CUL05592

Troubling Teacher Talk: The challenge of changing classroom discourse patterns

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The middle years are a crucial stage of schooling where the range in student achievement widens, and progress for some students slows significantly (Cairney et al. 1998; Hill & Russell 1999). Despite moves towards middle school reform and improved literacy standards, there remains a gap in literacy provision for young adolescent learners, particularly those defined as 'educationally disadvantaged' or 'at risk' (Masters & Forster 1997; DEETYA 1998). Many literacy intervention programs offered to underachieving adolescents fail to articulate to mainstream curriculum and assessment practices, or to scaffold students adequately in meeting the literacy demands of an increasingly abstract and specialised curriculum (Christie 1990; Unsworth 2001). Often attributing literacy failure to individual deficit, many intervention programs, albeit well-intentioned, lead to a differentiated curriculum which potentially compounds educational disadvantage and maintains stratified outcomes.

A number of middle years studies emphasise the need for literacy intervention programs to take account of the particular needs of the adolescent learner and to be firmly connected with mainstream curriculum and assessment practices. The *Successful Interventions* research initiative carried out in Victoria between 1997 and 2001 (ACER 2000; Deakin University 2001) identified these as priorities among its ten key principles for successful literacy intervention programs and strategies. More recently, the national report 'Beyond the Middle' (Luke et al. 2003) found that

> …many schools have instituted various forms of withdrawal programs as interventions aimed at students at risk of poor literacy achievement in the middle years. Many of these remain focused on deficit or remedial approaches, drawing heavily from dated special education materials with an emphasis on individual worksheets, leveled texts and base-line decoding of printed text….Characteristic of these pullout programs was a mismatch with the practices and pedagogies of the mainstream classroom. (Freebody et al. 2003: 116)

Beyond the Middle calls for 'a new wave of research' into sustainable improvements through mainstream pedagogic reform (Luke et al. 2003). This paper reports on a doctoral study which takes up this challenge by investigating pedagogic change in middle years literacy. The study investigates the training of teachers in one particular

approach designed to scaffold the literacy development of all learners, with a particular focus on those underachieving in the middle years. Called *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn* (Martin & Rose 2005; Rose 2004, 2005a; Rose, Lui-Chivize, Knight & Smith 2004), this approach is based on a 'fix the mainstream pedagogy' rather than a 'pull out and remediate' philosophy (Luke et al. 2003) and aims to avoid the fragmentation of target group interventions for ESL students, Indigenous students, weaker readers, and students with disabilities and special needs.

Learning to Read:Reading to Learn builds on three major theoretical bases: on the theory of scaffolded learning developed by Bruner (1986), after Vygotsky (1978); on functional grammar (Halliday 1994) and genre theory (eg Christie 1999; Christie & Martin 1997; Martin 1985, 1999; Martin, Christie & Rothery 1987; Martin & Rose 2006; Cope & Kalantzis 1993); and on a theory of the structuring of pedagogic discourse (Bernstein 1990, 1996). The approach has combined and refined successful literacy strategies, including genre-based approaches to writing and scaffolding approaches to reading with Indigenous students (Rose 1999, 2004; Rose, Gray & Cowey 1998, 1999; Rose, Lui-Chivize, Knight & Smith 2004) using insights from educational linguistics (Martin & Rose 2005).

Since its inception, the scaffolding approach has been shown to accelerate the progress not only of underachieving students (McRae et al. 2000) but to succeed in scaffolding all students in accessing the academic-literate discourses of schooling (Carbines, Wyatt & Robb 2006; Culican 2004, 2005; Gray 1998; Milburn & Culican 2003; Rose 2005a). Over the past five years in Victoria, I have worked with Dr David Rose on projects that have further developed the literacy pedagogy in *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn* and a professional development program training teachers in the approach. Collectively, these projects have now been accessed by several hundred middle years teachers in government and Catholic schools across urban, rural and regional Victoria.

The doctoral study on which this paper is based analyses the outcomes of two of these projects. The first project, in a middle years cluster of government schools, was also the first trial of the scaffolding approach with non-Indigenous, culturally diverse students in a mainstream, low socio-economic setting in Victoria (Milburn & Culican 2003). The second project was a research initiative on a considerably larger scale in the Catholic education sector in Melbourne. Both projects focused on improving the literacy standards of underachieving students identified as 'educationally disadvantaged' or 'at risk'.

