DRA06193

Engaging young children in shared conversations during whole group storybook reading.
AARE Conference Adelaide, 2006

Anne Drabble
Australian Catholic University

Abstract: The aim of this year long study was to examine the shared communications five year old pre-primary students engaged in during the socially constructed whole group story book reading activity in three pre-primary classrooms. The teachers' contributions to the whole group storybook reading activity were based on communication categories that contained directives, questions, statements and responses. Each of the three teachers used all of the communication categories. However, differences in emphasis and frequency of use were noted. The students were not major initiators of the communication in any of the three classrooms. They engaged in collaborative communication when opportunities were presented to them. Differences noted in the students' contributions could be attributed to the approach taken by the teacher, the students' background knowledge and experiences and the choice of text being read by the teacher. Insights gained on the nature and extent of the pre-primary teachers' and the students' communicative contributions have implications for developing reciprocal communication opportunities for both the classroom teacher and the students.

Theoretical framework

Young students in pre-primary classrooms are provided with substantial opportunities to participate in shared experiences in order to maximize their potential for development through social interaction. These shared experiences can be viewed as an extension of the social functioning young children engage in within the home environment. A range of studies have highlighted the value of social interaction in promoting development in the cognitive, affective and social domains in young children (e.g. Bruner & Harste, 1987; Cazden 1988; David, 1990; Vygotsky, 1962; Wertsch, 1985). In the area of social interaction the influence of communication, that is, the talk that is exchanged during the interaction on development has also been emphasised. In classroom settings, value has been placed on opportunities for students to participate in shared learning experiences where they can communicate with each other, share ideas, and learn from each other's knowledge and experiences. However, studies on the extent of the communication that occurs during classroom interactions have found the communication to be teacher dominated. This means that in general, students are expected to respond to questions in situations where the teacher already knows the answers, and that there are significant limitations to the contribution students can make to the interaction (Anstey & Bull,2002; Cazden, 1988; Dillon 1982; Edwards-Groves, 2003).

Emphasis on the value of socially constructed learning in classrooms has highlighted the significance of the communication that occurs during social interaction in enhancing development Edwards-Groves, 2003; Renshaw, 1992; Vygotsky, 19760). There has been considerable research into the value of storybook reading in facilitating the development of language and literacy in young children (e.g. Anstey & Bull, 2004; Dickinson & Keebler, 1982; Mason & Au, 1990; Reutzel & Cooter, 2004; Wells, 1985). Studies investigating the approaches teachers adopt while

reading storybooks to students have noted that variations in reading styles have influenced the communicative contributions that occurred during the storybook reading activity (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Dickinson & Keebler, 1989; Teale & Martinez, 1986). Teachers generally rely on group discussions during story reading sessions. During these discussions, teachers are inclined to guide or direct the discussion, resulting in a communication that is centred on the teachers' participation and control (Cazden, 1988). For students to develop autonomy, the teacher needs to find a role in the group that respects peer leaderships and contributes to the group's social and interpretive development (O'Flahaven, Stein, Wiencek & Marks, 1992).

Young children are eager to share their personal experiences in a social context (Cazden, 1988; Dillon, 1982; 1988; Fleer, 1992; Renshaw, 1992; Wells, 1990). However, there are a number of constraints within the pre primary environment which impact on the opportunities available to the children to include personal knowledge and personal experiences. These constraints include the number of children in the class, the time available to listen to the children's communicative contributions, and the pre primary teacher's agenda for the lesson (Howe, 1988).

 Studies have shown that peers provide a strong influence on student communications (Cazden, 1988; Eeds & Wells, 1989; Peterson & Eeds, 1990; Newkirk & McLure, 1992). Vygotsky (1978) argued that problem solving in collaboration with more capable peers enabled children to expand their understanding and learning. The mentor leads the child through scaffolded information to reach a level of increased understanding. This also occurs in peer interactions, when a more experienced child leads peers to consider other perspectives and include prior knowledge to arrive at new interpretations of an event.

