

occasions when she was referred to by them. An example in session S during a combination segment, when some students were playing, others eating, some working at their tables is noted. The teacher had been correcting students' work as they presented it to her at Table 5 (Appendix A, Figure 1). She left that table and walked to the observation point. There she interrupted the observer's notetaking by commenting on the "readers" used in the other class. That interruption 89 was categorized as observer related. While the teacher was talking to the observer interruption number 90 occurred. The excerpt describing that interruption was recorded as follows: -

89. T. comes to observation point begins a discussion about "readers" used in the other class.
90. 7 (M), Can we have the needles?
T. "I guess you can have needles". Teacher leaves to go to entrance where light switch is located.
91. 17 (F) brings a can of fruit to observer to open. Observer opens fruit.
17 (F) goes to her seat. Begins eating. Some students have built interlocking blocks into the form of guns and are pretending to be shooting at each other.
92. Teacher turns off light.

While interruption 89 was a teacher initiated interruption of the observer, number 90 was a student initiated interruption of the teacher as her interruption of the observer was proceeding. Number 90 was categorized

as unexcused. Interruption 91 was categorized as observer related as well.

If the observer by her very presence or by some unintentional action interrupted other actors, reliance on overt clues aided the observer's evaluation of the incident as an interruption. On one such occasion, as session V began, students had just seated themselves: -

1. Observer enters classroom (M)
"What's she doing here?" Other
students turn and look toward
observer.

T. "Take out your Math books.
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2. Students chat as they take out their
Math books and open them.
3. T. "O.K. Let's look at it."

The entrance of the observer was interpreted as an interruption as that entrance prompted the male student's inquiry even though the inquiry itself alerted the other students to the observer's presence.

Content of interruptions identified routines, rules and regulations sometimes by disorientation or misinterpretation of the situation by the initiator of these interruptions. This led to greater facility on the part of the observer to categorize interruptions environmental/routine interruptions as well as other types. Tonal qualities of verbal interruptions, along with the content, aided the perception of negotiability between actors. The identification of handraising in lieu of an expression of excuse was precipitated in the

categorization of accepted/excused interruptions. The subtle differences between accepted/excused, the patterned question response and the accepted/unexcused were examined to explicate the nuances to which the actors have to become attuned to discern the rules, routines, and regulations. By deliberation about these nuances and the process of habituation regarding interruptions, the category of unnoticed/ignored became part of the categorization process to try to ascertain whether interruptive attempts were repeated until successful and also to try to ascertain if ignoring is part of the strategy of actors in classrooms. Incongruence of meaning became associated with the observer as non-participant. The identification of that concern brought about both the categorical designation and the discussion of methodological concerns of interpretation which follow.

In Chapter II there was discussion of the choice of nonparticipant observation as a method for the collection of data. Because interpretation of the actions, speech and gestures of others are taken into account when the observer's self is involved in interruptions in the classroom situation, the processes by which these same interpretations are arrived at will be discussed in Chapter V as part of the interpretation and analysis of interruptions in the interactions of all the actors.

CHAPTER V - INTERPRETATIONS OF INTERRUPTIONS

One assumption made at the beginning of this study is that interruptions form a part of the general process of the culture in which we live and are therefore a segment of what Dell Hymes (1972) describes as a dictionary of what everyone knows. A second assumption was that studying interruptions in a particular interactive content could be instructive about the social order in that context. Both of these assumptions are at the core of the theoretical orientation of this research and both lead to a particular research process. Extraction of one from the other is difficult, as with most points in this study because these two are so interwoven. An attempt will be made in this chapter to bring together these difficulties with reference to the interruptions observed in this research (Chapter IV). Specifically attention is given to the categorization process (Chapter II) and to the problems of meaning (Chapter I) as actors go about their day-to-day activities in classrooms (Chapter III). Because both categorization and meaning relate to interpretation and analysis of interruptions, the discussion will take form through these channels including focus on the actors and the situational context.

In order to examine in detail the interactions among individuals, a particular research orientation was adopted

which in itself yielded certain dispositions toward further research. Indeed, as early research processes were being explored and tentative definitions of interruptions being made for the purpose of data collection and organization threads of interpretation schema were appearing. Observer held ideas about interruptions were being debunked. For example, one such idea was that a comparative scale of interruptions could be devised. The realization that an imposition of such a scale or data would be reinterpreting interruptions which had already been interpreted by the actors led to the evolution of categories from the data. The grounding of the interruptions within the data itself evolved from the research method chosen, since situational and contextual considerations became preeminent. In that regard, then, observing and recording of an optimum of classroom interaction become desirable. Since Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposed that generating theory from data in social research is an alternative method to the quantitative method of comparative analysis, that method has been implemented by a variety of researchers. Glaser and Strauss (1967: 17) maintained that there was "no fundamental clash between the purposes and capacities of qualitative and quantitative methods on data" but that one method could be used to "supplement" the other. This is exactly what happened in the present research. Without reiterating the problems of categorization outlined in the

chapter detailing the research process, reference is made here to the process whereby categories evolved from the data and only then could a quantification scheme be devised. However, once that scheme evolved the data could be used in a quantification manner for comparative analysis regarding numbers of interruptions relating to gender of actors, physical context of interruptions and situational context of interruptions; thereby pointing to paths of further research. At the same time, with the particular research method chosen the immediate and retrievable data needed to address the questions of the how and why of interruptions were also available. In this regard the suggestion here is that naturalistic studies do more justice to the complexities of classrooms and schools and that the naturalistic orientation provides a more appropriate framework for conceptualizing classrooms.

Self and Interpretation

By the interactional orientation to the process of human interaction the self processes are at the core of the social construction of reality. In this study the social reality involves a number of actors. The students, the teachers and the observer are those here addressed.

Observer and Interpretation

Once the research method had been determined the observer became a part of the social setting under study. Looking to the actors in the classrooms to define interruptions meant that a number of processes were simultaneously underway. For example, even though the observer believed that her experiences as a grade two teacher aided in the interpretation of events, in the suspension of the action of teaching for the action of observing a major orientation shift in the observer's definition of the situation occurred. Also, with that shift came a sensitization to the "strangeness" (Delamont, 1984: 255) encountered in a new research setting.

Throughout this report it has been stressed that both observer detachment and non-intrusive presence were desirable. However, in the sometimes convoluted yet revealing way that data yielded insights, it was the incongruity of meanings which spoke for the shared meanings. That is, the overt reaction to the unusual helped identify the usual. Two situational conditions therefore illustrated the uniqueness of interactional events and at the same time were used as confirmations that habituation occurs. From the observer's perspective, the "culture shock" of the unfamiliar situations in the kindergarten and grade three classrooms heightened sensitivity to meanings of actors other than teachers' meanings. In addition, the analysis for meanings

associated with the observer-related interruptions gave opportunity for comparison where the observer was the relatively constant phenomenon. Although there were few instances of recorded observer related interruptions, overall the initial establishing of a category was brought about by reflection of an interruption related to a student's looking at the observer when the teacher was insisting that the student look at her, because that student was talking to the teacher at the time. There was no direct reference to the observer either by the teacher or the student but the realization that the observer was covertly a part of the interaction just by presence in the room led to questions about how much and what kind of interruptions were thus associated. These questions could be addressed only by detailed examination of the interaction.

The researcher's inability in the first noticed incident of observer related interruptions to ascertain meaning in the student's look led to a number of questions. Was it disconcerting to have a second adult in the classroom? Was the student more interested in the observer than the teacher? Was the student shy? Was the student fearful? Was the teacher behaving differently with that student when the observer was present from other occasions? Did something about the observer's look, body language or position command attention from that student? One conclusion reached about that interruption was that

there was a discrepancy between the action of the student and the expressed desire of the teacher. The teacher was interrupting the student's looking by talking. By context, therefore, the teacher's desire regarding the student's look was made known.

Other observer-related instances of interruptions were somewhat more revealing. For example reference was made in Chapter III to an interruption related to the observer which appeared to establish that the observer was indeed an interruption. During one session the teacher referred to the observer as a visitor and drew attention to the observer while making a statement to the effect that even though the observer was in the room the behavior being exhibited by the students was not usual. Whether a question of student behavior resulting from observer presence or teacher strategy for coping with the unusual behavior or a combination the presence was verbally explicated therefore any wish for non-intrusiveness on the part of the observer was futile.