The scaffolding approach in *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn* differs in significant ways from other middle years literacy pedagogies, and from those commonly offered to underachieving students in literacy intervention programs. One of the most challenging features of this approach is that it asks teachers to change, or rewrite, patterns of teacher-student interaction that take place around texts in the classroom. It proposes a new pattern of classroom discourse embedded in a sequence of strategies designed to support all students in reading and writing quality, age-appropriate texts.

These strategies seek to address the needs of all students within the context of normal classroom teaching practice and can be implemented in both mainstream and intervention learning contexts.

However, changing the traditional patterns of classroom discourse that are a habitual or intuitive part of their practice poses a considerable degree of challenge for teachers. Investigating the best ways to support teachers in mastering this discourse pattern – and developing pedagogic processes, resources and analytic tools to assist them in actively and consciously taking it up – has been the focus of much of my professional contribution to *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn*. Drawing on my years of experience as a consultant and designer of teacher professional development programs in literacy, my focus is on how to scaffold *teacher* learning rather than *student* learning. The study documents teachers' pedagogic development and changed practice as a result of engaging in *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn* and the struggles and successes they encounter along the way.

In this paper, I undertake preliminary investigation of the challenges and achievements for teachers in changing habitual and embedded patterns of classroom discourse, through analysis of classroom talk. First, the paper outlines aspects of the theory and practice of the scaffolding approach in *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn* and the rationale for the changed discourse pattern. Second, it describes the new discourse pattern proposed. Third, it offers preliminary analysis of a lesson transcript and of the various moves that make up the new discourse pattern.

1.   How Traditional Classroom Discourse Patterns Exclude Some Learners

The scaffolding approach in *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn* is firmly located in a view of literacy as social practice. Central to the theoretical base underpinning the approach is a view of schooling as cultural learning and, consequently, a view of the teacher-student interactions that take place around texts in the classroom as culturally acquired. This theory argues that, for students from middle class, literate, school-oriented homes, there is close alignment between home/community literacy practices and the academic-literate discourses of schooling. For students from less advantaged backgrounds, however, there is frequently a gap between home and school literacy practices (Rose, 1999, 2004). Though students may bring diverse oral and literate knowledges, skills and capabilities to school, these do not necessarily match with those that schooling requires, or rewards (Gee 1996). Thus, success in schooling is likely to have more to do with the extent to which students have been inducted, or 'acculturated', into the particular discourses that take place around written texts (Rose 1999, 2004), than with individual cognitive ability.

For many students identified as disadvantaged or at risk, the gap between home and school literacy practices poses a significant barrier to learning (Heath 1983; Rose 1999, 2004). Research indicates that the range in achievement widens as students approach adolescence and progress through the middle and secondary years of schooling (Cairney et al. 1998; Hill & Russell 1999). In addition, as the curriculum

becomes increasingly abstract and specialised, the literacy demands and learning expectations (Christie 1990; Cumming et al. 1998) become more complex.

A key way in which the cycle of unequal outcomes for Indigenous students is perpetuated in institutionalised schooling is through patterns of classroom discourse (Rose 2004; Rose, Gray & Cowey 1999). Traditional patterns of classroom discourse – particularly those that take place around texts – have evolved in ways that are often unsuccessful for Indigenous students and remain a barrier to participation and learning. Though arguably more overt or obvious in the case of Indigenous students, it is the thesis of my research that the 'cultural gap' between what students bring to school and what success in schooling requires is equally significant in determining learning outcomes for other groups of students also identified as 'underperforming' in literacy in national literacy surveys (eg Masters & Forster 1998) and in the national literacy policy, *Literacy for All: The challenge for Australian schools* (DETYA 1998). Among these groups are students from language backgrounds other than English and students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

As forms of interaction, traditional patterns of classroom talk have evolved over a significant period of time. They are inextricably interwoven in the identities and subjectivities of teachers and students, and continually reproduced as part of institutionalised schooling. Though the respective epistemologies and pedagogies associated with different subject disciplines may reveal some variation, these patterns appear to be a universal 'template' for talk in educational settings (Nassaji & Wells 2000; Rose 2004; Wells 1999). They are habitual and intuitive, so naturalised as to be largely invisible and unconscious, hence Cazden's phrase 'the usually transparent medium' (1988). Thus, unless deliberately made an object of study, patterns of classroom discourse remain barely obvious to teachers or students, much less recognised as a determinant of academic success or as a mechanism of exclusion.