One way to incorporate the benefits of peer group discussions with peer scaffolded information is to extend it by applying storybook reading strategies that enable students to view themselves as a resource for information, rather than as passive participants. When teaching students to find answers to questions based on texts, peers could be involved in whole group discussions where they are considered to be a potential source of information rather than merely responding to a teacher's question. If peers are included in collaborative storybook constructions of meaning, their contributions could be acknowledged and valued. Scaffolded instruction helps students to become independent. The assistance takes place in a collaborative context, as teachers evaluate student performance and adapt instructional responses, in order to develop the students' autonomy (Beed, Hawkins, & Roller, 1991).

Students are able to learn from peer group discussions, because they provide a means for transferring some of the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the students (Alvermann, Dillon, & O'Brien, 1987). Peer discussions in whole group situations provide an opportunity for students to claim ownership of the learning process and to communicate about personally relevant experiences for clarification and collaboration. Peer comments also assist the group to make useful connections that allow them to understand the information from the storybook. In these situations the students appear to be using their prior knowledge and experience to accommodate and understand new information (Newkirk & McLure, 1992).

This study seeks to extend current understanding of the socially constructed communicative repertoires that occur in classroom settings. It investigates the capacity that whole group storybook reading has for encouraging young students' communicative contributions. More importantly, this study examines the opportunities that whole group storybook reading has for extending pre-primary students' contributions to include their personal knowledge and personal experiences. The two questions central to the study were:

- What is the nature and extent of the pre-primary teacher's communicative contributions to the whole group storybook reading activity?
- What is the nature and extent of the pre-primary student's communicative contributions to the whole group storybook reading activity?

Sample

In order to address the research questions, a year long study of the whole group storybook reading activity was carried out in three pre-primary classrooms in Western Australia. Pre-primary classrooms are usually located on site with the primary school. They accommodate children who turn five by 30 June. Students attend school for five full days each week and may interact with the primary school for assemblies, special events and use the school library. Pre-primary teachers usually adopt a thematic/integrated approach in their planning and presentation. This allows them to connect and reinforce developmentally appropriate learning experiences for the young students. For a number of weeks at a time, the pre-primary context is filled with theme related programming. Learning experiences such as table top activities and storybooks for the whole group story book reading activity are selected to complement the theme. The appearance of the home corner or play area in particular, is generally transformed to reflect the theme.

The three teachers participating in the study were selected because they planned extensive literacy activities for their students and they were located in different socio-economic areas. All teachers were female, aged between 28 -39 and shared an average of 6 years teaching experience.

- Teacher M: Low socio economic area. There were 25 students in the class. The majority of students were from non-English speaking home environments. Over half of the students were not accustomed to parent-child storybook reading sessions.
- Teacher J: Middle socio economic area. There were 28 students in the class. The students were confident communicators who were familiar with storybook reading sessions and shared communicative interactions
- Teacher S: High socio economic area. There were 27 students in the class. The students had strong social and communicative skills. The students were confident and enthusiastic about participating in shared communications. Teacher S frequently included background knowledge and factual information in their shared communication.

Results

The study found the organisation of the three classrooms for the whole group storybook reading activity to be very similar. Each of the teachers sat on a chair with the students seated informally on a mat in front of her. There were also similarities noted in teacher expectations for the storybook reading activity and the general manner in which the whole group storybook reading was carried out. However, significant differences were noted between the goals each of the three teachers established for the storybook reading activity. These goals had been determined by the teachers' need to accommodate the students' socio economic and cultural differences.

The teachers' contribution to the whole group storybook reading activity was based on communications that contained directives, questions, statements and responses. All three teachers used these categories but with differences in emphasis and frequency of use.

- Teacher J: adopted a storybook reading approach that was highly interactive and encouraged much learning through shared communication. She invited her students to include personal experiences into the conversations. e.g.

Teacher:	How did the water get on the floor?
Student1:	It moved
Student2:	Water can't move.
Teacher:	Water can't move?
Student1:	Yes it can. My poppa told me. It's like the waves on the woks (rocks). It moves up and then it moves down.
Student3:	Yeah, I seen that. When we were at the beach, fishing. The tide It's the tide. It's the tide coming in and going out.
Student4:	I like it when the water moves out and then I catch pipis. If we don't eat them daddy uses them up.
Student5:	Yuk, I had some mussels. It was all slippery.
Teacher:	Was it in a soup?
Student5:	Yes. It was Italian. At a restaurant when we went for daddy's birthday. I like the bread.
Student3:	Yum. I like restaurant bread.
Teacher:	Okay, let's have a look at the water on this page.