Acknowledgement by students of the observer's presence also gave opportunity for both comparison of students' initial and continued reaction to the observer in both the kindergarten and grade three classrooms. In the kindergarten classroom the initial observed reaction was a stare which initiated observer reflection about the categorization of the observer as an interruption. In the first observation session three other observer-related

interruptions occurred. The teacher interrupted the observer's recording to outline seating arrangements for students, and while she was so doing that conversation was interrupted by a male student asking directions about a seatwork project underway at that time. Neither of these interruptions was excused. The final observer-related interruption for the first observation session took place during the combination segment when a female student approached the observer at the observation point requesting that some blocks, with which she was having difficulty, be taken apart by the observer.

In the grade three classroom the initial observer-related interruptions were in the form of stares directed toward observer's position. There were two predominate kinds of interruption of the observer-related interruption observed in grade three classrooms. One by the teacher referred to above where the observer was named a visitor, and another at the beginning of the second observation session when a student loudly asked "What's she doing here?", which verbally directly implicated the observer. The second interruption was unacknowledged by observer, teacher or other students.

By highlighting these observer-related interruptions it is hoped that some aspects will become apparent especially as they relate to the concept of self and interpretation of interruptions. Part of Mead's theory relates to taking the position of others when viewing

oneself and the involvement of that process in one's disposition to act or react. How, then, did the actors view the observer? The message taken from the verbal references to the observer was that indeed the presence of an observer in the classroom was unusual. For example, one student's question "What's she doing here?" and a teacher's statement "I know we have a visitor but..." are cases in point. As for the occasions when students looked in the observer's direction, these students may have been bored and the observer a welcome distraction from their routine rather than an interruption. Examination of these interruptions revealed certain commonalities in them. None of the observer-related interruptions were excused or pardoned. All of those which involved looking in the direction of the observer emanated from students in an instructional situation while these students were seated either in homerooms or specialists' rooms. On the two occasions when the observer was approached by the kindergarten teacher there followed approaches by students either asking for help or seeking advice. With the exception of the initial question at the beginning of the second observational session verbal acknowledgements in the grade three classroom were made by visiting students.

Delamont (1976) suggests that there are two separate types of teacher-pupil encounters; the initial encounter and the routine encounter. She also suggests what is needed is observation of the first type. While the pupil-

teacher relationship was well along in the term some of the differences between kindergarten and grade three interruptions related to the observer encounters were noted in this research.

As the first observation session began the kindergarten students were given the observer's name and were simply told by the teacher that the observer would be spending some time in the classroom. There was no such introduction given to the grade three students. By prior arrangement the observer walked into the classroom. At the door the observer was quietly greeted by the teacher and asked to choose an observation point. At two sessions after the initial session the kindergarten students greeted the observer by calling out "Hi, Mrs. _____", giving the observer the kindergarten teacher's name. These were not consecutive sessions and the observer made no reply. At two other sessions the observer entered the classroom after the students had moved to corner A (Appendix A, Figure 1). No greeting was forthcoming in these sessions. In the other session which was session T (Appendix B) a simple "Hi" greeted the observer on entrance. By assigning the observer the teacher's name were these students concerned with slotting the observer into the teacher oriented expectation which they might have held toward an adult in the classroom, or were they trying to be friendly? Subsequent events suggested the former. Various school personnel came into the classroom

over the observation periods but remained only briefly. No greeting was offered these persons. The student initiated interruptions of the observer's recording activity were for requests of the type usually made of the teacher. Examples of these were "Can you open my can of fruit?" and "What name is on that can?" (Cans used for storing students pencils, crayons, etc.).

Behaviors exhibited by the observer was purposefully designed to be inconsistent with teacher behavior; not answering students' greetings, not initiating greeting or conversation with either students or teachers, not discussing students with teachers, giving single word or very brief answers to direct questions, and trying to exhibit little or no overt reaction to behaviors which would have been viewed as disruptive or disorderly had the observer been viewing these from the teacher standpoint. In the last instance, though no interruptions were recorded during one of these times, recess periods when teachers left their classrooms were particularly strange both for observer and students. This was more so for the grade three classroom than for the kindergarten. The puzzlement turned to, in the case of some of the males in grade three, escalation of breaches of behavioral rules. This was suspected to be an attempt to determine the status of the observer. In that sense the inconsistency of the observer's previously known behavior as teacher would have been inconsistent with that exhibited during

these recess times. No reference was made to interruption and no discernable interruptions among the students occurred during this time. However, the sense that the observer's presence was even more unusual at recess time than during regular class time was interpreted as having an overall affect on their regular routine. That no student interruptions were recorded was confirmation of the inability of the observer to interpret interruptions as oriented to by the students in their own cultural context when the teacher is not usually present since there was no other segment of comparable time span in the sessions when the interaction did not include reported interruptions.

During recess kindergarten students are supervised by older students (two in each classroom) from grades five and six. The interruptions recorded during that time illustrate both the differences in situational context and the differences in students' orientation to actors inside the classroom from those exhibited by grade three students. Immediately after the recess bell rang the older students entered the kindergarten classroom. They were not acknowledged by the students as the students set about to eat lunch. The teacher made the statement "There's our helpers, now". There was no observed reaction on behalf of the students as the transition from teacher to older students occurred. The first verbal interaction was a female student's question to the helper,

"Can we play London Bridges?" The helper did not reply. But a few minutes later one gave this direction: "Raise up your hand if you want to play London Bridges?" The helper then continued going around the tables helping and talking to students. To one male student a helper said, (naming the student who had overall more than double the interruptive events attributed to him than any other student in the classroom) "You going to play London Bridges? You going to be a good boy?" To which the student replied "yes" answered by the helper, "That's good". That student, however, did not join the game but joined other boys playing with guns and robots. The play took the form of running, pushing the toys around and over the heads of others and discussing the capabilities of the toys. Some boys did join the London Bridge game but two who were scuffling when the game was interrupted by the helpers from the other kindergarten class requesting assistance from those in the observed classroom were overheard to say "I'm not playing that stupid old game." One of these same boys initiated the one observer/related interruption for that segment by coming to the observation point at the end of the recess segment and saying "You're still at your homework". That action was interpreted as an interruption by the observer. There being no indication such as apology attached to the event only the situational context and the actor in that context could be used in the assessment of interpretation on the part of

the initiator. That the event occurred is justification for the claim that the observer as observer had some impact on the situation. The context of the interruption was used as a clue to the interpretation of the observer's presence. The word "still" for example was taken to mean that that student had noticed the temporal significance of the recording. Perhaps that was inconsistent with any writing event which he had observed previously, or maybe it was more consistent with a writing event which he had witnessed outside the classroom, hence the reference to "homework".

When the strangeness of the situation was such that no interpretation of interruptions could be arrived at, for example that encountered by the observer during recess in grade three, then a disjoint between the meaning of student interruptions in that context could be assumed. The recording of interruptions in the kindergarten class at recess time gave rise to questions regarding the other actors in classroom situations as well as the context of these situations.

Teachers and Interpretation

While the observer's presence in the classroom has been referred to as a unique event and the actors' interpretation of that event has been examined through the observer related interruptions, the same procedure has not

been followed in the interpretation of other interruptive events because the teachers and students are continually part of the interaction in classrooms. A teacher was present at all times during the observation sessions except for the recess segments. Reliance on clues either in the content or context of the interruptions to try to ascertain if these were more teacher related or student related was the procedure followed. Most of the interruptions, by being part of an overall interactive situation, involved all the actors so determination of comparative relevance was a matter of analysis. Further discussion of that kind of analysis will follow. For the present the teacher as interrupter is discussed.

Of the total interruptions recorded over the observation sessions teacher initiated interruptions accounted for slightly less than half (Table 2, Appendix C). If teachers are interrupting so many times proportionately to other actors, that is, approximately twice as many interruptions while being approximately one twentieth of the classroom population, it seems appropriate to ask: What kinds of interruptions are these teachers initiating and why are teachers initiating so many interruptions?

Flanders (1970) maintained that teachers do about eighty percent of the talking in classrooms. A great deal of the recorded interaction in the classrooms observed in the present study was recording of verbal interaction and

these data bear out the Flander's report. Edwards and Furlong (1978) disagreed with Flanders in his interpretation of teacher talk. Their thesis is that even in less structured settings such as resource based classrooms talking is a coping strategy. A significant aspect of the present data is the categories of interruptions in which teachers' interruptions generally were placed.

