

Discourse in Context

CONTEMPORARY APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Series Editor: Li Wei

Contemporary Applied Linguistics Volume 1: Language Teaching and Learning,
edited by Vivian Cook and Li Wei

Contemporary Applied Linguistics Volume 2: Linguistics for the Real World,
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Forthcoming:

Contemporary Applied Linguistics Volume 4, edited by Dina Tsagari

Discourse in Context

Contemporary Applied
Linguistics Volume 3

EDITED BY

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B L O O M S B U R Y
LONDON • NEW DELHI • NEW YORK • SYDNEY

Bloomsbury Academic

An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

50 Bedford Square
London
WC1B 3DP
UK

1385 Broadway
New York
NY 10018
USA

www.bloomsbury.com

First published 2014

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: HB: 978-1-6235-6305-9

ePub: 978-1-6235-6235-9

PDF: 978-1-6235-6301-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

To come

Typeset by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India
Printed and bound in Great Britain

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Intervening in contexts of schooling

David Rose and J. R. Martin

1 Introduction

Building on Halliday's view of linguistics as an ideologically committed form of social action, a major goal of language research in the Sydney School (Hyon 1996; Johns 2002; Martin 2000; Rose 2008, 2011; Rose and Martin 2012) has been to analyse and redesign the pedagogic contexts through which school knowledge is acquired and evaluated. The research has drawn on two complex theories of social context, including the model of text-in-context developed within systemic functional linguistic theory (SFL) and the model of pedagogic contexts developed in the sociological theory of Basil Bernstein (1975, 1990, 2000). On the one hand, the Sydney School research has applied the model of text-in-context to describe the systems of 'knowledge genres' that students are expected to read and write in school. On the other, it has adapted Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse to describe the 'curriculum genres' (Christie 2002) through which control of the written genres of schooling are acquired and evaluated.

The study reported here applied these theories in a large-scale educational intervention in Australian primary and secondary schools. The goal of the study was to measure the effectiveness of genre-based literacy pedagogy developed in the Sydney School research. Approximately 400 teachers were trained in the pedagogy over the course of the 2010 school year, in western NSW. Teachers implemented the pedagogy and measured their students' literacy growth by analysing their writing at the beginning and end of the training programme. The chapter begins by outlining the Sydney School model of text-in-context, Bernstein's theory of pedagogic contexts and the context of the study. The model of text-in-context is then applied to analysing students' writing growth, and the overall findings of the educational intervention are presented and discussed.

2 The Sydney school model of text-in-context

Halliday (2013: 215) rehearses the question ‘Can we actually model and represent and interpret context within the framework of what is generally involved as a theory of language?’, noting that his teacher Firth thought you could and that he thinks so too, ‘if only because it’s the best chance you’ve got’. His remarks reflect the long-standing concern in Firthian and neo-Firthian linguistics with modelling context as a level of meaning (Monaghan 1979). As Firth comments (1957/1968: 200–1), ‘The meaning of texts is dealt with by a dispersal of analysis at mutually congruent series of levels, beginning with contexts of situation and proceeding through collocation, syntax (including colligation) to phonology and phonetics . . .’. Halliday, more influenced by Hjelmslev (1961) and W. S. Allen than Firth in this regard, had modelled this dispersal as a realization hierarchy such as that outlined in Figure 13.1, with phonology realizing lexicogrammar, lexicogrammar realizing semantics, and semantics realizing context. This privileges context as a stratum of meaning in Halliday’s model (akin to Hjelmslev’s connotative semiotics), realized through patterns of language choice (e.g. Halliday 2005).

Halliday’s linguistic perspective on context, in which language construes, is construed by and over time reconstrues and is reconstrued by context, can be termed supervenient. It contrasts with the circumvenient perspective whereby language is