- Teacher M: concentrated on shared communication to promote confidence in speaking in front of the class as her students were extremely shy. She also encouraged her students to participate in the shared communication to develop her students' English language and literacy competency. e.g.

Teacher:	And do you remember what happened to the mum?
Student1:	Flipped over.
Teacher:	What's another word that sounds like flipped over?
Student2:	She fell over.
Teacher:	I think my mum would have fainted if she saw my room looking like that.
Student1:	She fainted, the mummy fainted.
Teacher:	Yes, good boy. Fainted is the word we need. The mummy fainted. Can we all say that together?
Chorus:	Fainted!

- Teacher S: demonstrated a controlled and structured role in order to stimulate general and declarative knowledge in her students. She encouraged her students to draw on their existing factual knowledge to add to the information provided in the factual texts that were read to the students. e.g.

Teacher:	What do you think that might be?
Student1:	It's just the reflection.
Teacher:	How do you know that?
Student1:	Because when you look into a puddle you see your reflection. Not that you've fallen in.
Teacher:	Yes, he's looking into the water and it's a bit like looking into a mirror isn't it?
Student2:	A mirror on the ground.

The students' contributions to the whole group storybook reading activity were based on requests, questions, statements and responses. They were not major initiators of the communication. However, they contributed to the shared communication whenever opportunities were presented

to them. Differences noted in the students' contributions could be attributed to the approach taken by the teachers, the students' background knowledge and experience and the choice of text being read to the students.

The strategies adopted by the teachers to create opportunities for the students to develop communications around experience and knowledge were based on teacher questions, statements, and responses and also student statements and responses that referred to background experience and knowledge. All three teachers occasionally included some of their own personal experiences to enrich the storybook events, whereas students were enthusiastic and spontaneous about sharing their personal and family experiences that linked to the storybook events.

The nature and extent of the pre-primary teachers' contributions to the whole group storybook reading activity

A summary of the teachers' contributions to the whole group storybook reading activity is contained in Table 1 below.

Communication Type	Teacher J Communication Frequency	Teacher M Communication Frequency	Teacher S Communication Frequency	Mean Teacher Communication Frequency
Teacher Directives	423	395	309	375.7
Teacher Questions Text	213	226	103	180.7
Teacher Questions BEK	97	206	101	134.7
Teacher Questions C of C	295	214	131	213.3
Teacher Statements Text	60	210	73	114.3
Teacher Statements BEK	31	60	33	41.3
Teacher Statements C of C	10	20	9	13.0
Teacher Response Requests	97	116	48	87.0
Teacher Response Text	11	18	13	14.0
Teacher Response BEK	5	9	8	7.3
Teacher Response C of C	8	12	2	7.3
Teacher Response to Student	783	650	196	543.0
Total	2033	2136	1026	1731.7

BEK: Background experience and knowledge

C of C: Continuity of communication

Table 1. Comparison of Teachers' Communication Types to Whole Group Storybook Reading

The data contained in the table shows that all three teachers relied on controlling communications strategies such as directives and questions. Questions are strongly linked to the text; to background knowledge and experience and continuity of communications. All teachers used follow up questions to connect with a previous response and to maintain a continuity of dialogue with their students. The teachers generally displayed similar profiles of communication. However, there was a marked difference in the number of communications used. Teachers J and M delivered in excess of 2000 recorded communications whereas Teacher S recorded the lowest communication with approximately 1000 recorded.

Teacher directives
Each of the teachers gave directives about their expectations for the whole group storybook reading activity e.g. hands on laps, listening carefully, and hands up. The content of the teachers' directives were similar and included references to on-task behaviours. Teacher J conveyed to the students that their role was to listen to the story, and to sit quietly with their hands in front of them. Teacher M's directives contained specific instructions to the whole group and to individual students who had become distracted. Teacher M's directives resulted in behavioural adjustments by the students. Teacher S issued directives to the students that shifted from listening to the story towards greater teacher control over student behaviour during the storybook reading activity.