Quantitatively (Table 2, Appendix C) it can be ascertained that the majority of interruptions were in the point of order/direction category and of these the majority were initiated by teachers. The problems of interpretation of interruptions again arise. The element of interpretation in numbers relates only to the immediate designation into a category as the action occurs. In the present study the difficulties of ascertaining whether the interruptions were point of order or direction and the joint designation of these two into one category have already been addressed in Chapter IV. The question here relates to the teachers' definitions of classroom situations.

Different researchers have attempted to identify relevancies in teacher definitions of classroom situations. Some of these have included teachers' definitions of students (e.g., Martin, 1976; 1979; 1983; Woods, 1978), others such as Apple (1983) have looked at teachers interpretation of knowledge while still others,

(Delamont, 1976; Woods, 1980; Meighan, 1981) have incorporated teachers' careers and teachers' expectations relating to students.

The teacher in the primary classroom is usually the sole adult present at any one time. Teacher initiated interruptions were therefore directed toward students' actions. With the teachers initiating interruptions in the point of order/direction category the implication can be taken, if the interruption is indeed an interruption, that students' actions are being ordered or directed. Examination of the interruptions in that category reveals examples of interruptions by teachers using verbal means of communicating the direction or orders, as well as using gesture actions and signals. However, the commonality in the different means of interrupting was the expectation that students would accept the interruption as an order or direction. In other words, the role of the teacher carries with it an expectation that the teacher can interrupt by way of ordering or directing the students. Such is also the case for behavioral, organizational or instructional pursuits of activities of students being interrupted by teachers.

Interruptions noted when the expectation of the teacher was not met in this regard pointed to the strategies the teachers used, to ensure that the expectations were met. One such example is recorded in one session (session T, interruptions 66 through 68,

Appendix B). The Teacher was directing students to put their homework books on a specific chair. Repetition stressed the specific chair as each time some children either ignored the direction completely or put their books on another chair. After all the books had been placed the teacher reiterated the fact that she had given the direction four times, indicating the importance she placed in having students carry out specific directions. This interruption was in contrast to those employed by others in the point of order direction category. In the grade three classroom repetition of directions were, as with that pertaining to the chair in kindergarten, associated with the group following directions and very often related to students talking to each other when the teacher expected the students to be working individually. These took the form of the teacher saying "Sh" and repeating it a few minutes later.

The importance to the teacher of students following directions was also demonstrated by the use of directions given in the tone of an order. Mention has already been made (Chapter IV) of interruptions when teachers gave specific directions such as "Sit down". These were usually prefaced by the students name and interrupted some action in which the student was involved and was not consistent with a teacher's plan. Questions were also often asked by a teacher in a tone which appeared to redirect attention from one action to another.

The redirection aspect of teachers' questions or statements often gave some indication of the importance attached to types of activity. For certain situations, teachers were concerned with organization, expecting students to follow particular patterns or routines in carrying out activities. Instances of teachers interrupting student discourse by telling them to raise their hands to speak, but then in the same segment allowing exceptions to that request, were noted. Also in similar type segments with the same students, other teachers did not attend to the handraising at all. Comparisons of these instances indicated that they were more related to the perception of the content of the interruption than to the routine as such. Teachers' interpretations of such communication are naturally in line with their perceptions of what was going on, or should be ongoing at the time, and allowed or disallowed the direction of that action to continue. Comparison of two incidents will serve to illustrate the interpretation made by teachers about the relevance of students' discourse to the instruction being presented by the teacher:

T.: How many people know the song
'Mommy's Taking Me to the Zoo
Tomorrow?' The song is repeated by
 the teacher and children. Then they
 sing together.

32. (F): My arm is sore (students had received shots from the nurse the day before).

T.: We're not talking about arms we're talking about zoo animals. Stick to the point (a poster of a sailfish with a pointed mouth with the lettering STICK TO THE POINT) says stick to the point.

33. Some children: Stick to the point!

A second incident:

26. T.: Alright everybody, look this way, please. If you haven't got the date done by now just look up here. Lay your pencil down.
Students comply. Looking in teachers direction at chalk board.

T.: Going to tell about (name) Island. There's a book (title) about that written by (author).

T.: (Tells about folklore on the island pirates tales, etc. leading up to discussion of words to use in creative writing)
Students raise hands to ask questions.

27. (F) My uncle was in a boat for a few days before people found him.

T.: What word made you think of that story?

(F): stranded
(stranded was one of the words suggested on the word list)

T. Try to use this word.

Another incident already recounted relating to the color pink (Interruption 2, session T, Appendix B) shows the

teacher's interpretation of an interruption as being "not very nice". A similar format to that which the child was using had appeared in an instruction on color the previous day. Although no reference was made to the student's recognizing the color pink, she was reprimanded for the way she said it. By so doing did the teacher interrupt one learning orientation and replace it with her own?

Delamont (1976: 43-44) suggests that teachers have "privacy" and "autonomy" in classrooms. Attempts to interpret teachers' reactions to interruptions by other teachers, environmental related interruptions and those interrupting obviously planned routine indicate that teachers have restrictions imposed by others. One of the obvious restrictions is the temporal framework of the classroom. References occurred in all sessions to time and things which "had to be done" in the time stated. Students were interrupted in the middle of assignments to go to specialist classes or to be dismissed, despite the stated importance especially in kindergarten of "finishing" assigned work.

Privacy is also questionable in the classrooms observed. Teachers other than the regular classroom teachers visited periodically. Sometimes these interruptions were excused, more often not. In one classroom the teacher in the adjoining classroom was clearly audible most of the session observed. When the observed teacher was questioned by the observer after the

session was over the teacher conceded that she had tried to compensate for that situation where she felt it was important the students in her room not hear answers in the same spelling lesson. A faulty folding wall was cited as the problem and had been faulty for some time. The incident was apparently deemed important enough that it was again mentioned to the observer several days later by the teacher indicating that indeed the door had been fixed but she had been unaware at the time that it had.

David Hamilton (1984) found that in the nursery school classroom he investigated the teacher easily adjusted her schedule after the interruption by a carpenter. The same kind of adjustment was evidence, on occasion, in the kindergarten class in this study (e.g., the unexpected appearance of the story readers) but the same adjustment was not evidenced when the routine was interrupted in grade three (e.g., confusion about the time of an expected special assembly in the gymnasium).

A number of classrooms at the same grade level also appeared to impose some curricular and temporal restrictions on teachers privacy and autonomy. Exchange of students for parts of lesson periods and coordination of themes related to special projects being cases in point.

Students and Interpretation

According to Martin's (1981b; 1982) work on student's perception of teachers, it cannot be assumed that teachers because they are teachers understand the point of view of students. In connection with this research one is led to ask if it can be assumed that because the predominant kind of interruption the observed teachers initiated was point of order/direction that the response of students was to be ordered or directed. Relatedly, were the strategies of students so directed toward their own ideas of the learning situation that the teacher's orders and directions, rather than initiation of the teacher's own plans, are responses to student strategies? Martin (1976) suggested that teachers perception of pupils negotiability affects negotiation and subsequent interaction in classrooms. The predominant category of student initiated interruptions observed in this research was of the obtrusive/rude variety. The total number of interruptions in that category was a few less than those in the point of order/direction category and both were by far the categories containing the highest numbers. Comparison of those initiating the two different types of interruptions, though, reveals few student initiation point of order/direction and few teacher initiation of obtrusive/rude type. Some aspects of these exceptions reveal interesting dimensions. For example, on two occasions only were point of order/direction interruptions

initiated by grade three students. Both these were initiated by a female. In the first situation as students were looking into a box of paper for scraps to complete a project the female student interrupted a male's shuffling through the scraps in the box saying, "_____ (M) stop making such a mess. Holy creation what a mess!" At that point they both walked away from the box. the female student with paper, the male without. The second event occurred during the same segment referred to earlier during session X when the observer/related incident naming the observer visitor occurred. At that time the students were asked to carry out a specific action. They laughed and giggled. The teacher stood with her head bowed while the students' laughing continued. Two female students together said: "Sh, sh". The remaining students became quiet.

In the kindergarten class the same number of female initiated interruptions as male initiated in the point of order/direction category were recorded. One male was involved in all of these interruptions. On certain occasions that student was interrupted by both male and female, while at other times he was the interrupter. On one of these occasions he directed the teacher's attention to particular parts of pictures he was holding when she had asked him to read. On another occasion, after noticing glue on some work of other students at his table, he asked "Hey! who did that?" A female student replied "I

did". She had walked around and dropped it, so far as could be determined, purposefully on other students' work. She then went to the counter, got paper towels and cleaned it up. These samples of interruptions also exemplify the kinds of statements made during other interruptions.