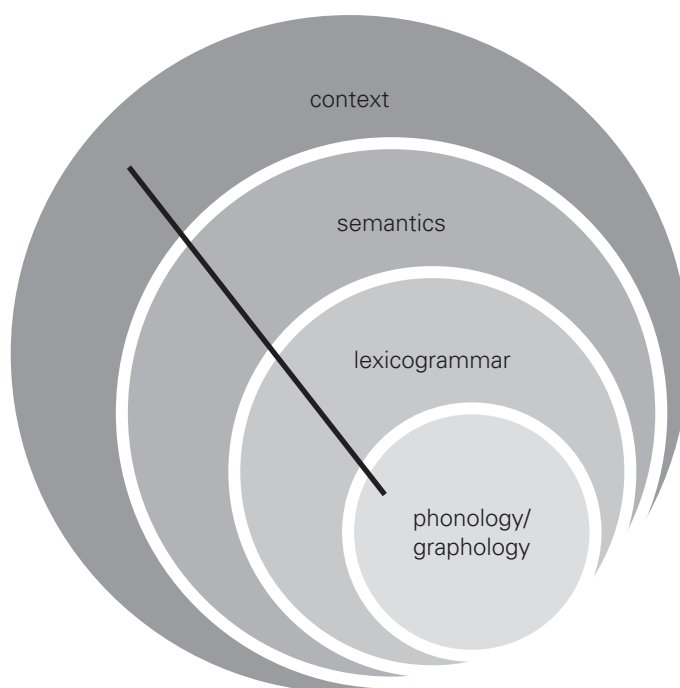


FIGURE 13.1 *Context as a stratum of meaning.*

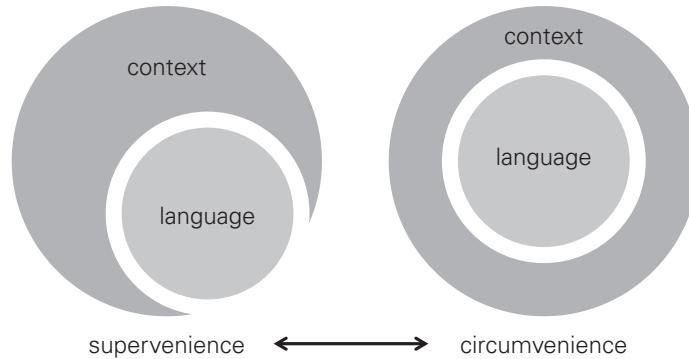


FIGURE 13.2 *Supervenience and circumvenience.*

conceived as embedded in context, where context is treated as extra-linguistic and not itself modelled in linguistic terms as a system of meaning. The two perspectives are outlined in Figure 13.2, using co-tangential circles for the supervenient perspective and concentric circles for the circumvenient one.¹

Martin (e.g. 1985, 1992) further develops the supervenient perspective, suggesting that Halliday's stratum of context needs itself to be stratified into two levels which he calls register and genre (Figure 13.3).² In doing so, Martin is proposing a model in which context can be mapped as a system of genres (Christie and Martin 1997; Martin and Rose 2008), realizing through field, tenor and mode systems (collectively referred to as register). One of his reasons for stratifying context as genre and register is to foster Halliday's proposals (e.g. 1978) for using intrinsic functionality (ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning within language) to map extrinsic functionality (field, tenor and mode respectively) as dimensions of context (Martin 2001), without having to incorporate considerations of genre that muddy the waters (for argumentation see Martin 1999, 2001). Also significant is Martin's recontextualization of Halliday's semantics (cf. Figure 13.1) as discourse semantics (e.g. Martin 1992; Martin and Rose 2003), by way of emphasizing that register and genre are realized through meaning relations in text which regularly extend beyond the clause. Context is not in other words a pattern of lexicogrammatical patterns, but a pattern of a pattern of lexicogrammatical patterns – the basic unit of analysis in contextual linguistics has to be text, not clause.

One strategy for mapping the genres of a culture is to group them according to their broad social goals and distinguish them by their local organization (Martin and Rose 2008). Figure 13.4 presents such a map of genres that students are expected to read and write in school, identified in Sydney School research, that we have referred to as 'knowledge genres'. They are classified first in terms of three broad social goals: engaging readers, informing them and evaluating texts or points of view. Of course any text has multiple purposes; it is its primary social goal that generates the recognizable staging of the genre, the stages that participants expect to go through to achieve the goal.

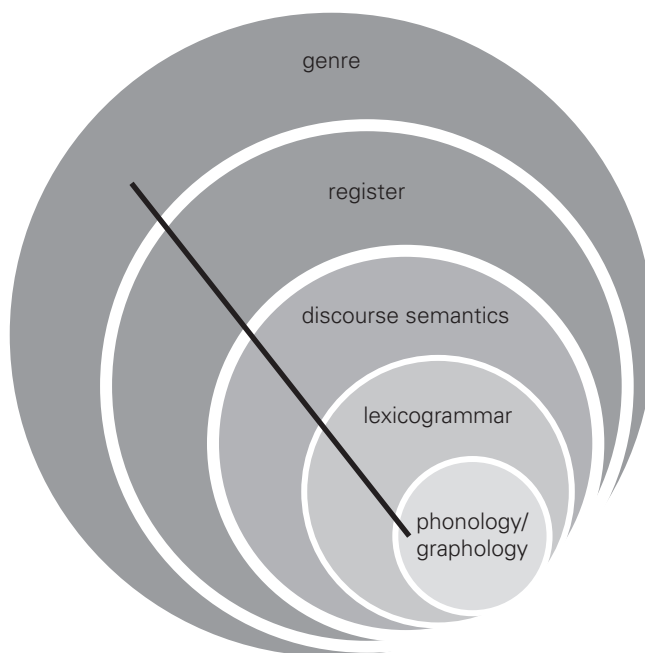


FIGURE 13.3 Martin's supervenient model of language and social context.