Teacher questions that were text related
The main text-related questions asked by the three teachers were predictive, interpretive and higher order questions that required the students to draw on prior knowledge. Questions before the storybook reading were confined to predictions about story outcomes, whereas during the story reading the teachers used the events in the story to pose a greater range of questions to the students. Teacher J made extensive use of factual recall questions after the story reading as an efficient method of gauging the students' understanding of the content of the storybook. Lengthy sequences of factual recall questions were strung together to create a series of rapid communication exchanges between the teacher and the students. This method was not employed by Teacher M and Teacher S. Teacher M asked questions about the title, author and illustrator. She also asked students questions that were linked to the illustrations in the storybook. The students used the illustrations as visual clues that allowed them to respond to her questions. Teacher S also commenced the storybook reading by asking questions about the title, author and illustrator. The teacher believed that this information was necessary as her students regularly visited the public library with family and were familiar with borrowing storybooks. She also asked questions about the meaning of words.

Teacher questions that indicated a continuity of communication
This category of teacher questions was extensively used by the three teachers and ranked highest in terms of the number of teacher turns. The main type of question asked was based on the meaning of words and events, predictions and interpretations. Teacher J asked the majority of questions. Her questions probed information from her students about particular events in the story. The questions also initiated extended patterns of communication that encouraged reasoned and thoughtful responses from the students. Teacher M's questions were usually confined to the meaning of words and the prediction of immediate storybook events. The teacher provided continued assistance to the students by pointing to the illustrations that allowed them to make responses. Teacher S's questions were constructed to extend teacher-student communication. Her communications were more detailed than the students' responses and they consisted of detailed

utterances that created student interest in the story being read and added information to their knowledge and understanding.

Personal experience questions about the student, family, or the teacher were asked regularly by the teachers. The questions asked by Teacher J would link the events in the story to the students' personal experiences. Teacher M placed her students in similar circumstances similar to the characters in the story and asked her students, "What would you do if this was happening to you?" This was an infrequently used form of questioning by Teacher S, although she did include some questions about her personal experiences that linked to the story events. Teacher J and M made regular use of yes/no questions. Teacher J tended to ask questions that encouraged ongoing communication by repeating a student response and inviting them to contribute further to the conversation with a more elaborated and more descriptive response.

Teacher statements that were text related

Teacher statements that were text related was not a main form of communication used by Teachers J, M and S. The teachers made statements about the storybook title, author, and illustrator before the reading commenced. In classroom J, the statements were intended to focus the students' thinking on what the story was about and to create student interest. Her statements formed part of the preparation before the story reading. Teacher M used statements to explain what the story was going to be about, and to acquaint the students with the storybook title, author and illustrator. Her explanations were considered necessary as her students had limited experiences with storybooks and were not familiar with some of the events that occurred in the storybooks she read to her students. Teacher S also made statements to inform the students about the names of the author and the illustrator. Teacher M and Teacher S extended their statements to elaborate on the meaning of story events and word meanings. Their elaborations provided new information to the students. Teacher S also referred to features in the illustrations that were not described in the story to add further relevance and meaning.

Teacher evaluative responses to a student communication

Teacher evaluative response to a student communication was used extensively by the three teachers. All three teachers' responses were similar in content and included the acceptance of the student communication with an accompanying reinforcing comment. The reinforcement from the teacher helped to maintain the momentum of the student communication and create extended patterns of communication between the teacher and the students. Teachers nearly always repeated the student response; this was considered a necessary practice as it allowed all students to hear what an individual student had just said. Sitting on the floor in front of the teacher's chair with their quiet voices made it difficult for all the group members to hear what had being said. By repeating the student response the teacher maintained on task behaviours and student interest in the story reading. It also encouraged continued communication from the students.

The nature and extent of pre-primary students' contributions to the whole group storybook reading activity

A summary of the students' contributions to the whole group storybook reading activity is contained in Table 2 below.