Similarities between those verbal orders or directions initiated by teachers and those initiated by students were also noticed. For example, when the female student in the kindergarten said, "_____ sit down", she used the same phrase and a similar tone of voice which had been used on other occasions by the teacher. That, also, was the case in grade three interaction reported when the female student used "Sh, sh." Other grade three teachers very often used "Sh, sh" in directing their students. The teacher involved in that particular interaction had not been noted as using that sound. The exceptions, then, when students used point of order/direction interruptions indicated that they used similar strategies to those of their teachers. That interruptions had the results of directing or changing the action of the interrupted could be taken to mean that those being interrupted had congruity of meaning. If students were able to change each other's behavior, why was that strategy not used more often? Was it because they do not have the opportunity to use it or do they neglect to avail themselves of opportunities opened to them?

The category which recorded the most student initiated interruptions was the obtrusive/rude category (Table 2, Appendix C). However, there were few teacher initiated interruptions in this category. Those which were noted were usually initiated by teachers other than the classroom teacher, and took the form of interrupting interaction between the classroom teacher and students. There were occasions when interruptions could have been interpreted as the rude/obtrusive variety by the interrupted student, but students' interpretation of these interruptions as rude or obtrusive could not be determined. When students were moving from one classroom to another they were designated by group names. During one such occasion a student was asked "_____ are you an _____ (naming the group)? That particular group had been asked to line up. The female questioned by the teacher had stood as well. This interruption was seen as a point of order/direction one. Judging from the facial expression this student may have been embarrassed. Generally in that classroom point of order/direction interruptions were directed by the teacher toward students as a group and those which were directed toward females of the point of order type were done privately. A similar description relating to a chair incident has been described in Chapter III. The question by the teacher could have been interpreted as rude or obtrusive by the student. Perhaps the teacher misunderstood the students

reason for standing, for example, she may not have heard the group designation in the direction to stand, or if the teacher had not usually named females publicly when a perceived breach of direction occurred.

Gender of students and the ways in which their actions are interpreted has been dealt with by researchers both in the United States (e.g. Block: 1980) and Britain (e.g. Delamont: 1984). These researchers found that sex-stereotyping is reinforced in schools. In the present study analysis for differences between male initiated interruptions and female initiated interruptions included context and type as well as comparison of numbers. The differences found in interpretation by teachers indicated by the reaction in the grade three classroom were noted. The one female among a group of five students who each initiated ten interruptions over the total observation was that female who was publicly named. Ten interruptions were twice as many as most other students and more than twice as many as some.

If female "sensitivity" was being reinforced in the grade three classroom and a disjoint between teacher perceived disruptive behaviors (interruptions being an indication) of that student then the interpretation of the student's behavior could be a manifestation of that perception. In the kindergarten classroom when the content of some of the interruptions of the male who interrupted most were examined, sensitivity about his own

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work performance was exhibited, sensitivity to animals, and overall a sensitivity to teacher meanings were present. On the other hand, some females in the class exhibited opposite behavior. On two occasions for example, females grabbed a male student's wheelchair and removed him from the activity in progress without his indication to do so.

Interpretation of Interruptions: An Overview

Given the nature of the present research orientation and procedures of analysis, a brief discussion of the process of interpretation, as used in the presented analysis is in order here. Congruent meanings for actions were assumed after comparison of aspects showed similarities of action and reaction. That analysis for aspects of actors, situations and contexts was ongoing. Because the process of the interruptions were of interest, rather than numbers occurring, very little statistical analysis was done. It was deemed relevant to compare numbers of gender for the reasons previously stated. A record was kept of the overall numbers of interruptions initiated by actors in the classroom, and although there were slightly more hours spent in the kindergarten classroom, the teacher initiated and student initiated interruptions were considerably more overall in kindergarten. Comparison, however, of the male and female

initiated interruptions within the kindergarten classroom revealed that, unlike the grade three classroom, one male initiated almost three times (72) the number of interruptions as the male initiating the next closest number (26) and the female initiating the most interruptions (33) initiated more than the second male. The female with the second highest (25) numbers initiated close to the number of the second highest male.

Comparisons of the aspects of the interruptions themselves such as content, context and initiators were used in addressing questions of gender related interruptions because the numbers without that information revealed little if any of the interpretation of the acts. That there was such a wide discrepancy between student numbers of the obtrusive/rude type gives some indication of the diversity of interpretation of the situation. These students who initiated the largest number of interruptions, for whatever reason, took or were given the opportunity of interrupting three times as much as any other student in that class. On the other hand, there was one student who was not observed to initiate or attempt to initiate an interruption in this class.

Segments of periods were related to physical proximity of actors to each other so that interaction of students with each other and with teachers was observed in a number of settings. Students' perceptions of these settings were often revealed by interruptions. In

kindergarten, for example, student initiated interruptions during seatwork assignments were generally related to the work assignment. In interrupting each other these were not excused or explicitly identified. But from the content of the situation is seen that students often as not monitor each other's work. Examples from one session include:

- (at table 2)
37. 6 (M): (To 7 (M) Let's
do the transformers.
7 (M): No, I got to do my work.
6 (M) goes to table five, picks up
a worksheet (tens) and brings it back
to the table.
38. 6 (M): I'm on my tens!
39. 10 (F): (from table 3) I'm on my
tens, too.

The same kind of concern was not observed where students were seated around the teacher for discussion. In these situations students often interrupted each other or the teacher with comments about the teacher exposition of the topic. Comments such as "I hate stories" or "Lets read the Bible" were those noted as interruptions at teacher instructed segments. Some students succeeded in having their particular topic picked up by other students and the discussion carried a little way without being interrupted by the teacher. On one occasion the day after the Challenger disaster in the United States some students interrupted teachers with comments but the discussion was redirected by each teacher to the original topic being instructed.

A male student's reaction to a writing activity was to lie across his desk, shuffle his feet, talk with his neighbor and look toward the observer. The teacher visited that student's desk three times during the segment where they discussed the writing.

By analyzing interruptions in the classroom strategies of the actors in classrooms unfolded. The importance of interruptions in the development of the social order became evident.

Even though students' views of teachers and school are to some extent shaped by their social, physical and temporal environments, the present analysis of interactions suggest that students are active participants in the process of learning to be students and to carve out their interaction rules with each other.

Through observer related methodological concerns and deliberations, situational concerns of students as well as teachers about actors in classrooms unfolded. Content analysis of the observer related interruptions as well as observer interpretation of these interruptions revealed attempts to categorize the observer as a participant within the classroom. Similarities and differences noted between these attempts in the grade three class where no communication about the observer was given initially and similar attempts were made to categorize the observer as participant in kindergarten. Since the students and teachers had been together in the observed classrooms for

approximately half the school year role related routines and regulations were discernable. These were noticed by the observer in behavioural, organizational and instructional pursuits and were identified by the sequential flow of activities and the obvious familiarity of the actors with them. These routines and regulations were noted by the content of interruptions when deviance from these routines occurred. These interruptions also made up the majority of interruptions and were specifically related to categories of actors, that is students and teachers; the point of order/direction category with teachers and the obtrusive/rude category with students. The students' monitoring of their own work habits and the communication of their ideas about the content of instruction are some notable points exposed by student interruptions. While enumeration identified the prominent interrupters closer analysis yields facets of these interruptions which identify the interruptions as accepted in the routine of classroom interaction. These findings can lead us toward an understanding of interruptions.

CHAPTER VI

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF INTERRUPTIONS

By way of conclusion, it is appropriate to comment upon the theoretical orientation of this research, specific methodological concerns, major findings, and the practical implications of the study. The overall aim has been to understand the process of interruptions and to suggest the implications on teaching/learning in kindergarten and grade three classrooms. Understanding is itself a process so that the aim of this commentary is to highlight the multiple social realities in the classrooms rather than offer prescriptive directions for the actors in this setting.

Theoretical Overview

Observations were made at the outset of this research concerning the social process of interaction and the idea of social construction of reality. Implicit in the opening paragraphs of Chapter One is the idea that for the students and teachers in classrooms there is a reality that exists on two levels. One level is that of shared realities and the other is where definitions, values and interpretation seem to be unique to each individual. The concern of this research has been to address both of these

levels but to focus specifically on the shared meanings and their development. To come to terms with this development of shared meanings one process within the classrooms was singled out for study, namely interruptions. Starting with the assumption that there are interruptions in the kindergarten and grade three classrooms observed and by suggesting that they are seen as such by the actors in these classrooms, the present research attempted to ascertain some of the strategies of the actors whereby their orientation to interruptions were arrived at. Thereby the social order of the classroom came under scrutiny. Putting that the social order under review meant a close examination of individual actions and reactions. In other words the individual acts upon the society and in turn is acted upon by the society. In the orientation of Mead (1934) and Blumer (1962), the development of self through significant others is at the core of an understanding of interruptions.