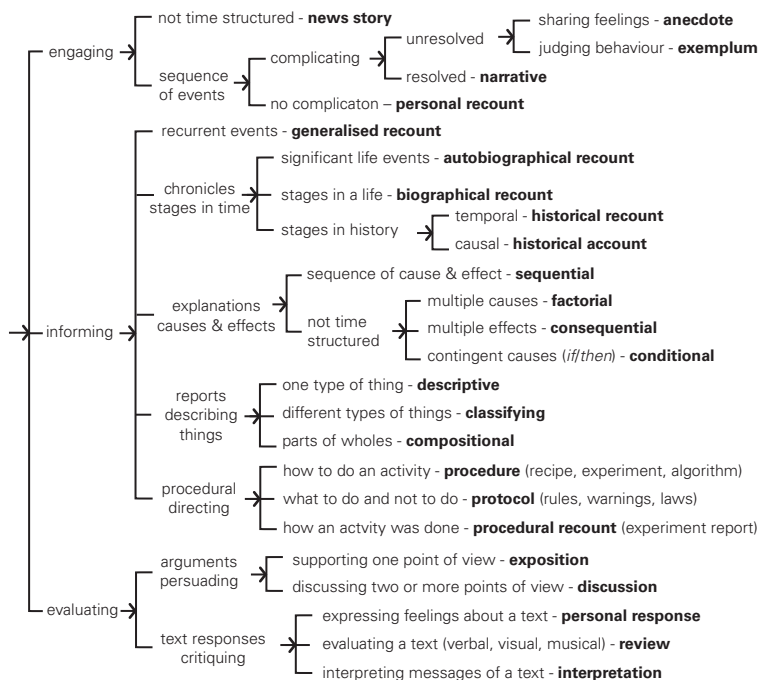


FIGURE 13.4 Knowledge genres in the school.

3 Bernstein's theory of pedagogic contexts

Bernstein (1975, 1990, 2000) provides two complementary perspectives on pedagogic contexts, as institutional structures, and as rules governing institutional practices. From the structural perspective, he describes education systems as a 'pedagogic device' operating at three levels: (1) fields of production of knowledge, primarily in the upper echelons of academe; (2) recontextualizing fields, where this knowledge is transformed for pedagogic purposes, for example, teacher training or textbook publishing; and (3) fields of reproduction, where recontextualized knowledge is transmitted and acquired by learners. From the perspective of sociological rules, Bernstein distinguishes (1) distributive rules regulating the distribution of resources to social groups, including discursive resources distributed by education; (2) recontextualizing rules regulating the transformation of knowledge into pedagogic discourse; and (3) evaluative rules regulating transmission and acquisition of knowledge.

These three levels of rules are interrelated. Evaluation regulates the distribution of different types and levels of education to different groups of students through their school years, and hence to professional, vocational or manual levels of occupations. Distributive rules in turn shape the forms in which knowledge is recontextualized for different groups of students, according to their evaluations, for example, as detailed scientific knowledge for students destined for science-based occupations or as simple hands-on science activities for less successful students.

All these dimensions of the pedagogic device are realized in the school as what Bernstein terms pedagogic discourse, in which he distinguishes two aspects: an instructional discourse 'which creates specialised skills and their relationship to each other', and a regulative discourse 'which creates order, relations and identity' (2000: 46). Bernstein emphasizes that the instructional is embedded in and dominated by the regulative, that the acquisition of knowledge is regulated by the social order and relations underpinning pedagogic discourse.

From the standpoint of genre and register theory outlined above, Bernstein's use of the term discourse refers to fields of social activity, coloured by tenor.³ Thus, pedagogic discourse can be interpreted in terms of pedagogic register, including sequences of learning activities (field), pedagogic relations between learners and teachers (tenor), and modalities of learning – spoken, written, visual and manual (mode). These three dimensions are summarized in Figure 13.5. In this perspective, it is the social relations enacted over time in pedagogic activities that create 'order, relations and identity'.

The instructional discourse thus includes the fields of knowledge (or skills) acquired through these pedagogic activities, relations and modalities. In social semiotic terms, knowledge is projected by the pedagogic register, as the act of saying projects a locution, or thinking projects ideas (in Halliday's 1994/2004 terms). On this model, knowledge is projected by activities of teaching and