Communication Type	Student J Communication Frequency	Student M Communication Frequency	Student S Communication Frequency	Mean Student Communication Frequency

Student Requests	56	96	50	67.3
Student Questions Text	22	22	18	20.7
Student Questions BEK	2	10	11	7.7
Student Questions C of C	2	8	2	4.0
Student Statements Text	66	148	41	85.0
Student Statements BEK	69	79	31	59.7
Student Statements C of C	9	74	8	30.3
Student Responses Directives	11	11	3	8.0
Student Responses Text related question/statement	399	430	251	360.0
Student Responses BEK	102	171	49	107.3
Student Responses C of C	431	338	168	312.3
Student Responses	33	25	7	21.7
Student Communication				
Total	1202	1412	639	1084.3

BEK: Background experience and knowledge
C of C: Continuity of communication
TRQ/S: Text related question/statement

Table 2. Comparison of Students' Communication Types to Whole Group Storybook Reading

The data contained in the table show that student communications were primarily in response to a teacher initiated communication, although approximately 15 percent of recorded student communications was in the statement category. Student communication responses involving text related questions and responses aimed at maintaining the student-teacher dialogue were the most frequently used methods of communication. The student statements were text related and referred to their background experience and knowledge demonstrating the students' willingness to contribute to whole group communications when the subject area is familiar to them. The pattern of student communications was similar in each of the classrooms, but the absolute number of student communications in classroom S was approximately 50 percent of the number of student communications in classrooms J and M respectively.

Student requests
Student requests were student initiated communications and were made by students from classrooms J, M and S. The student requests were based on indications about the visibility of the storybook, indications about an intention to communicate with the teacher, talking, chatting and

calling out. The student requests also referenced behavioural aspects of other students that impeded their ability to see and hear the teacher reading the story. The student communications were of limited duration and did not account for extensive communications involving the teacher and students.

Student questions that were text related
Student questions that were text related, included questions that were predictive, interpretive and higher order. Questions about the meaning of events and words only occurred in classroom S. However, the number of student turns was low in this category of student communication. The student questions that were predictive, interpretive and higher order had the intention of increasing the students' understanding of a storybook event. Questions that were asked about the meaning of events and words were principally by students wanting a clearer or further explanation for words that they were not familiar with. Both types of student text related questions promoted further student communication with the teacher and other students.

Student statements that were text related
Student statements that were text related included statements that were based on factual recall, prediction and interpretation, and statements about storybook illustrations. Student statements based on factual recall occurred in classrooms J and M, and were asked after storybook reading and during storybook reading respectively. Most students participated in the communication statements that varied from short direct statements about storybook events and longer descriptions of the events. The student statements about predictions and interpretations were made by students in classrooms J, M, and S. There was twice the number of student turns from students in classroom M. In classrooms J and M, the students' predictions about storybook events were volunteered by the students. In classroom S, the students used parts of the text as clues to predict outcomes from the storybook events that had been read. The student statements were effective and resulted in collaborative communication between the students, because each student statement provided a foundation for each successive student communication.

Student statements based on the storybook illustrations were used in each of the three classrooms. The students from classroom J made statements that described the storybook illustration and most students contributed to the communication. Communication links developed between the students. Statements made by students from classroom M confirmed the detail of the storybook illustration and evoked patterns of communication that involved other students and the pre-primary teacher. In classroom M, the students' statements explained the content of the illustrations and provided an account of their interpretation of the illustration. The construction of the student turns in classroom S consisted of a statement containing simple sentences.

Student statements that indicated a continuity of communication
Student responses that indicated a continuity of communication were based on responses about factual recall, prediction and interpretation, meaning of events and words, and self, family, teacher or pre-primary. Factual recall responses occurred after storybook reading in classroom J. The student responses consisted of linked student turns that provided continuity in the discussion about classroom recollections from the storybook. There were no apparent student factual recall responses from the students in classrooms M and S.

Students from classroom J produced linked response turns, consisting of several utterances that formed logical descriptive sentences that were particularly evident after storybook reading. The collaborative communication was characterised by the continuity of the student-teacher communication. In classroom M, the responses consisted of linked communication patterns and a

large number of student turns varying in length from a single utterance to short sentences. The students' responses from classroom S were direct answers to a teacher question that led to further communication from the teacher or peers. The duration of the linked student communications was two or three exchanges, involving the students and the pre-primary teacher. Student responses based on the meanings of events and words occurred during storybook reading in classroom S. An examination of the student responses showed the different meanings that different students gave to storybook words and events.