Kindergarten classes are usually Newfoundland children's first "in school" experiences. Perhaps at that early stage in their student careers the formation of role typifications might be tenuous and shared meanings within the school context evasive. Consolidation of these shared meanings might be expected to occur as students progress through the primary grades. Suggestions by researchers such as Jackson (1968) that students are subjected to delays, denials and interruptions as they learn the rules,

routines and regulations of classroom life indicated that a study of interruptions would be instructive in examining the processes whereby that learning takes place in kindergarten and grade three classrooms.

Methodological Concerns

The imposition of a researcher into the classroom situation itself had implications in the research process since that imposition changes the situational context and could be viewed as an interruption by other participants in the interaction. Taking that eventuality into consideration and using data generated by that interaction was seen to compensate for the liabilities associated with a "teacher-eye" view of the interaction. The richness of data and its retrievability were other bonuses from the non-participant observation method.

Analysis of data posed problems since the "common-sense" construct of the comparative interruptiveness of events could not be imposed on data because of the interpretative processes concomitant with interruptions. The categorization scheme which arose from the data, while yielding, albeit arbitrarily discreet categories, exposed similarities and uniquenesses in situational, contextual and temporal aspects of interruptions as well as in the language, gestures and body movements involved in these interruptions. As such, the quantification itself as part

of the ongoing analysis was useful in directing research toward the aspects of gender of actors, role of actors and the situational dimensions of classrooms.

Questions arose from the research process regarding the confirmation by actors of their interpretation of interruptions. These were precipitated by the situational strangeness for the actors of some interaction events notably, recess segments of sessions. Two alternatives present themselves as having value in redressing these concerns; post-observation interviews and technological recording of the interaction without an observer present. Although there is an awareness that both these present difficulties (McCall and Simmons, 1969), both could be used as supplementary methods of research.

Major Findings

The major findings of this research can be elucidated by addressing the idea of the hidden curriculum in the school. A survey of research on the hidden curriculum reveals two paths of research on the topic. One focus has related the hidden curriculum to society as a whole, while the other focus has been on the hidden curriculum inside classrooms. The latter has been the most relevant focus to this research. There were, however, the instructional segment interruptions which held themes of Apple's (1981) suggestions of teachers' perceptions of school knowledge

as definitive. As negotiation between students and teachers occurred over direction and topics of discussion there were occasions when students were denied opportunity of pursuing topics in which they held interest for those which the teacher had planned.

Those concerned with interaction inside classrooms have tried to extricate some of the strategies of the actors in classrooms as these strategies relate to teaching and learning. These strategies are considered part of the hidden curriculum as they have not been taken into account by the "official" curriculum. Interruptions in both kindergarten and grade three classrooms followed similar patterns. There were very few named as interruptions by the actors and the few which were so named were named either by the public address system personnel or teachers. The pre-field work assumption that interrupters would seek pardon or wish to be excused was borne out in a few cases, but replaced by the "handraising" requests of teachers. That is, when students wished to overtly enter the interaction they were requested to raise their hands. When none of these, asking pardon or excuse, or handraising was acceded to the interruptions were named rude/obtrusive. Students initiated most of the interruptions in this category. When interruptions were initiated to give directions or orders these were placed in the point of order/direction category. Teachers initiated most of the interruptions in

the point of order/direction category. These two categories constituted the majority of interruptions in both classrooms studied here. One category of interruptions was common, therefore, to teachers and another to students. Those which adhere to the common place interpretation outside classrooms are not common.)

By counting the number of interruptions one sees further evidence of the dynamism of interaction within classrooms. Quantitative analysis shows that approximately one interruption occurred every minute of the observed sessions. A large proportion of these were verbal, thereby adding evidence to Flander's (1970) contention that there is a large amount of talk in these classrooms. Edwards and Furlong (1978) maintained that rather than indicating a "transmission model" of education, as Flanders believed, the teacher talk is a coping strategy. Agreement with that theory is also indicated in the data from the kindergarten and grade three classrooms observed. When the quantitative "who" is investigated the teacher proportionally to each individual student did the most interrupting. However, when the type of interruption common to teachers as a group and the type of interruption common to students as a group were analyzed, the "coping" aspect is highlighted. Students and teachers used different strategies.

Within the symbolic interaction perspective certain student strategies have been examined (Martin, 1976; 1983;

Woods, 1980a; 1980b). Martin has highlighted negotiation as one of the strategies used between students and teachers. Woods (1980a; 1980b) has looked at concerns and perspectives of students and teachers other than those involved in negotiation as such.

Evidence of negotiation presented itself in the classrooms studies in the present research. In the sense that the interruptions were a process between actors, then, the interruptions were part of the overall negotiation which took place. Indeed the interruption itself was in many cases the opening of negotiation. While Jackson (1971) saw students "subjected" to interruptions in the classrooms, in the present study the interrupters subjected each other to this phenomenon. Teachers as well as students were subjected to delays and denials brought on by interruptions. There were also differences. Teachers were interrupted by students but also by environmental and temporal considerations. Students were interrupted by teachers as these students attempted to communicate their points of view or pursue their own plans of action. These differences accompanied situational contexts such as segments of sessions. Some of these segments proceeded without many overt interruptions while others were completely interrupted so that these segments did not proceed as the teacher had obviously planned. Where routines were so interrupted the kindergarten class adapted more readily to the change in

procedure than did the grade three students. In grade three classroom observed there was a general disorientation on the part of the teacher and students when interruption in routine occurred.

More interruptions occurred in segments of periods in classrooms other than homeroom segments. Other differences were noted about these segments. For example, student initiated interruptions were initiated by different students than those in the regular classroom, specialists teachers used different types of interruptive techniques such as signals, and specialist teachers identified interruptions by the use of excuses or pardons.

Nuances such as tonal qualities of verbal interruptions demonstrated habituation within some communicative situations, (e.g., teacher being startled by a pretend crying incident of a student when the student was out of the teachers line of vision). Another example was a student's immediate return to the semi-circle when the teacher's stern voice ordered him to do so. Students sometimes used tonal qualities similar to those used by teachers.

One of the more notable aspects of interruptions was the individuals initiating the interruptions. One male student in the kindergarten class initiated three times as many interruptions as the next highest initiator, while a group of five (four males and a female) initiated the same number at the top of the grade three list of student

initiated interruptions. Other students initiated only a few. One student initiated none.

Delamont (1976: 46) commented "we all cut off promising questions and rush on with our definitions of relevance." Evidence that such "cutting off" occurred in the kindergarten and grade three classrooms was found by comparative analysis of interruptions. Perspectives of actors were revealed in the content and types of interruptions and disjoint between the perceptions of students and those of teachers sometimes appeared to stifle communication.

Practical Implications

Given the extent and source of interruptions in kindergarten and grade three classrooms some implications for classroom interactions arise. For example, students want and indeed take initiatives in their own learning situations, also the potential for interruption turning to disruption exists. In addition the potential also exists for interruptions to be constructive events in the progression toward shared meanings. Metacommunication, that is, communication about communication taken as part of the organizational aspects of classrooms is one way to facilitate communication. Each classroom brings, both for the student and teacher, new situational dimensions and contextual characteristics which are unique to that

classroom. Teachers are aware of the organizational aspects of the school. Taking into account student awareness of the reasons for the existence of rules, routines and regulations allows both for revelation of opposition and also diffuses potentially confrontational situations. Student initiated interruptions taken as communication of their culture and perspectives can be, properly understood, accepted as part of the social order of the classroom.

Further Research

The obvious complexity of classroom interaction described by this research suggests a challenge on theoretical grounds. The Meadian question of how social order is possible in the midst of change is particularly relevant to classrooms because of the multiplicity of interruptions and assorted meanings and interpretations to this phenomenon in the classroom. The imposition of the observer into the student culture at recess suggests that not enough is known about student interaction inside schools when teachers are absent.

The assignment of kindergarten students to specific seating arrangements, their developing awareness of procedural rules like "sticking to the point" in discussion and their acceptance of "helpers" in the absence of teachers were in the present study "a

historical". An investigation of the initial encounters of kindergarten children and teachers in classrooms could point up how these kinds of understandings have been achieved.

