

Constructing and Integrating Through Talk

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“I’ve just thought of this!”

- ❑ The Reading Recovery model of teacher development
 - ❑ Teachers articulate their insights
 - ❑ Constructing knowledge and integrating new knowledge into practice
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Do the same processes
apply to how children
construct knowledge?

Constructive Activity: “Pulling together”

- Constructing and integrating (Kintch, 1994)
- What young children do while reading (LL2, p.117)

They must search for response alternatives, switching tack, evaluating choices and monitoring the integration of all these things.

Feeding new minor parts into an on-going symphony (LL2, p. 102)

Make use of working systems that children already have in place

For talking

While challenging these systems to change and adapt to a novel activity

Talking about stories using the language of stories

Developing a theory

Can a theory of construction and integration be applied to

- how young children construct their understanding of what they have read, and
 - how they appropriate the language of books through talk?
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Focus for observation

Teacher and child
conversations about a story

Audio taping

Puts this specific interaction into sharp focus

- Analysis of my teaching decisions
 - Evidence of the children linking and making connections (Clay, 2001, p. 227)
 - Evidence of the children using the language of the text in their talk
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Retelling or Responding?

- Retelling: oral narrative
- Responding: oral discourse

Teachers need to consider from a child's perspective what they are asking a child to do when asking a child to retell a story.

Francis retelling *Ben's Dad*

Janice: Tell me what this story is about.

Francis: Ben's dad?

Janice: Uh huh

Francis: Ben was painting...um...a picture for his dad.

Janice: Oh

Francis: And...and the teacher said, "Ben look! Here comes your Dad." And Ben...and Dad said, "Dad, Dad!" I mean, Ben said, "Dad, Dad!" and Dad said, "Ben, Ben."

James retelling

Baby Bear goes fishing

Janice: Tell me what this story is about.

James: Baby Bear went fishing

Janice: And what happened when he went fishing?

James: He...he get some fish?

Janice: Mmm

James: And...and he took them home.

I wonder...

If a different sort of invitation could have generated

- More talk from the child
 - More opportunity to extend the learner's knowledge
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Steven talking about *Mother Tiger and Her Cubs*

Steven:

This page is really cool to me cause...um...I like it when tigers...um...bend down in the grass and I know what they do it for cause they've got really good skin and they're...um...really bendish and they can bend really low and ...um...cause some...um...grasses are orange and they hide in the orange grass or in white grass or in green grass or there's lots of yellow and green grass. And once something comes by they jump out and kill it and eat it. Unless it's a tiger.

Why did an open invitation work well?

- Allows the child to begin the conversation
- Provides a joint focus from which the teacher can extend the learner

Beginning with Steven's observation assured his attention and provided opportunities my input in subsequent exchanges.

Observing change over time in amount of talk (measured in words)

<u>Observation</u>	<u>One</u>	<u>Two</u>	<u>Three</u>
Francis	37	41	90
Manika	33	58	94
Steven	79	92	345
Natalie	92	70	131
James	13	35	48

Retelling as part of a standardized assessment of comprehension

Teacher

- instructed to remain a neutral observer
 - Listens for how well the child makes reference to the characters, relates important events in sequence, and uses the vocabulary of the story
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PM Benchmark Kit Assessment Procedures (Nelly & Smith 2001)

Suggested retelling prompts:

- Who was the story about?
 - Where does the story happen?
 - What happened first? Then what happened?
Etc.
 - What was the problem in the story?
 - What do they do about it? What else do they do?
 - How does it end? How did it turn out?
 - Did anything else happen?
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What are the limitations to a standardized approach to retelling?

- ❑ The teacher has the distinction of being the one who knows what is important (Johnston, 2004, p. 12)
 - ❑ The answers to comprehension questions depend more upon the difficulty of the sentence structure of the question than on the child's reading, according to research (Clay, 2002, p. 61)
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Implications for Reading Recovery teaching and learning

Reading Recovery teachers must view their conversations with children about stories as different from a standardized retelling of a story.

Conversations with a child about a story...adds to the teacher's understanding of the reader in useful ways, and leads the child into discourse about stories.

(Clay, 2002, p. 61)

Implications for Reading Recovery teaching and learning

- Greater scope for learning to occur
 - That we can talk about the stories we read
 - That extracting meaning from the story is the whole point to the reading experience (Clay, 2005b, 1991)
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Tuning into the child's thinking

After any of the two or three familiar books, teacher and child may discuss the story (focusing on what it meant to the child). (LL 2, p. 88)

After the first reading

LL 2, p. 97

A brief conversation or a good question after the first reading can reveal a wealth of understanding (*or a lack thereof*).

A conversation with Steven about *Tabby in the Tree*

Steven: The part I like is when the dog gets chased away, because I don't like other animals to chase him.

Janice: So the dog gets chased away and then what happens?

Steven: And then Tabby gets up the tree and he refuses to come down.

Janice: So?

Steven: So he...he stayed up there for...for a long while until he came down. Then Miss Green baked a fish.

Using discourse to focus on literacy in Reading Recovery

We can expect diversity

- in what children bring to their understanding of the author's message
- and in what captures their attention

Once you have a child engaged in discourse about a story, and if you are tuned into the child's thinking, you can responsively direct the child to some new learning.

Manika talking about *The Party*

Manika: This...this little dolly is having the birthday party. And this little dolly having cakes, tarts, cake, table, and a...chair.

Janice: Sounds like a lovely party. You need all those things.