Student responses that included references to self, family, teacher, or pre-primary, occurred in each of the classrooms. In classroom J, the responses were made before and after storybook reading; in classroom M the responses were made before, during, and after storybook reading; and in classroom S the responses were made before and after storybook reading. The student responses in classrooms J, M, and S were mainly references to self and family and generally detailed a former family event that paralleled a storybook event. The students' communications were detailed and lengthy.

Student evaluative responses to a student communication
Student evaluative responses to a student communication were an infrequent category of student communication in classrooms J and M. In classroom J, the student responses were based on acceptance with a reinforcing comment after storybook reading, and rejection or disagreement of a student comment before and after storybook reading. The exchanges were usually dyadic and of short duration, with a limited number of communication turns from each student. In classroom M, the student responses were based on rejection or disagreement before and during storybook reading. The communication exchanges consisted of several communication turns, involving two or three students.

Discussion
The practice of whole group storybook reading observed in the three pre-primary classrooms can be perceived as a ritualistic event, because they occurred at a scheduled time each day. They were also routinely carried out at the mat area in each of the classrooms. Results of this study suggest that the pre-primary classroom is a social environment where there are numerous opportunities for the students to regularly participate in shared learning experiences. These shared learning experiences may be teacher directed or student initiated. The Vygotskian framework of socially constructed learning is evident in the whole group storybook reading activity. Teachers deliberately created a social setting for the story reading context by reading a series of storybooks that linked to a particular unit of work; inviting special visitors to the pre-primary to interact with the students; organising class excursions to reinforce the topic and decorating the classroom with the students' artwork.

Teachers spent a considerable amount of their initial communicative contributions on their expectations of student behaviour during the storybook reading activity. However, as the year progressed, the teachers relinquished some control and presented more opportunities for the students to engage in shared communications. When the students were invited to include personal knowledge and experiences, lengthy conversations resulted between students. There was also evidence of scaffolding by teachers and peers in each of the classrooms. The teachers made connections with other storybooks that had been previously read to provide a platform for more detailed and extended communications between teacher and students. Students in each of the classrooms built on the personal experiences shared by their peers by adding to the conversations

with their own personal experiences. This added much to the quality and length of student communication.

The whole group storybook reading activity was regarded by the teachers as an extension of their language and literacy program. Teachers operated within the students' 'zone of proximal development' by offering explanations of word definitions; by providing clear examples of word meanings and elaborating on personal experiences. Predictive questions were used by the teachers to increase the collaborative communication with the students. All teachers' questions to students that were text related contained predictive and interpretive elements which operated within the students' understanding, and often extended the students' learning and development of language.

Teachers perceived the storybook reading activity to be valuable in developing listening skills, vocabulary, meaning making, comprehension and pre reading strategies such as picture clues, familiarity with text and word recognition. The social context of the storybook reading facilitated confidence with speaking and the sharing of personal knowledge and experiences. It also established an interest in storybooks, allowed students to discuss emotions and feelings by reflecting on the characters in the story, and reinforced positive social dynamics within the classroom, through laughter and a sense of fun and excitement during the storybook reading activity. In conclusion, this study found that the three teachers considered the socially constructed whole group storybook reading activity to be a valuable learning experience in facilitating language and literacy development. Moreover, when the students were able to include personal knowledge and experience in the communication, teachers were able to relinquish some of their control over classroom talk and allow lengthy and insightful conversations to be shared among the students.

It could be anticipated that the pre-primary students' needs would change as the year progressed. Maturity, confidence and an increase in cognitive, social and physical skills would necessitate some change in the teachers' goals for the students' learning and development. Differences were generally noted in the teachers' overall approach to the level of shared communication that occurred during the story reading activity. Teachers provided additional opportunities for student participation and shared communicative contributions. The pre-primary students who were initially enthusiastic and spontaneous about participating and engaging in shared communications capitalised on this additional opportunity to communicate and eagerly shared their personal knowledge and experience with their peers in the story book context. The differences in teacher and student contributions throughout the year could be attributed to changes in teachers' goals for the students and how these impacted on the communication and the increased skill level of the students. The students communication increased as the year progressed in each of the pre-primary classrooms.