Analysis of classroom discourse has been the subject of extensive educational research (eg Wells 1999; Mercer 1995; Edwards & Westgate 1994). The most common pattern, described variously as the Q-A-E (*question-answer-evaluation*) pattern or the IRE (*initiation-response-evaluation*) pattern has been said to account for a possible 70% of teacher-student classroom interactions (Nassaji & Wells 2000; Wells 1999). In this pattern, the teacher initiates discussion, usually with a question, students respond and the teacher provides feedback in the form of evaluation. In their report *Everyday Literacy Practices in and Out of Schools in Low Socio-Economic Urban Communities,* Freebody et al. (1995) refer to this pattern more simply as the 'Q&A' pattern.

In exploring ways that question and answer routines privilege some learners over others, Rose cites Bernstein's distinction between different kinds of pedagogic discourse (Bernstein 1990, 1996 cited in Rose 1999, 2004) and argues that routines such as IRE function as part of the invisible forms of control in 'liberal progressive' educational philosophies and pedagogies. Legitimated in discourses of 'learner-centred' curriculum, 'individuated' or 'student-centred' learning, these pedagogies

engage and enable different learners unequally (Rose 2005a). The monitoring questions embedded in the IRE pattern privilege experienced readers who continually recognise, predict and recall patterns they are familiar with, and who have developed sophisticated skimming and scanning skills. Weaker readers, on the other hand, lack the experience, knowledge resources and skills required to participate successfully in these discourses (Rose 2005a).

2.   Democratising Literacy through Classroom Discourse

Learning to Read:Reading to Learn proposes a new 'instructional' pattern of classroom discourse designed to engage learners and equip them equally with the knowledge resources needed to participate successfully in the literate discourses of schooling. In this pattern, students are given high levels of support, or 'scaffolding', in reading and writing high quality, challenging, age-appropriate texts. These texts must be essential to curriculum learning and provide access to important features of literate language. Called the 'Scaffolding Interaction Cycle' (Rose 2004, 2005a), this pattern underpins the lesson sequences for narrative and factual texts that make up the literacy pedagogy in *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn.*

The Scaffolding Interaction Cycle consists of a series of three 'scripted' elements or 'moves' – *prepare*, *identify* and *elaborate* – that teachers use to talk through the text with students. The *prepare* move prepares students for the meaning and organisation of the text and supports them in locating particular wordings in the text. The *identify* move affirms students' responses and directs them to mark particular wordings (usually through highlighting parts of the text). The *elaborate* move expands on the meanings of the text, raising the discussion to a level beyond that which students could produce independently.

In contrast with traditional questioning routines, the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle begins with statements. These are given in the *prepare* move in the form of two kinds of prompts or cues: first a 'position' cue, which tells the student *where* to look in the text to locate particular wordings; second, a 'meaning' cue, which tells the student *what* kind of meaning to look for in the text. The student uses these cues to locate and mark particular wordings in the text (*identify*), and participates in discussion exploring higher levels of meaning through defining literate or technical terms, explaining key concepts and discussing ideas (*elaborate*).

This series or 'chain' of moves is summarised by Rose as follows:

> *Prepare*: giving position and meaning cues for students to recognise wording
> *Identify*: affirming and highlighting
> *Elaborate*: defining, explaining, discussing (Rose 2004, 2005a)

The three moves that make up the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle are enacted using a particular discourse pattern. This pattern consists of particular wordings (or sentence stems) for each move in the Cycle. Collectively, these provide a frame on which the discussion of a specific text hangs. Though the content or substance of discussion

will change from one text to another, it is framed using this consistent pattern of wording. It is these wordings, shown on the following table, that teachers must make a habitual part of their practice if they are to master the changed discourse pattern underpinning the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle.