Interruptions as a window into classroom interaction reveals the advantages of attempting to understand the processes by which learning takes place - the advantages of questioning who? why? and how? rather than how much? Teacher orientation toward that approach in their own teaching is implicated in teacher education.

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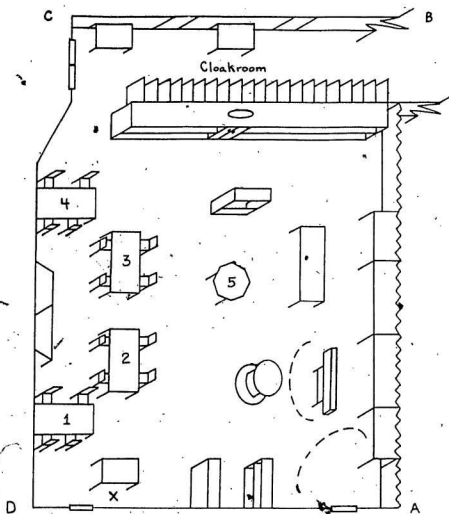
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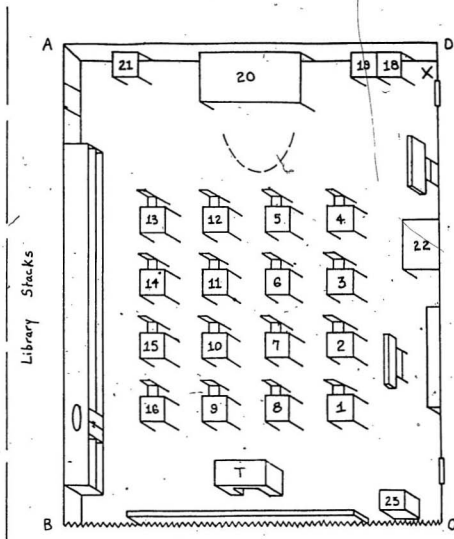
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APPENDIX A



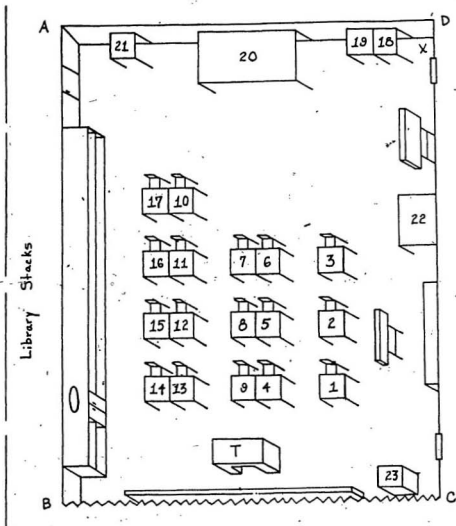
Key:-
 X = Observation Point
 ○ = Informal Seating

Figure 1. Floor Plan of Kindergarten Classroom



Key:- X = Observation Point
 T = Teacher's Desk
 (---) = Informal Seating

Figure 2. Floor Plan of Grade 3 Classroom Before Change



Key: X = Observation Point
T = Teacher's Desk

Figure 3. Floor Plan of Grade 3 Classroom After Change

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Fieldnotes Sampler: Session T

12:35 Bell rings.

Observer enters classroom.

All students seated. Two helper students (from Grades five and six) are circulating among the tables.

"Hi" (Most of the children call out to the observer.)

Teacher enters. T. turns off light. As teacher walks towards Corner A.

1. 11 (f) walks up to her and gives her a small item.

T: Thank you.

11 (f): You can keep that for ever and ever.

T: O.K. boys and girls, go over to the Corner.

T: Thank you, boys (to helpers). T. turns on light.

Students all go to Corner A.

Teacher goes to Corner A.

2. 10 (f): You with the pink, sit there (referring to the teacher, and pointing at the chair in Corner A).

3. T: That's not a very nice thing to say to Mrs. (referring to herself, by name). I wouldn't say to boys and girls as You with the blue or You with the red.

T: Let's say our prayer.

(Repeat prayer together)

T: Now, let's look at the weather.

T: 15 (f) What is the weather like?

4. 14 (m): It's windy.

5. T: Sh --. 15 (f)'s turn.

15 (f): Windy.

Most discuss weather with teacher.

T. points to calendar on wall near her.

T: Boys and girls now look there's only two days left till our party.

6. Most children: Christmas party!

T: No, it isn't Christmas party. What kind of party is it?

Some children: Circus party.

T: Yes, that will be on Friday (points to the day on the calendar).

T. then flips up the calendar sheet for that month for a second.

T: We're going to have to turn to a new month on the calendar after Friday. A new page in the green book, too, ...

7. ___ (f) What's in the green book?

T: Where Mrs. _____ (herself) write down if you're here.

T. calls names and children answer as she records attendance.

T: Who knows what we are talking about in our Hickory Hollow book now?

8. Several children: Circus.

T: No, that's what we talked about before.

— (m): The zoo.

T: Yes, the zoo.

T: Now, we're going to read a book called Wild Animal Babies.

Teacher reads the book.

(T. intersperses her reading with pointing to and explaining pictures. T. continues to read.)

9. 7 (m): I love their nose.

T: You love their nose, do you?

T. continues to read.

10. 12 (m): That tail is longer than a rat's.

T makes no indication she heard and continues to read. Reads word 'bamboo'.

10a. 15 (f) - Bamboo! (sounding incredulous).

T: Yes --- (teacher explains about bamboo growing in the jungle and some animals climbing them).

11. 7 (m): Some eat bamboo shoots.

12. Several children discuss loudly among themselves.

12a. T: Sh - Some of you aren't listening.

12b. 11 (f) raises hand.

12c. 14 (m) raises hand.

T: Yes, 11 (f)?

11 (f): I have a new sweater.

T: Mmm.

T: Yes, 14 (m)?

14 (m): See that animal book right there. I got one like it.

T: That's nice.

T. resumes reading.

13. 10 (f): I might have to go to the doctor about I can't see very well.

(Teacher makes no response.)

14. 6 (m): Did you hear about the big space ship that blew up yesterday?

T: Yes, I head about it.

15. 4 (f): People were on it.

16. 10 (f): A teacher was on it.

17. 12 (m): It blew up.

18. 5 (f): I saw on T.V. that somebody had a bomb with people in it and they couldn't get out. They all got blowed up.

19. 13 (m): You know it was when I was home that day before I was ready for school

20. 7 (m): 14 (m) blowed in my ear. 9 (m) told him to blow in my ear.

21. T: We had a little discussion about that yesterday - blowing in people's ears.

22. 7 (m): 14 (m) said

23. T: Uh! uh!

Teacher continues to read in little louder voice. Discussion erupts by students (raising hands) about ears and health. (Not healthy to blow in ears, etc.).

24. 17 (f): (not raising hand) I got a sore throat.
25. 16 (f): (not raising hand) My dad was drinking and had to go to jail.
26. 14 (m): My dad had an ear infection and had to get wires in his head.
27. 9 (m): We play Monopoly and if you go to a place with a wheel you go to jail.
- 27a. 1:05 Bell rings.

T: Now we're going to library (story not completed).

T: 13 (m), do you have your library books?

13 (m) nods.

Janitor comes into classroom, takes student from wheelchair and carries student out. All children follow in a line to the second floor library/resource centre. Regular teacher leaves.

28. T: (in library) Q.K., girls, you can put the books back on the trolley and you can do that after. (This directed to library prefects - Grade 6 - who are helping to shelf books.

T: (to students just seating in semi circle on floor in a corner). Now, boys and girls, we're going to put the cards back in the books.

29. 10 (f): I did.
30. T: Excuse me, dear, you have to raise your hand up.
10 (f) raises her hand.
T. sorts and gives out cards.
1 (m) leaves semi circle to look for his book.
Children take cards from teacher as she passes them out.
- 30a. 1 (m): (returns with no book).
I didn't got one.
31. 1 (m) coughs loudly and long.
32. T: Oh! My goodness. Who has that terrible cough?
(No reply).
T. continues to sort out cards.
33. Some children shout: Mrs. ____!
- 33a. T: Mrs. ____ (referring to herself) doesn't like boys and girls to shout out her name, O.K.?
34. 10 (f) raises hand again.
T: Yes. What do you want?
35. 10 (f): Do we get another book?
T: Yes, if we brought one back...
36. 8 (f): Did you see about the rocket?
T: Yes, I sure did. I'll show you some pictures later.
37. T: (looking at 5 (f) who is looking around at book shelves) Look at me.