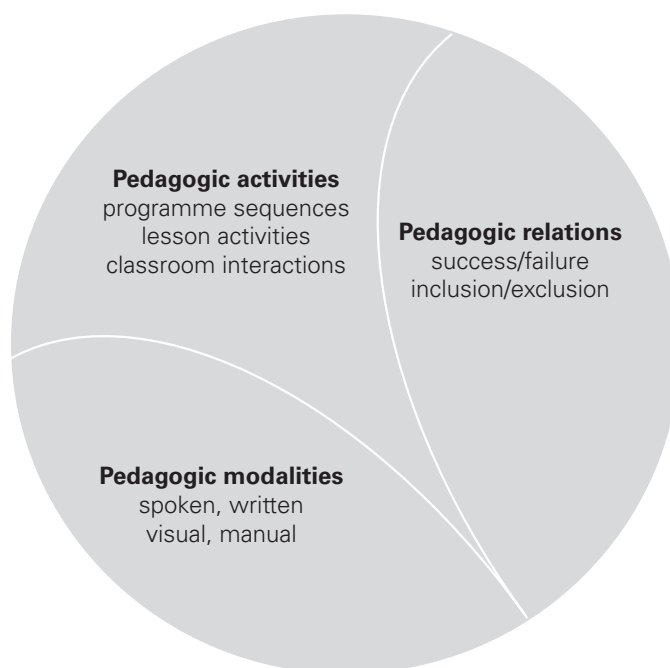


FIGURE 13.5 *Pedagogic register.*

learning. There are thus two fields involved in Bernstein's 'instructional discourse': the field of pedagogic activity and the field of knowledge projected by it. The entire configuration of pedagogic activities, relations, modalities and projected knowledge constitutes a genre that Christie (2002) has termed 'curriculum genre', illustrated in Figure 13.6.

As Figure 13.6 suggests, it is not only knowledge that learners acquire through pedagogic activities, relations and modalities, but identities as learners that are more or less successful, and more or less included in the community of learning in the school. Differentiation in learner identities is a product of (1) continual evaluation, which positions them on a hierarchy of success and failure, (2) varying degrees of engagement in lesson activities and classroom interactions, and (3) varying control over modalities of learning, particularly reading and writing. By these means, pedagogic discourse creates an unequal social order and asymmetric social relations. The creation of differential learner identities internalizes and thus naturalizes the social order produced by the pedagogic device, as Bernstein (2000:5) points out, 'How do schools individualize failure and legitimize inequalities? The answer is clear: failure is attributed to inborn facilities (cognitive, affective) or to the cultural deficits relayed by the family which come to have the force of inborn facilities'.

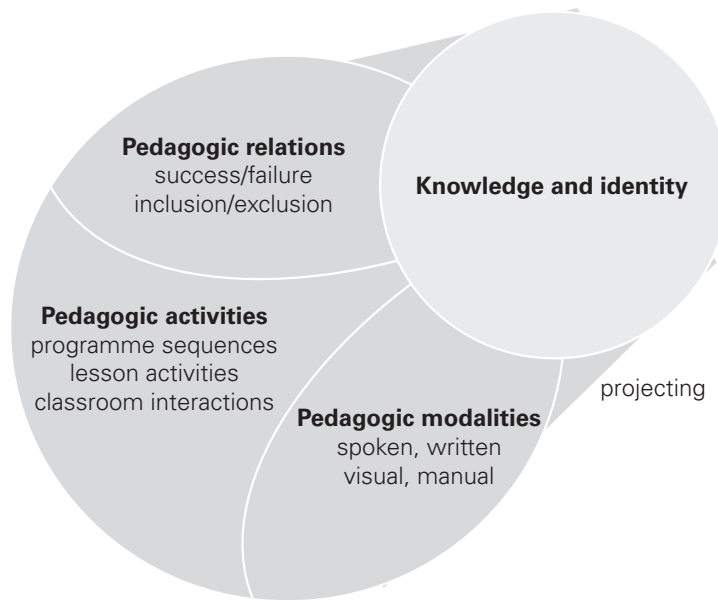


FIGURE 13.6 *Curriculum genres.*

4 The context of the study: A genre-based literacy intervention

The aim of the intervention reported on here was to subvert the hierarchy of success and failure and creation of differential learner identities, by equipping teachers with tools to enable all their students to succeed with the same levels of reading and writing tasks. The genre-based methodology employed to do so is known as Reading to Learn (or R2L), which provides three levels of guidance for reading and writing tasks. In the first level, teachers prepare students to comprehend challenging texts, by giving an oral summary of the field as it unfolds through the genre, in terms that all students can understand. At this level, students are also guided to write successful texts, by jointly deconstructing the stages and phases of model texts in target genres, and jointly constructing new texts organized with the same stages and phases (for stages and phases of knowledge genres see Martin and Rose 2008; Rose 2005). In the second level, teachers guide students to read passages of text in detail, by preparing them to recognize groups of words in each sentence, and elaborating on their meanings as students identify each word group. At this level, students are also guided to use what they have learnt from reading, by jointly rewriting the text passage that has been read in detail, using the same grammatical patterns for literary or persuasive texts, or the same field for factual texts. In the third and most intensive level, teachers guide

students to manually manipulate wordings, by cutting up sentences they have been reading, and rearranging them. At this level, they also practise spelling the words they have cut up, and rewrite the sentences they have been manipulating. The Reading to Learn programme thus includes nine designed curriculum genres, as follows.

	Reading	Writing	
1st level	Preparing for Reading	Joint Construction	Individual Construction
2nd level	Detailed Reading	Joint Rewriting	Individual Rewriting
3rd level	Sentence Making	Spelling	Sentence Writing

In Individual Construction, students practise writing new texts with the same stages and phases that have been guided in Joint Construction, before attempting a completely independent writing task. Similarly in Individual Rewriting, students practise the same task that has been guided in Joint Rewriting.