Table 1

Moves	Wording (or sentence stems) for scaffolding prompts or cues
Prepare	*The first/next part of the sentence tells us…*
Identify	*Can you see the words that tell us…?* *That's right. Let's highlight…*
Elaborate	*That means….* *Why do you think…?*

Adapted from Rose 2003

Table 2 below indicates the way the discourse pattern looks when enacted on part of a narrative text. In order to illustrate it, I have selected the first sentence of a key passage in Paul Jennings' story 'Mousechap' published in the collection *Uncanny* (1994: 9). The wordings for the scaffolding prompts or cues are shown in italics. In the *prepare* move, the 'position cue' and 'meaning cue' are clearly shown in bold text, as are the 'affirm' and 'highlight' parts of the *identify* move. The text in the *elaborate* move is intended to be indicative only of teacher prompts or cues, as the discussion with students will always unfold in slightly different ways.

Table 2

Example sentence: 'In the blackness, the sounds of soft gobbling came from behind the locked door'.

Scaffolding Interaction Cycle	An example of a typical discourse pattern in the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle
PREPARE	**Teacher: [position cue]** *The sentence starts by saying* **[meaning cue]** that it was completely dark, and that the boy couldn't see anything at all? *Can you see the words that tell us* how dark it was?
IDENTIFY	**Teacher: [affirm]** *That's right,* it says 'In the blackness'. **[highlight]** *Let's highlight* the words 'In the blackness'.
ELABORATE	**Teacher:** *Why do you think* the author tells us that the boy is surrounded by blackness? **[students and teacher discuss, for example…]**

	Do you think it's more frightening than if Jennings just said it was dark? *Remember how* he was lying in bed before and it was so dark that he felt really spooked? *Have you* ever felt spooked at someone else's house? *So how do you think* he would be feeling now?

Culican 2004

An important principle underpinning the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle is that of using statements, rather than questions, to predict, locate and analyse meaning. This move away from questions is supported by extensive observation and analysis of classroom lessons in the national study *Literacy Practices In and Out of Schools in Low Socio-Economic Urban Communities* (Freebody et al. 1995). This study found that much 'interactive trouble' disrupting pedagogic discourse and disturbing the flow of teacher-student interactions in the classroom was due to several 'prevalent and apparently unquestioned routines of talk' (Freebody et al. 1995: 312):

> The first is the constant use of questioning as the driving machinery of teaching and learning; the second is that these questioning sequences do not usually follow any prior explication of the task at hand, or the outcomes expected, or the level of language that is the focus, or the interactive routines that will be put in place…(Freebody et al. 1995: 312)

Interactive trouble typically occurs where the teacher poses a question which fails to elicit an acceptable or correct response. Such question and answer routines often fail because they throw students back on their existing knowledge resources, rather than extending these resources or developing new ones. The theory and practice of the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle is designed to ensure that all students are equipped with the knowledge resources required to participate successfully in classroom discourses that take place around texts. Though questions do indeed feature in this pattern, their position in the chain of interaction is at points where all students are able to offer a response, even if that response is a reformulation of information provided by the teacher in the *prepare* move.

Starting discussion with a question is a characteristic of the IRE pattern and one that Rose describes as characteristic also of both traditional-behaviourist and liberal-progressive ideologies in education (Rose 2004). Though questions *appear* to be more inclusive and democratic, questions privilege those students already equipped to participate successfully in discourses around texts, further disadvantaging those that lack the knowledge and social capital (Harker et al. 1990) in the form of the appropriate or relevant knowledge resources, or who possess resources not valued in these particular discourses.

It may appear that the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle imposes a structure where previously there was none. However, it is more accurate to say that the Cycle applies a structure that is systematic, explicit and overt as distinct from one that is implicit and enacted intuitively by the teacher in the form of the IRE pattern.

3. Investigating Change in Classroom Discourse Patterns

The focus of my research is on the change in teachers' pedagogic discourse and the struggles and successes they experience in taking up the new discourse pattern that underpins the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle in *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn.* My previous research (Milburn & Culican 2003) indicates that the pattern is difficult and challenging for teachers to take up, with some moves in the pattern proving more difficult to master than others.

This is not so much because the pattern itself is difficult but rather that a recurring problem for teachers lies in habitually defaulting to the more intuitive IRE pattern, and particularly to the 'I' part of the pattern in the form of an initiating question. Most evident in the core component of the narrative and factual lesson sequences called 'Detailed Reading', this default to the IRE pattern leads to interactive trouble and disrupts the chain of moves in the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle.