T. holds up a book and tells students about the author. A loud knock on a door in the walkway. No reaction. T. reads the book.

At the end of some pages there is a line to sing. Students join in after first couple of pages.

38. Two students turn around to look at observer (seated behind semi circle beside a bookcase) as they are singing.

T: (as she finishes story) Put up your hand if you want to tell why you think ... (naming a point in the story)...

39. 14 (m): (not raising hand) Brings in

40. T: Sh!

41. T: 13 (m), Can you see from where you're sitting?
13 (m) nods.

42. 12 (m): (without raising hand) They should let him (referring to story point).

T: Yes, 12 (m)? ...

12 (m) repeats comment.

43. 5 (f): Can we sing that song again? (The teacher begins and they all sing.)

44. 7 (m) raises hand.

45. T: 7 (m) has his hand up. What does 7 (m) want?

45a. Several raise hands.

46. T: Put your hands down! If you like this book put your hand up and you can get it and I will put a card in it.

47. 7 (m): I hope I can get one about a duck.
T: I'm going to help you look today. (Teacher holds up several books.)
48. 8 (f) stands.
T: Sit down, 8 (f). 8 (f) sits.
49. T: 10 (f), not now!
Teacher starts holding books up in front of her one by one.
50. T: O.K., let's stop singing now and listen to Mrs. _____ (herself).
51. T: What, 14 (m)? You want that one? (indicating one book).
T: 7 (m), you don't have your white card.
52. T: People who have books go to the desk and I'll sign them out. (Teacher goes towards stacks.)
53. Come on, 10 (f), I'm going to give you some books to look at. The rest of you line up at the desk to stamp the cards.
T: Mrs. _____ (herself) got to stamp the blue card, don't we?
54. T: Sh! These boys and girls are working in their classrooms.
(Desk is close to the classrooms with open doors.)
Books are stamped in turn by teacher. Each student goes back to the semicircle after the book is stamped.
56. 14 (m) speaks (can't make out what is said).

57. T: 14 (m), 14 (m), you're not listening.
58. T: Move over, (m), let 7 (m) over there (as 7 (m) moves towards the semicircle).
59. T: 10 (f)! 10 (f)! (Can't ascertain why).
8 (f) sits on teacher's chair at the semi-circle.
60. Students talk among themselves.
61. T: Sh! Sh!
62. 13 (m) sits in wheelchair. 17 (f) takes off brake and moves the chair around periphery of semi-circle. 12 (m) gets up and runs and jumps.
15 (f): Ouch! Ouch! (Another student has hurt her arm (can't ascertain who).
 Teacher returns to semi-circle from desk.
 Now 12 (m) is sitting on teacher's chair. Gets up as teacher approaches.
- T: Look, Mrs. has her hand up. What does that mean? Children take* turns.
63. 7 (m): This book is all scrubbed up.
64. 1 (m) goes round and round. (Not noticed*)
65. T: 1 (m), I got one for you here.
- 65a. 14 (m) hand up (not noticed).
- 65b. 10 (f) hand up (not noticed).
 T: Did you bring a book? (Can't tell to whom she is speaking.* No audible answer.)
 T: O.K. Let's put our books under our arm and line up.

* This assessment made before T. spoke.

Students line up and classroom teacher arrives.
They follow her in line to the regular classroom.

1:30 p.m.

T: Put your library books in your book bag and bring them back next week. Put your homework books on the yellow chair.

Students are looking in the book bags, putting in, and taking out books.

66. T: On the yellow chair! ...

(Some students put books on the incorrect chair, some not yet putting them on a chair at all.)

67. T: On the yellow chair!

68. T: On the yellow chair! Goodness! Mrs. ____ has only said it four times!

T: I want you to sit in front of Willie the Worm.
(A display on the easel)

69. 12 (m): Willie the Worm (ignored).

70. T: Mrs. _____ didn't say bring up your books.
(Some children carry books to corner.)

71. T: Girls, put the dolls back. When we work up, here we don't bring anything.

72. A boy from an elementary classroom enters. "Can I read you a story?"

T: Yes, my love, indeed you can.

73. Teacher turns on light.

Boy reads to children in semi-circle.

74. — () repeats word "Cats?" (Boy has told them this is what the story is about.)
75. 14 (m) and 9 (m) lock arms and rock (not noticed).
(T. is sitting at Table 5 correcting some seatwork.)
76. 7 (m) picks tape off the rug, rolls it in a ball and throws it over his shoulder. Checks in the teacher's direction (apparently to see if teacher is watching. She isn't.)
77. 7 (m) whispers to 6 (m).
Boy finishes story and gets up to go. Some students get up to go towards entrance as well. Teacher stands up.
- 77a. T. pulls 1 (m) to one side (roughly). Can't hear what is said to him.
1 (m) cries.
T: Now, what are we going to say to ____ (naming the boy who read)?
Students: Thank you!
Boy, leaves.
T. goes to resume place in front of the easel. Children follow and sit.
T. reviews words on Willie the Worm.
78. 10 (f) jumps.
- 78a. T: Will you sit down, please. You're bothering me and I'm sure some of the other children can't see.

T: 14 (m), do you know what this word says?

14 (m): Danger.

T: No, it doesn't say danger. It says draw.

79. T: 4 (f) and 16 (f)! (Didn't notice what they were doing.)

T. tells students how to practice.

T: Do you know what practice means?

80. 10 (F): Do it over.

T. explains how to practice at home and how to do the practice sheet.

2:00 p.m.

T: Helper, come and give everyone a sheet.

81. Children: 2 (f)! 2 (f)!

2 (f) gets sheets and distributes them. T. looks at some work at Table 5.

82. 7 (m): Do we need our cans? (as he is looking at his sheet at his table.)

T: You need scissors and glue and a pencil to write your name on it. (From Table 5.)

Some children go to the shelf for their cans.

83. T: (From Table 5) 12 (f), you're supposed to be giving out the sheets.

84. 10 (f): She's looking over here.

T: Leave her alone. I'm sure she's doing a good job. You can do it your way when it's your turn.

T. continues looking at sheets at Table 5.

85. 12 (m) shouts.

86. T: 12 (m), when you're doing your work would you please not shout. (Children working at tables.)
87. T: I'm going to put letters in the middle of your table. When you go home, put them in your book bag.
88. Teacher puts down letters on each of the tables. She reminds students individually to take them home.
89. 7 (m) looks at letter as he cuts.
90. T: (Takes the paper he is cutting.) No! no! Head and speech balloon first. (7 (m) takes back paper and continues to work on it.)
T. moves to next table.
91. T. to 10 (f): Excuse me, excuse me. You're supposed to cut out the speech balloon and head and glue it on first.
10 (f) gives no indication she has heard.
Continues to cut.
T. circulates around tables.
92. 2 (f) goes to look for scissors on Table 4.
93. 2:05 - Bell rings.
94. T. joins 2 (f) at counter. Both look for scissors.
T. circulates.
95. T: (Stopping at Table 1) 3 (m), go get the red scissors. They cut better than the green ones.

96. 2 (m) sings clang, clang (the song from the library).

T. stands watching Table 1.

97. 7 (m): Do that say Hickory Hollow? (to teacher).

T: Yes, glue blue on the set though.

3 (m) returns to table with green scissors.

98. T: 3 (m), what colour are these scissors? (No answer.)

T: 3 (m), what colour are these scissors? (No answer.)

T: You don't know? _____ that's green.

Mrs. _____ (herself) said get the red ones. (Red scissors have four holes so that teacher can help with cutting.)

1 (m): ----- (unable to understand his speech).

3 (m): Yes/

T. goes to counter and gets scissors.

T. gives 3 (m) a pair of scissors with red handles and helps him cut.

12 (m): Where's my sithers gone to? (to himself loudly.)

99. 4 (f): (Leans over to Table 2 and says to 7 (m)) Look, you have to on the lines. (No answer.)

99a. 4 (f): (To 2 (f)) Is this yellow?

99b. 7 (m): (Loudly) What? Is that yellow? (Walks over and looks at the paper). Ya, that's yellow.