These curriculum genres are practised in daily and weekly programmes, with the goal of students independently writing a new genre each month or so. The programme as a whole constitutes a curriculum macro-genre, with variable pathways through sub-genres depending on need, schematized in Figure 13.7. The teacher training programme is designed for teachers to learn and practise each curriculum genre in manageable

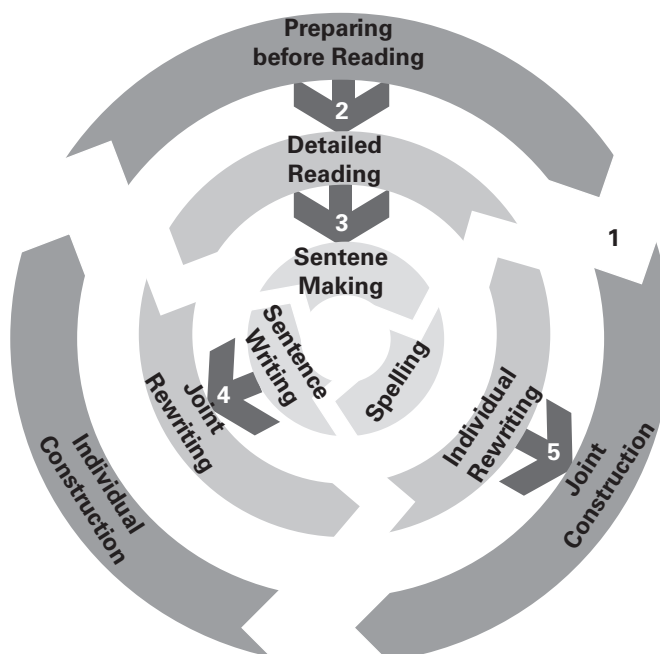


FIGURE 13.7 Sequencing options for R2L curriculum genres.

steps. Face-to-face training workshops provide the knowledge about pedagogy and knowledge about language needed to select and analyse texts, plan and implement lessons, and evaluate students' reading and writing.

5 Data analysis

Students' growth is assessed by teachers in the Reading to Learn programme, through formative testing of reading comprehension in each lesson unit and through summative testing of writing towards the end of each 10 week school term. The writing assessment developed in the programme is designed to accurately reveal the language resources that each student brings to the writing task. Teachers identify these language resources in students' writing, using 14 criteria. The criteria are derived from the SFL model of text-in-context outlined above, recontextualized to facilitate a simple, practicable text analysis for each piece of writing.

At the level of genre, evaluation focuses on the social purpose, stages and phases of the text. At the level of register, it focuses on the text's field, tenor and mode. At the level of discourse semantics, lexical, appraisal (evaluative), conjunction and reference resources are identified. At the level of grammar, the variety and accuracy of grammatical resources are evaluated, and at the level of graphic features, spelling, punctuation and graphic presentation are marked. The sequence of analysis is thus from the 'top-down', from genre to register, to discourse semantic resources that realize field, tenor and mode, to grammatical patterns that realize discourse semantics, to graphological features that express these patterns in writing. Questions are used to interrogate each of these criteria, summarized in Table 13.1.

Students' writing samples are compared with analysed writing exemplars at each school year level, and each criterion is given a score from 0–3 against the standard in the exemplar. Teachers are asked to assess the writing of students from low-, middle- and high-achieving groups, in order to compare the growth of each group in the class. Samples of these students' independent writing are assessed each term (four times a year), using the 14 criteria on a score sheet, exemplified in Figure 13.8. The totals at the bottom of the score sheet give a clear indication of each student's progress through the year. They also clearly show the rate of progress of the whole class and of the low-, middle- and high-achieving groups in the class.

By way of illustration, Texts 1–2 illustrate growth for one low achieving student in Year 7/8. The pre-intervention Text 1 is a very brief personal response to a book. The post-intervention Text 2 is the type of text response known as interpretation, in which the novel is appreciated and its themes are interpreted.

We'll deploy the model of language in context to analyse the improvement exemplified in Texts 1–2. Text 1 is the genre known as a personal response (see Figure 13.4 above). This is a typical response produced by weaker students when asked to evaluate a text (Rothery and Macken-Horarik 1991; Martin and Rose 2008). In terms of appraisal, it is characterized by expressions of personal feelings and reactions to the text (Martin and Rose 2007; Martin and White 2005). Appraisals are marked in bold in Text.