The following analysis looks at one teacher implementing 'Detailed Reading' as part of the narrative lesson sequence. The teacher videotaped this lesson as a basis for discussion and analysis in an interview with me as researcher. Analysing lesson transcripts with teachers is both an analytic tool for advancing my research, and a pedagogic tool for engaging in a conversation that takes teacher pedagogic change forward. The purpose is not to critique teachers' practice but rather to make the pattern visible or tangible in a way that identifies where and how it can be refined. My aim is to be respectful of teachers as learners and to avoid positioning myself as 'expert' to the teacher's 'novice'. Because teacher ownership was important, interviews reflecting on videotaped lessons were co-structured, with both myself and the teacher free to stop the tape and initiate discussion at any point.

The school where the lesson was held is in a culturally diverse, low socio-economic area of Melbourne and the students involved in the lesson were in the upper primary years of schooling. The students had been identified by the school as 'low literacy' and were in a small group targeted for additional literacy support. Among the group were newly and recently arrived students from language backgrounds other than English.

The text the teacher used for the scaffolding lesson is 'Bart's Balloon' from *A Lot of Hot Air* by Australian author Terry Denton (2004). Previously, the teacher gave the students an overview of the content of the text and the way the text unfolds. She then distributed enlarged photocopies of the text and read it aloud to the class. As part of the *identify* move, students used highlighter pens to mark particular wordings.

The following extract shows the first part of the story:

> One day in 1709, the King and Queen of Portugal were sitting around in their palace, when a strange bloke knocked on their door. 'I am Bartholomeu de Gusmao of Brazil' he announced. 'And I have something earth-shatteringly brilliant to show you'.

> So the King and Queen called all their friends and relatives and hangers-on into the palace. (Denton 2004: 18)

The following transcript is set out in order to highlight the teacher's moves (after Rose 2004). In the *prepare* move, the position cues (*where* to look) and the meaning cues (*what* to look for) are identified using 'pc' and 'mc' respectively. The 'affirm' part of the *identify* move, where the teacher responds positively to students' responses, is also clearly indicated. Each separate *elaborate* move is annotated to show its particular focus and the teacher's (presumed) intention. Because the focus is on the teacher, the transcript does not differentiate between responses from different students. Student responses are analysed in another part of the study.

Prepare	T	1	[pc] The first part of the sentence [mc] tells us when this story
		2	took place. When was it, Sam?
Identify	**S**	3	1709
Affirm	**T**	4	Yeah, good boy. 1709. Let's highlight that.
Prepare	**T**	5	[pc] Then [mc] it tells us about the people – the who – two people
		6	who were there.
Identify	**S**	7	*The King and Queen*
Affirm	**T**	8	Yeah, good. Highlight that.
Prepare		9	[pc] And [mc] where they were. Where were the King
		10	and Queen? Yes, Joe?
Identify	**S**	11	*In Portugal*?
Affirm	**T**	12	Yes. The King and Queen were *in Portugal*.
Prepare		13	[pc] Now [mc] it tells us what they were doing.
		14	Andrew, what were they doing?
Identify	**S**	15	*Sitting around.*
Affirm	**T**	16	They were *sitting around*. Good boy. Let's highlight *sitting around.*
Prepare		17	[mc] Where were they sitting around?
Identify	**S**	18	In the palace.
Affirm	**T**	19	In the palace. Good boy. *In their palace.* Right.
Prepare		20	Ian, [pc] then [mc] it tells us <u>what </u>some-one did.
Identify	**S**	21	[pause; another student answers] *A strange bloke knocked on their*
		22	*door.*
Prepare	**T**	23	[mc] So who was it, Ian?
Identify	**S**	24	*A strange bloke.*
Affirm	**T**	25	*A strange bloke.*
Elaborate **[focus: meaning]**		26	What's *bloke*? William? [pause; no response] You don't know?
	S	27	*A man*?
	T	28	Yeah. It's a man. *A strange bloke.*
Prepare	**T**	29	And what did that *strange bloke* do? Ian?
Identify	**S**	30	He *knocked on their door*?
Affirm	**T**	31	He *knocked on their door*. Good boy. Sure did. Let's highlight
		32	*knocked on their door.*
Prepare		33	Okay. Robert [pc] now [mc] it tells us what that strange bloke said.
		34	What <u>did </u>he say?
Identify	**S**	35	*I am Bartholomeu de Gusmao of Brazil.*