Manika: After the cake is...like..a...the cake. There is the cake sits.

James Talking about *Blackberries*

Janice: Have a look here.

James: Baby Bear (pause) he took one blackberry at...in his hand. Baby Bear ate all his blackberries.

Janice: What happened at the end here?

James: I don't know what happens here.

Janice: Look what's going on there.

James: Mmm

Janice: Look at what he's pointing to

James: To his tummy.

Linking up the entire story reading experience through conversation

Teaching decisions:

- ❑ Selecting the *just right* book (LL 2, p. 90)
 - ❑ Individualizing the orientation to the story
 - ❑ Following the reading with a quick conversation about the story
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Linking and making connections through conversation

- ❑ To ask for a personal response to the actions of a character (LL 2, p. 96)
 - ❑ To give the child an opportunity to infer what might happen next (LL 2, p. 97)
 - ❑ To check on a child's comprehension of a key event in the story (LL 2, p. 97)
 - ❑ To reveal what captured the child's attention
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Steven after reading *Mother Tiger and Her Cubs*

Janice: What's happening here?

Steven: I don't know why she's after the baby pig. The baby pig is not enough for mother tigers ususally.

Caution

Our own questioning is not simply “questioning”, rather it is “a way of questioning.”

When we sense a child’s puzzlement...we can at least pause and ask ourselves: What sense is this child making of this exchange?”

(Lindfors, 1991, p. 420)

Using the language of stories in discourse about stories

- Reading stories and talking about stories strengthens the connection between oral and written language
 - Discourse about stories provides opportunities for children to bring the language of stories into their talk.
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Appropriating the language of story through conversation

- Teacher and child discourse about a story is a context for oral language development
 - Examine how the child articulates his/her understanding of the message
 - How the teacher scaffolds and extends
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Natalie talking about *Teasing Dad*

Janice: Oh, they're having a good time, aren't they?

Natalie: And Dad...this one is funny one. The water went all over Dad.

Janice: *You* know what's going to happen next.

Natalie: Yea. They all run and Dad went faster. Got you naughty monkeys!

Janice: Oh, that's what he called them.

Natalie: Yea and...Dad put them in the water.

Natalie talking about *Mrs Spider's Beautiful Web*

Natalie: (refers to the pictures in the book)

And this one, the spider was hiding. The spider said, "It's so sticky." Then the spider hid in there. The fly came and he go in Mrs. Spider's web. After it's finished now Mrs. Spider look at the...her web and it was broken and she worked all night. In the morning it was all better again.

Natalie talking about *Chicken Licken*

Natalie: Fox Lox took them to the den.

Janice: Mmm

Natalie: “Well, well, well”, said Fox Lox. And then here Fox Lox and there Fox Lox’s den. Then the little squirrel call down, “Do not go there!” because Fox Lox will eat them. So they went as fast as they could and then back home. But they never tell the king that the sky is falling.

Change over time in complexity of Natalie's language

- Use of irregular verbs (go/went, do/did, is/was)
 - Use objective pronoun (put *them*)
 - Use of *this* as an adjective (*this one*)
 - Use of *all* as an adverb (*all over, all better*) and as an adjective (They *all* run)
 - Use of *there* as adverb (*there is*) and noun (Don't go *there*)
 - Use of *her* as an adjective (*her web*)
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Manika talking about *The Party*

Manika: This...this little dolly is having the birthday party. And this little dolly having cakes, tarts, cake, table, and a...chair.

Janice: Sounds like a lovely party. You need all those things.

Manika: After the cake is...like..a...the cake. There is the cake sits.

Manika talking about *Run Rabbit Run*

Manika:

There's the rabbit hole and here's the rabbit and the hole. The rabbit's home is in this hole. There's a dog going to eat this rabbit and the rabbit runs. But the rabbit can't see it. The rabbit sees it right now. The rabbit runs. And the...when goes into the hole then he's safe. Run rabbit run.

Manika talking about *The Bumper Cars*

Manika: Okay, this is James, this is Katie, this is Nick, and this is Dad. James and Katie...Nick and Katie want to go in... Nick, Nick and Katie want to go in the blue- red car.

Janice: Uh huh

Manika: And they go. Ja-Jamie and Kate, Kate want to go in the red car. And Dad, Dad wants to go...Dad and...Nick want to go in the blue car. And then after that Nick says, "Watch out!" shou-ted, shouted Nick.

Janice: Oh dear!

Manika: And after that they went...After that the bumper cars went **bump**.

Change over time in the complexity of Manika's language

- ❑ Sorting out indefinite article *a* and definite article *the*
 - ❑ Use of irregular verb (go/went)
 - ❑ Using rules for English sentence structure- noun and verb agreement (want/wants, go/goes)
 - ❑ Using *this* as an adjective (*this* hole), and as a pronoun (*This* is Dad).
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Linking and making connections

(Clay, 2001, p. 227)

Pulling together the threads
of the story through talk

Constructive Activity: (LL 2, p. 117)

- search for response alternatives
 - switching tack,
 - evaluating choices
 - monitoring the integration of all these things
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Conditions for productive conversations

- Invitation to talk about
 - A joint focus
 - Personalized – starting with what captures the child's interest
 - Skillful and careful use of questioning and comments
 - Monitoring your teaching decisions
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Two final thoughts

Could returning to an earlier conversation assist in adjusting a child's mental set for a reading task?

(LL 2, p. 88)

Audio taping brings what you are working on into sharp focus