- T: (At Table 5) You're doing a really good job over here, aren't you?
100. 4 (f): (From Table 1) I'm doing a really good job, too.
101. 10 (f): Kiss Gregory! Kiss Gregory! (from Table 3; unable to hear rest of conversation.)
102. 10 (f): (Shouting) I'm a girl.
103. T: 7 (m), you aren't listening. Don't cut them all out. Glue them on as you cut them out so you won't lose them.
- 8 (f): (Table 2) Attention. You're supposed to give attention to other people, too. (To no one in particular at the table.)
- 6 (m): Attention means you love some one.
104. 12 (m) shakes glue at 9 (m).
105. 9 (m) shakes his glue back.
106. T. moves towards Table 3. (Glue shaking stops.)
T: When you're finish your work you'll be able to have some recess.
107. Children: Ya! Ya! Ya! --(From some other tables.).
- T: If your name is on it.
T. moves towards Table 5.
108. 10 (f): Yaa! Yaa ...! Yaa ...! (Loudly).
T. turns around to look at 10 (f), alarmed.
10 (f) has just been pretending to have done something incorrectly.

12 (m) still standing, shaking glue.

12 (m): (As teacher goes by, he's standing with his hands on his hips) What do you think of mine?

T: That's good.

T. returns to 3 (m) to help again.

109. 14 (m): I'm finished.

T: Finished? Put your name up there. Then clean up your table and have your lunch.

110. 7 (m): (With a worried look) Will mine be as good as 6 (m)'s?

T: That's alright. Everybody's will be different because they're doing it their own way.

111. T. turns off light, then on again.

T: An awful lot of noise here today.

15 (f) takes a curled carrot out of her lunch box.

112. She goes to Table 3 and Table 2 to show it.

9 (m) and 12 (m) finished. They get out their lunch.

6 (m) takes out his lunch.

8 (f): Can I go to the fountain?

T: You've already been to the fountain. Finish your work and you can have your lunch. (8 (f) shrugs.)

113. 1 (m): Hey! Look, I not (Can't understand what he's said.) Apparently unnoticed by anyone.

3 (m): (With head down looking at paper) My

114. 5 (f): Look, mine trowed up. (All at Tables 1 and 2 look up.)
3 (m) cleans up table and passes by 7 (m).
115. 3 (m): Hey! 7 (m), me dimished (finished?).
7 (m) just looks, keeps cutting.
12 (m), 6 (m), 9 (m), and 14 (m) are playing together near Corner A.
12 (m) covers his ears. (Trying to avoid noise or contact?)
116. T: (To 2 (f)) Go to the bathroom and clean the glue off.
117. T: Are you boys finished your recess? 12 (m), you're not. You haven't cleaned up.
 Children play at various places in the room. Some boys play with transformers.
118. T: (Takes toy from 12 (m)) You can't have that till you're cleaned up.
12 (m) goes to table and cleans up.
119. 10 (f): My nose keeps smelling that. (Potato chips in her hand.)
120. 10 (f): (Goes to T.) Can I have a needle?
 T: It's there in the tub.
121. 10 (f): (Shouts) I got a needle!
11 (f) and 4 (f) run to see.
122. 10 (f): Boys and girls, come and get your needle.
 (Means come get a pretend injection.)

123. 14 (m): Hey! 12 (m)
(12 (m) assembling Go Bots.)
124. 17 (f) goes to teacher, asks if she can go to the bathroom.
T. is sitting at Table 5 checking folders.
125. 8 (f): (At Table 2) There's no such thing as fifty hundred fifty thousand. My sister is crazy. She bothers me when I'm doing homework.
126. 8 (f) tries to grab a cup from 5 (f) who is trying to drink from it.
5 (f) passes the cup to her when she's finished drinking.
127. 7 (m): She's going to drink it all.
128. T: (From Table 5) Boys and girls.
- 128a. 9 (m): Mrs. _____ is talking.
Who has the needles?
129. 14 (m): I have.
130. T: If it's in your pocket, 14 (m), you'd better put it back as you aren't using it.
131. 15 (f) shouts.
132. T: 15 (f), that's an outdoors voice.
133. 15 (f): I never played with one, once.
Children play in groups at different centres in the room, moving among them.
13 (m) and 3 (m) play in centre of room.
134. T. turns off light.
T: Everyone, clean up.

135. T: (Notices 13 (m)'s table wet) Why didn't you wash off your table when you were finished?

Others continue to play.

136. T: Three seconds to get behind your chairs: n one ... , two ... , three.

Children go to chairs.

137. T: I'm asking you not to bring Go-Bots to school, tomorrow.

138. 1 (m): I never brought one

T: I never said you did. I don't want anybody to bring any. That make people too noisy.

T. gives instructions about who is to clean up what.

139. (Holds up car) Who owns this red car?

14 (m): Some one in the other class.

140. T: I want everyone to listen. No more voices, 12

(m): I see a lunch box on 8 (f)'s table.

Children pick up book bags, etc.

T: Everyone pick up their scraps.

T. tells about homework to go home. She checks tables.

141. T. 7 (m), listen. Someone owns these scissors. This Go-Bot and that pencil at 7 (m)'s table.

7 (m): I don't own that.

T: It doesn't matter. It's your table so you have to clean it up.

7 (m): O.K.

T: Now, tomorrow is going to be a quiet day.
Anyone who has a loud voice leave it at home
tomorrow.

142. T: 8 (f), clean up the things on your table.

T: Let's look for a quiet table now.

T. calls tables by names of children at the
tables.

T: 12 (m)'s ..., etc.

3:00 p.m.

All go to the cloakroom.

APPENDIX C

Table 1
Interruptions Observed and Initiators of Interruptions in Session 4

Category of Interruptions	Order Observed (list to #98)	
Observed/ Initiator	35 47a 91	
Observer	72 75 90	
Belated		
Accepted/ Increased	41 54 57 92	
Accepted/ Decreased	25	
Accepted/ Neutralized		
Initiated/ Terminated	1 5 6 7 11 14 18 33 40 42 89	
Enzymemetal	2 17 21 22 23 24 27 28 29 34 37 44 46 49 51 52a 58 60 61 62 63 65 68 69 70 71 76 77 82 93 94 95 97	
Scotline		
Point of Order/ Direction	3 4 8 13 16 19 24 30 34 35 38 43 45 47 48 50 52 53 55 56 59 64 65 74 77 79 80 82 84 85 86 87 88 98 99	
Postscript/ Question/ Response	9 12 15 20 31 32 73 78 81 83	

Key: Initiators

- Male
- Female
- Teacher

Notes: original color-coded
initiation are observer-initiated

Table 2
Frequency of Interruptions in Observed Sessions

Categories of Interruptions	Sessions										Totals
	D	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	
	(N)										
Accepted/ Excused		6	9	3	8	2	2	4	2	11	47
Unnoticed/ Ignored		14	-	2	11	10	3	12	6	13	71
Point of Order/ Direction		23	16	34	32	48	69	34	25	71	352
Environmental/ Routine		3	18	10	9	9	13	35	29	18	144
Obtrusive/ Rude		51	23	50	51	42	65	3	8	33	327
Accepted/ Unexcused		3	10	10	17	23	22	1	5	4	95
Patterned/ Question Response		-	4	12	22	12	7	11	8	15	91
Observer Related		4	4	4	2	1	2	3	3	7	30
Total		101	78	119	143	141	177	99	82	161	1157

Note: Totals not always equivalent because of undetermined origin or category of some interruptions.

Table 3
Segments and Categories of Interruptions
in Each Segment of Session Q

Designation of segment	Approximate length of segment (minutes)	Categories and frequencies of interruptions (n)
Teacher directed (opening activities)	10	O = 4, T = 1, A = 2, 2 = P/D, 1 = Q
Teacher instructed (spelling list)	15	O = 1, T = 2, U = 1
Individual seatwork (spelling)	10	O = 1, T = 1, U = 5
Teacher directed (evaluation)	25	O = 1, T = 2, P/D = 4, 1 = E
Teacher instructed (listening, informal seating)	15	O = 1, T = 1, U = 2, R = 2
Transition	3	T = 3
Student directed (Recess)	15	--
Transition	3	P/D = 1
Teacher instructed (specialist)	15	O = 3, U = 1, P/D = 4, E = 2
Teacher directed (specialist)	12	O = 4, T = 1, P/D = 2, E = 1, R = 2, Q = 1
Transition	3	P/D = 1, T = 1
Individual seatwork (silent study)	10	O = 1, E = 2, T = 2
Collective seatwork (math)	24	T = 2, P/D = 2, R = 2, M = 1

Key: Obtrusive/Rude = O
Accepted/Unexcused = U
Point of Order/Direction = P/D
Patterned/Question-Response = Q
Observer Related = R
Unnoticed/Ignored = N
Accepted/Excused = E
Environmental/Routine = T