Affirm	T	36	Good boy. Let's highlight all of that, because that's what he said.
Prepare		37	What word do they use instead of said?
Identify	S	38	*Announced*?
Affirm	T	39	*Announced*. Good boy.
Prepare		40	[pc] Now [mc] *Bartholomeu de Gusmao* tells them something. He
		41	tells them about something incredible that he wants to show them.
		42	What does he say, William?
Identify	S	43	*And I…have something* [begins to sound out] *in..cred..ible to show*
		44	*you.*
Identify[2]	S	45	[a different student responds] *earth-shatteringly brilliant*?
Affirm	T	46	Good boy, William. *I have something earth-shatteringly brilliant to*
		47	*show you.*
Elaborate [focus: meaning]		48	*Earth-shatteringly brilliant.* What do you think that means?
	S	49	Something special?
	T	50	Yeah, special, outstanding,incredible, blow your mind.
Affirm		51	Very good. Let's highlight *earth-shatteringly brilliant.*
Prepare		52	[pc] Now the next…we're going to a new paragraph now, and now
		53	[mc] it tells us what they did next. So, first of all, who?
Identify	S	54	*The King and Queen.*
Affirm	T	55	Good. Let's highlight the <u>who</u>, *The King and Queen.*
Prepare		56	[mc] What did they do? Gerard?
Identify	S	57	[inaudible]
Prepare	T	58	Well, actually….go on…[mc] it tells us they called three
		59	groups, didn't they? Who'd they call, Gerard?
Identify	S	60	*Friends.*
Prepare	T	61	Sally, who was the second group?
Identify	S	62	Relatives.
Affirm	T	63	Good.
Prepare		64	And who was the third group? Ian?
Identify	S	65	*Hangers-on. Hangers-on.*
Elaborate [focus: metaphor]	T	66	What do they mean by *hangers-on*?
	S	67	Neighbours?
	T	68	Could be.
	S	69	[inaudible]
	T	70	Could be. Okay, those people who were just around the place.
		71	Around the palace at the time. So let's highlight who they called-
		72	friends, relatives and hangers-on…

In the early stages of contact with the new discourse pattern in the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle, teachers exhibit varying degrees of control over the various moves. Concern to remember each separate move and to deliver it in the right order can make the pattern appear somewhat stilted, even robotic. However, as they develop deeper understanding of the Cycle, teachers begin to enact the moves in less of a lock-step manner and to 'work' the pattern as a chain of interaction, repairing and adjusting it according to the needs of their students. This growth in confidence and expertise can often be seen even in the course of one scaffolding lesson.

The transcript above demonstrates several characteristics typical of teachers new to the Cycle. Though the teacher shows mastery over the order or sequence in which the moves occur, she is still in the early stages of using each move to set the context for the next, and in exploiting the potential within each move to develop students' understanding of the text.

Analysing the 'prepare' move

The purpose of the *prepare* move is to foreshadow both the meanings and the organisational structure of the text for students. This *prepare* move provides support for students at a number of levels: first, it orients the student to the overall gist of the sentence (*sentence preparation*); next it tells the student where to look to find the answer (*position cue*); then it provides a prompt as to what wording to look for (*meaning cue*).

Beginning the discourse pattern by giving the students an orientation as to *where* to look in the text (the position of the words) and *what* to look for (the meaning of the words) is a radical departure from traditional question and answer routines. Teachers new to the pattern typically find it difficult to take up a pattern where the starting point for discussing the text is statements rather than questions. Many teachers new to the pattern report that 'telling students the answer before asking students the question' feels as though it reverses the 'natural' order of things.

In the lesson transcript above, the teacher shows a sound grasp of the purpose and structure of position cues. Though as yet her range is somewhat restricted – 'now' (4 occurrences), 'then' (2) or 'and' (2) – she consistently directs students' attention to particular parts of the text to locate particular wordings, as can be seen in bold text in the following examples:

Prepare	T	1	[pc] **The first part of the sentence** [mc] tells us when this
Prepare	T	13	[pc] **Now** [mc] it tells us what they were doing. Andrew,
Prepare	T	20	Ian, [pc] **then [mc]** it tells us <u>what</u> some-one did.