Table 13.1 Writing assessment criteria

CONTEXT	[Quick judgements are made about these context criteria.]
Purpose	<i>How appropriate and well-developed is the genre for the writing purpose?</i>
Staging	<i>Does it go through appropriate stages, and how well is each stage developed?</i>
Phases	<i>How well organized is the sequence of phases in the text?</i>
Field	<i>How well does the writer understand and explain the field in factual texts, construct the plot, settings and characters in stories, or describe the issues in arguments?</i>
Tenor	<i>How well does the writer engage the reader in stories, persuade in arguments, or objectively inform in factual texts?</i>
Mode	<i>How highly written is the language for the school stage? Is it too spoken?</i>
DISCOURSE	[Discourse criteria are marked in the text, to give an accurate measure.]
Ideation	<i>What are the writer's lexical resources? How well is lexis used to construct the field?</i>
Appraisal	<i>What are the writer's appraisal resources? How well is appraisal used to engage, persuade, evaluate?</i>
Conjunction	<i>Is there a clear logical relation between all sentences?</i>
Identification	<i>Is it clear who or what is referred to in each sentence?</i>
GRAMMAR and GRAPHIC FEATURES	[Grammar features are judged overall rather than one-by-one.]
Grammar	<i>Is there an appropriate variety of sentence and word group structures for the school stage? Are the grammatical conventions of written English used accurately?</i>
Spelling	<i>How accurately spelt are core words and non-core words?</i>
Punctuation	<i>How appropriately and accurately is punctuation used?</i>
Presentation	<i>Are paragraphs used? How legible is the writing? Is the layout clear? Are illustrations/diagrams used appropriately?</i>

Text 1: Pre R2L personal response

In this book **I like that I could connect with it** as **it's suitable for my age**. By the end **it dragged on a bit to much for my liking**.

Of the three evaluations here, two are reactions to the text – positively appreciating the text's appeal to the reader *I like that I could connect with it* (reaction: impact), but negatively appreciating its emotional effect *it dragged on a bit to much for my liking*

Student names	Jayden				Ada				Corrine				Dean				Robin				Vivian			
	Pre writing	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Pre writing	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Pre writing	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Pre writing	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Pre writing	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Pre writing	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
PURPOSE	0	1	1	2	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3
STAGING	0	1	1	2	0	1	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3
PHASES	0	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
FIELD	0	1	1	2	0	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
TENOR	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
MODE	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	3	1	1	2	3	2	2	3	3
LEXIS	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
APPRAISAL	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
CONJUNCTION	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	3	1	0	2	3	0	1	2	3	2	2	3	3
REFERENCE	0	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	3	2	3	3	3
GRAMMAR	0	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
SPELLING	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	3
PUNCTUATION	0	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	3	3
PRESENTATION	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	0	1	2	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	3	3
TOTAL	3	14	19	25	9	19	24	28	13	15	22	27	15	22	28	35	22	26	31	38	28	33	37	40

FIGURE 13.8 Sample score sheet for writing assessment.

In this book I like that I could connect with it as it's suitable for my age. By the end it dragged on a bit too much for my liking.

(PRE R2L)

TEXT 1 Pre-intervention writing sample by a low-achieving student in Year 7/8.

Review
"The Recruit" ①

"The Recruit" is a fantastic novel by Robert Muchamore, which was first published in 2004. This realistic narrative is for young teenagers who would easily relate to this story as the characters face problems of today's teenagers.

The main character, James Choke (Adams), goes through tragedy and adventure through out his young life. Through the novel, he has to adjust to his losses in life. He finds out who he really is and discovers a lot of new things in life.

After being separated from his sister (Lauren), James had to live in an orphanage. Towards the end of the narrative James becomes a spy and knows what it feels like to belong and make new friends in a whole new environment.

The author Robert Muchamore made the novel very realistic by making James' life not so easy. James had a rough life until something amazing happened to him and totally changed

his life. Many young teenagers go through the same problems as James does. Through out this novel the composer has used informal, modern language that would appeal to teenage audience. There is swearing, references to popular culture and references to technology. The third person narration gives a lot of information to the audience. It describes the characters from an objective perspective.

Every now and then, the novel made me feel sad and angry. ... knowing what James had to go through in life I would have liked if the author mentioned Kerry a bit more. I believe this story is written well and outstanding novel with believable plot, that many young people would enjoy.

Fantastic effort!

Kopio

TEXT 2 Post-intervention writing sample by the same student in Year 7/8.

(reaction: quality). The third positively appreciates the text's value *it's suitable for my age* (valuation). One evaluation is amplified, *a bit to much* (graduation), and all are sourced explicitly to the writer (engagement). Ideationally, the only lexical items realized here are 'this book' and 'my age'. The lack of any description of the text and its contents is inadequate for a text response. Textually, there are several personal references *I, I, my, my*, and text references *this book, it, it's, the end, it*, which serve to contextualize the response interpersonally (to the writer) and ideationally (to the book).

In terms of tenor variables of status (un/equal) and contact (close/distant), this very personal response implies a familiar peer relationship with the reader; in terms of field, it lacks any description of the book; in terms of mode, it is context-dependent speech written down. As this student is soon to enter secondary school, the tenor would be regarded as too familiar for its academic context, the field as inadequate, the mode as far too spoken and the genre as inappropriate for the task of evaluating a literary text.

Text 2 is an interpretation, which appreciates a novel and interprets its themes. This is the canonical genre of literature studies in the secondary school. Interpretations typically begin with an Evaluation, followed by a Synopsis of elements of the text that carry its themes and conclude with a Reaffirmation of the evaluation. Again, appraisals are in bold.