Implications for learning and teaching

This study highlighted the significance of the whole group storybook reading activity in pre-primary classrooms. It can be regarded as a valuable opportunity for developing the communicative contributions made by young students. Teachers who wish to promote reciprocal and shared communication through social interaction and relinquish some control over classroom talk should include questions that allow the students to share personal knowledge and personal experience. When students respond to a teacher's question that requires them to include personal experience, the teacher may not readily know the answer to the question asked, they can only anticipate what the student might say. This situation allows the student some control over the

classroom talk and may allow them to guide the direction of the communication, by opening the conversation to other members of the group.

If the pre primary teacher's approach to learning is based on socially constructed learning, it is essential that considerable attention be given to the daily programming of activities in order to establish learning experiences that have the potential for providing intellectually challenging communicative opportunities for pre-primary students. In doing so, teachers may be encouraged to relinquish their dominance over classroom talk and provide genuine opportunities for reciprocal communication. Communicative interactions that accommodate these considerations invite young students to engage in purposeful and meaningful learning experiences. It also facilitates the development of conversational skills and discussion strategies that are necessary life skills.

References

Alvermann, D. E., Dillon, D. R., & O'Brien, D. G. (1987). *Using discussion to promote reading comprehension.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Anstey, M., & Bull, G. (2004). *The literacy labyrinth.* Australia: Pearson Education Australia.

Beed, P. L., Hawkins, E. M., & Roller, C. M., (1991). *Moving learners toward independence: the power of scaffolding instruction*. The Reading Teacher 44: 648-655.

Bruner, J., & Harste, H. (Eds). (1987). *Making sense. The child's construction of the world.* New York. Methuen.

Cazden, C. B., (1988). *Classroom discourse:Tthe language of teaching and learning.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Cochran-Smith, M. (1984). *The making of a reader*. Norwood, NJ: Albex Publishing Corporation.

David, T. (1990). *Under five- Under educated?* Milton Keynes. Open University Press.

Dickinson, D. K., & Keebler, R. (1989). *Variation in pre-school teachers' styles of reading books.* Discourse Processes. 12: 353-375.

Dillon, J. T., (1982). *The multidisciplinary study of questioning*. Journal of Educational Psychology. 74: 147-165.

Dillon, J. T., (1988). *Questioning and teaching*. New York, New York Teachers College Press.

Edwards-Groves, C., (2003) *On task: Focused literacy learning.* NSW Australia. PETA

Eeds, M., & Wells, D. (1989). *Grand conversations: An exploration of meaning construction in literature groups.* Research in the Teaching of English. 23: 4-29.

Fleer, M. (1992). *Identifying teacher-child interaction which scaffolds scientific thinking in young children.* Science Education. 76: 373-397.

Howe, A. (1988). *Expanding horizons: Teaching and learning through whole class discussion.* National Association for the Teaching of English, Sheffield. UK.

Mason J., & Au, K. (1990). *Reading instruction for today*. Glenview. Scott Foresman.

Newkirk, T., & McLure, P. (1992). *Listening in: Open talk about books (and other things).* Portsmouth, NH. Heinemann.

O'Flahavan, J.F., Stein, C., Wiencek, B., & Marks, T. (1992). *Intellectual development in peer discussion about literature: An exploration of the teacher's role.* Final report to the Trustees of the National Council of Teachers of English. Urbana IL.

Peterson, R., & Eeds, M. (1990). *Grand conversations and literature groups in action*. New York. Scholastic.

Renshaw, P. D. (1992). *The reading apprenticeship of preschool children*. In J. Cullen & J. Williamson (Eds.), The early years: Policy, research and practice. West Perth WA. Meerlinga Young Children's Foundation.

Reutzel R., & Cooter, R. (2004). Teaching children to read. New Jersey. Pearson Education.

Teale, W.H., & Martinez, M. (1986). *Teacher's storybook reading styles: Evidence and implications.* Reading Teacher. 2: 23-41.

Vygotsky, L. S.(1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA. The MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press.

Wells, G. (1990). *Creating the conditions to encourage literate thinking.* Educational Leadership, 47(6): 13-17.

Wertch, J. V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of the mind.* Cambridge. Harvard University Press.