The example also shows a good understanding of the purpose and structure of meaning cues, which are the words following stems such as 'it says…' or 'it tells us…'. However, common to early scaffolding lessons is lack of variety in the meaning cues and over-reliance on cues using *who, what, where,* and *when*. Out of a total of 16 *prepare* moves in the transcript, 14 begin with *who, what, where,* or *when.* The high number of 'wh' cues, as Rose describes them (2003a), indicates that, unsure of the new discourse pattern, the teacher defaults to the more familiar territory of the IRE pattern, and to 'comprehension' style questions that test students' knowledge or understanding, rather than equipping them with the resources to respond successfully (Rose 2004).

Many of the 14 'wh' cues occur where the teacher can be fairly confident that the students can *identify* the wording, as shown in these examples:

| **Prepare** | **T** | 1 | [pc] The first part of the sentence [mc] tells us **when** this |
| | | 2 | story took place. When was it, Sam? |

| **Prepare** | **T** | 18 | [mc] **Where** were they sitting around? |

In both these examples, the information is straightforward and students have no difficulty locating the wording. However, in other examples, the teacher's 'wh' cues fail to provide weaker readers with adequate support. Over-use of the 'wh' cues– and, in particular, careless use of the *what* cue – can lead to interactive trouble as students are unable to reason from the cue to the specific part of the text. Consider this example:

Prepare	**T**	21	Ian, [pc] then [mc] it tells us <u>what </u>some-one did.
Identify	**S**	22	[pause, then another student answers] *A strange bloke*
			knocked on their door.
Prepare	**T**	23	[mc] So who was it, Ian?
Identify	**S**	24	*A strange bloke.*
Affirm	**T**	25	*A strange bloke.*

Here, the *what* cue in Line 21 is too general and fails to give 'Ian' sufficient support in reasoning to the answer. However, the teacher recognises the break in the Cycle, and self-corrects by promptly repairing the interaction in Line 23 so as to enable 'Ian' to be affirmed for a correct response.

More supportive use of 'wh' cues in this lesson would be to use *who* to cue the wording *a strange bloke* first, followed by *what he did* to cue *knocked at the door*. More supportive still would be to use what Rose (2003a) refers to as a 'commonsense paraphrase' cue. This is where, instead of using *who, what, when* or *where*, the meaning cue provides an alternative wording, or words that mean the same thing as the wording in the text. An example here would be to say '…it tells us that a man they didn't know came to the door'. The words 'man they didn't know' provides a commonsense paraphrase for *strange bloke*. This kind of cue would then lead the teacher more naturally into discussion in the *elaborate* move of possible double meanings of the word *strange*.

Recognising the Cycle as a chain of interaction where each move is used to maximise the potential of the next, is a developmental stage reached only when teachers have mastered the moves individually. As confidence increases, teachers begin to self-correct and adjust their use of the pattern 'on their feet'. This is often evident even within one lesson. Here, recognising that the next few words are difficult and that her preparation cues are giving students insufficient support, the teacher provides a commonsense paraphrase meaning cue:

Prepare	**T**	40	[pc] Now [mc] *Bartholomeu de Gusmao* tells them something.
		41	He tells them about something incredible that he wants to
		42	show them. What does he say, William?

Here the teacher uses the wording 'something incredible that he wants to show them' as a commonsense paraphrase for the text words *something earth-shatteringly brilliant to show you*. Once again, however, the use of the too-general *what* cue leaves William unsure of the expected response. A more supportive cue in Line 42 would have focused students' attention on the wording *earth-shatteringly brilliant* using a commonsense paraphrase (eg 'what words tell us that what Bartholomeu wants to show the King and Queen is incredible or spectacular?').

Analysing the 'identify' move
Using the teacher's preparation cues, students are able to *identify* particular wordings in the text. In this move, the teacher affirms students' responses and asks students to mark the wordings on their own copies using a highlighter pen. This move seems least problematic for teachers, perhaps because evaluating student responses is also a fundamental part of traditional discourse patterns. However, in contrast to traditional patterns, the *prepare* move of the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle is designed to ensure that all students can 'get the answer right' and receive praise. Affirming responses from all students is an important means by which the Cycle seeks to democratise classroom practice.