Text 2: Post R2L review

Evaluation	'The Recruit' is a fantastic novel by Robert Muchamore, which was first published in 2004. This realistic narrative is for young teenagers who would easily relate to this story as the characters face problems of today's teenagers.
Synopsis themes	The main character, James Choke (adams), goes through tragedy and adventure throughout his young life. Through the novel, he has to adjust to his losses in life. He finds out who he really is and discovers a lot of new things in life.
plot	After being separated from his sister (Lauren), James had to live in an orphanage. Towards the end of the narrative, James becomes a spy and knows what it feels like to belong and make new friends in a whole new environment.
Reaffirmation relevance	The author Robert Muchamore made the novel very realistic by making James' life not so easy . James had a rough life until something amazing happened to him and totally changed his life. Many young teenagers go through the same problems as James does.
composition	Throughout this novel, the composer has used informal modern language that would appeal to teenage audience. There is swearing references to popular culture and

references to technology. The third person narration gives **a lot of** information to the audience. It describes the characters from an **objective perspective**.

appeal

Every now and then the novel **made me feel sad and angry**, knowing what James had to go through in life. I **would have liked** if the author mentioned Kerry **a bit more**. I **believe** this story is **written well** and **outstanding** novel with a **believable** plot that **many** young people **would enjoy**.

Within its staging, the Synopsis includes two paragraphs which identify the novel's themes and synopsise its plot. The Reaffirmation evaluates its relevance to teenage readers, its literary composition and its appeal to the writer and potential readers. While genre stages are highly predictable, phases within each stage tend to be more variable, depending on the field and writers' imagination.

Appraisals are concentrated in the Evaluation and Reaffirmation, including a much wider range of text **valuations**: *fantastic novel, realistic narrative, very realistic, a lot of information, objective perspective, written well and outstanding novel, believable plot*; reader **reactions**: *easily relate, would appeal, made me feel sad and angry, I would have liked, many young people would enjoy*; and **judgements** of characters: *not so easy, rough life, something amazing happened to him, totally changed his life, young teenagers go through the same problems*. Resources for **graduation** are also more diverse: *easily relate, throughout, a lot of, whole new, very realistic, not so easy, totally changed, every now and then, a bit more*. **Engagement** is now far more objective, with personal sourcing limited to the final evaluation: *made me feel sad and angry, I would have liked, I believe*, and valuations attributed to potential readers: *young teenagers who would easily relate, young teenagers go through the same problems, many young people would enjoy*.

Ideationally, lexical resources construe the texts' themes and their relevance to readers: *tragedy and adventure throughout his young life, has to adjust to his losses, finds out who he really is, discovers a lot of new things in life, young teenagers, problems of today's teenagers*. They also construe the field of literature: *novel, narrative, story, characters, main character, tragedy and adventure, plot; author, composer, published; informal modern language, swearing, references, popular culture, technology; third person narration, information, objective perspective*. Some of these literary resources have clearly been scaffolded by the teacher, but they are used coherently here by the student writer. Thirdly, the novel's plot is condensed as an activity sequence in just two sentences:

*After being separated from his sister (Lauren),
James had to live in an orphanage.
Towards the end of the narrative James becomes a spy
and knows what it feels like to belong
and make new friends in a whole new environment.*

Textually, reference to the book now begins by **naming** it ‘*The Recruit*’ and then **presuming** it variously as *a novel, this narrative, this story, the novel*. Characters are also presented by **naming**: *the main character, James Choke*, and then **presumed**: *his young life, he, him, his losses, who he really is, James’ life, the same problems as James*. In addition to presenting each phase as separate paragraphs, the shift from phase to phase is also signalled by clause Themes that are made prominent, either by doubling an identity or by starting with a time or place, underlined as follows:

Evaluation	“The Recruit”
Synopsis	
themes	<u>The main character</u> , James Choke
plot	<u>After being separated from his sister (Lauren)</u> , James
Reaffirmation	
relevance	<u>The author</u> Robert Muchamore
composition	<u>Throughout this novel</u> the composer
appeal	<u>Every now and then</u> the novel

Tenor unfolds subtly through the text, beginning with **strong valuation** to engage the reader: *a fantastic novel*, then **amplified judgement** for its themes: *totally changed his life* and **amplified valuation** for its relevance: *very realistic*. While there is little explicit appraisal for its composition, the listing of its qualities serves to amplify its value. While these are all presented objectively, the personalized reactions in the last paragraph enact solidarity with teenage readers. The field here is multi-layered, with one field, the novel’s plot, projecting a field of personal growth (its themes), and the field of literary appreciation (Rothery 1997). The mode is now at an appropriate level of written language for the end of primary school, and the genre is masterfully controlled. This student is now well prepared for the writing demands of secondary literature studies.