The teacher in the transcript appears to be well in control of the 'affirm' and 'highlight' parts of the *identify* move, as the following examples show:

| **Affirm** | **T** | 4 | **Yeah, good boy.** 1709. **Let's highlight that.** |

| **Affirm** | **T** | 51 | **Very good. Let's highlight** *earth-shatteringly brilliant.* |

Though the videotaped lesson shows the teacher not yet fully exploiting the potential of the *identify* move as a means including and affirming all students, the extract discussed previously (Lines 21-5), where she adjusts the discourse pattern to ensure that 'Ian' gets a chance to respond successfully, demonstrates her understanding of the fundamental principle of inclusivity and democratisation of classroom literacy practice.

Analysing the 'elaborate' move
Building on the understanding of the text established in the *prepare* and *identify* moves, the *elaborate* move supports students in participating in a discussion of higher level meanings than they would be able to produce independently. Crucially, it is this move that maximises the learning for all students by focusing on literate language, exploring meanings and inferences, unpacking metaphors, developing metalinguistic awareness and connecting with students' prior knowledge and experience.

Though of all the moves, it appears to be most closely aligned with traditional ways of exploring meaning in texts in the classroom, the *elaborate* move nevertheless

poses considerable challenges for teachers. Whereas the *prepare* and *identify* moves are more tightly scripted, the *elaborate* move, detailed lesson plan notwithstanding, seems somewhat less structured and less predictable, demanding that teachers respond more 'on their feet' to the way the discussion with students unfolds. It is here that teachers intuitively revert to the familiar territory of the IRE pattern. Thus, it is also here that the dominance of that pattern – and its potential inequality – are often most apparent.

Despite its importance for developing students' understanding, a count reveals only three instances of the *elaborate* moves in the transcript, which indicates that the teacher is less comfortable with this move. Not only does she overlook opportunities for elaboration in the text (eg *sitting around* in Line 16 and *strange* in *strange bloke*, Line 25) but in all three instances, she falls back on the IRE template of comprehension-style questions for her starting point, using these questions to define meaning at the literal level only:

Elaborate [focus: meaning]	**T**	26	**What's** *bloke*? William? [pause; no response] You don't know?
Elaborate [focus: meaning]	**T**	48	*Earth-shatteringly brilliant.* **What do you think that means?**
Elaborate [focus: meaning]	**T**	66	**What do they mean by** *hangers-on*?

Here again we see that the Cycle, when used effectively, is a chain of interaction where the *prepare* and *identify* moves provide a foundation on which the *elaborate* move is then able to build. In the above examples, the *what* questions provide little or no support for students in reasoning to the answer, throwing them back on their existing resources. This is partly a consequence of the previous lack of support given in the *prepare* move where, instead of commonsense paraphrase cues giving alternative wordings, the teacher over-relied on 'wh' cues. Commonsense paraphrase cues for terms such as *strange bloke* (Line 21), *earth-shatteringly brilliant* (Line 45) or *hangers-on* (Line 65) in the *prepare* moves of the Cycle would have enabled richer discussion in the *elaborate* moves. This discussion could explore literate devices such as, for example, humorous inference, colloquialism, metaphor, colloquialism, hyperbole and linguistic complexity.

My research so far suggests that the *elaborate* move is a reliable indicator of teachers' general mastery of the changed discourse pattern in the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle. As their confidence and expertise develops, they begin to exploit more consciously and actively the potential of this move for raising all students' understanding of the text to a higher level. In our analytic discussions of this lesson, the teacher herself observed that she framed many of her *prepare* and *elaborate* moves with an initiating

question and that this gave students low support for understanding and appreciating aspects of the text.

Conclusion

My professional interest lies in investigating the best ways to support teachers in mastering the changed discourse pattern in *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn* and on developing pedagogic processes, resources and analytic tools to assist them in the process. My research so far indicates that working with teachers on analysis of lesson transcripts is both a useful analytic and generative process for my research and also a useful pedagogic process for teachers. Teachers in the research have expressed that breaking up the teacher talk according to the moves in the Scaffolding Interaction Cycle makes the pattern more visible and highlights the 'interactivity' of the Cycle in the way each move establishes a foundation for the next. From these observations, it is reasonable to expect that teachers' practice will continue to develop and that analysis of subsequent lessons would reveal different trends and patterns as they work towards pedagogic change in middle years literacy through *Learning to Read:Reading to Learn.*

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