6 Findings

Table 13.2 illustrates how the writing assessment criteria are applied to Texts 1–2, to produce a numerical score to measure students’ progress. Text 1 scored 0 for most contextual and discourse criteria, as its two sentences are so far below the standard expected for junior secondary school, although they meet minimum standards for lower level criteria. In contrast, Text 2 scored 2–3 for all criteria, as it meets a top to average standard for genre, register and discourse criteria. A score of 2 recognizes potential for improvement in a criterion. The total scores show growth from well below the grade standard (less than 15/42), to around a high standard for the grade (around 35/42).

To measure the overall trends for the whole intervention, teachers’ score sheets were collected and the total scores were recorded for analysis. Scores were analysed from approximately 100 randomly selected classes. As students targeted for assessment in

Table 13.2 Assessment of Texts 1–2

	Text 1	Text 2
PURPOSE	0	3
STAGING	0	3
PHASES	0	2
FIELD	0	2
TENOR	0	2
MODE	0	2
LEXIS	0	3
APPRAISAL	0	2
CONJUNCTION	1	3
REFERENCE	1	3
GRAMMAR	2	3
SPELLING	2	2
PUNCTUATION	2	2
PRESENTATION	2	2
Total	10	34

each class were selected from low-, middle- and high-achieving groups, the scores are representative of results for these groups in whole classes, helping to minimize bias. The sample thus represents a large set (~400 classes × 20–30 students per class, or ~8–12,000 students).

Charts 13.1 and 13.2 show the gap between low-, middle- and high-achieving student groups, before and after the intervention. Chart 13.1 shows the pre-intervention scores for each student group and school stage in Term 1. Chart 13.2 shows the post-intervention scores for each student group and school stage, after 3 terms of R2L teaching.

School stages surveyed include kindergarten (K), junior primary (Yr1/2), middle primary (Yr3/4), upper primary (Yr5/6) and junior secondary (Yr7/8). Note that the same students are represented in each cohort in Charts 13.1 and 13.2, for example the K group includes the same students in Charts 13.1 and 13.2, before and after the intervention. Note also that the data do not show longitudinal growth rates from year to year. Rather these are data from the year that teachers were being trained in the R2L programme.

In Chart 13.1, pre-intervention scores at the start of kindergarten show that the gap between low- and high-achieving students is 16 per cent of the total possible score. By the start of Yr1/2, average scores have risen by 25 per cent of the total, but the gap between low and high students has tripled to over 50 per cent of the total – the

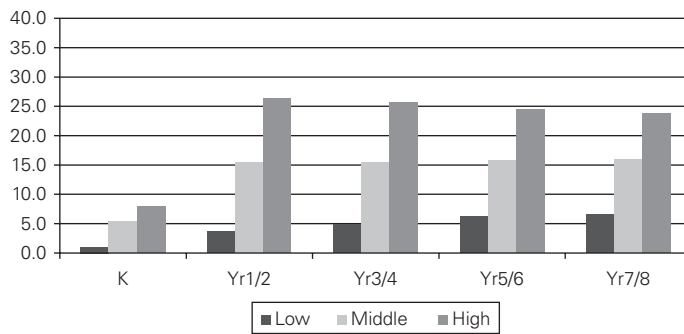


CHART 13.1 *Pre-intervention scores show gap between student groups before R2L teaching.*

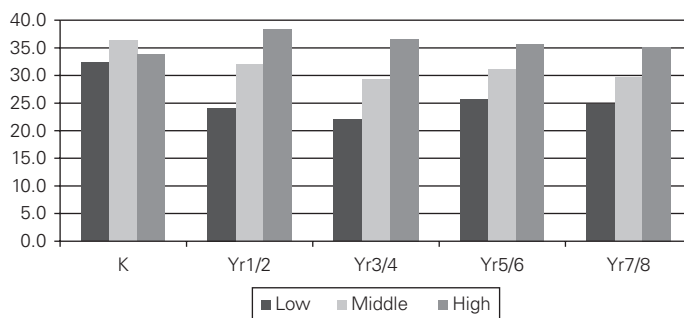


CHART 13.2 *Post-intervention scores show growth and reduction in gap after R2L teaching.*

high group has accelerated but the low group is still near zero. This gap then continues throughout the years, decreasing slowly. The low group improves very slowly from Yr1/2 to Yr7/8, the middle group remains steady and the high group falls slightly.

Comparing results between Chart 13.1 and Chart 13.2, post-intervention scores show average growth in kindergarten is 70 per cent above pre-intervention scores, and the gap between low- and high-achieving groups is halved to 9 per cent. In the other year levels, growth is 30–40 per cent above the pre-intervention scores, and the gap is reduced to 20–30 per cent.

The pre and post-intervention data in Charts 13.1 and 13.2 are combined as trend lines in Chart 13.3 below. The bottom two lines are pre-scores for low and high groups (i.e. without R2L teaching) and the top two lines are the post-scores for low and high groups (after R2L teaching).

Chart 13.3 clearly shows the contrast between outcomes with and without the R2L intervention, for low- and high-achieving student groups. Without R2L, the low group improves slowly each year, but stays within the failing range (~5 points). The high group improves faster in kindergarten and then stays in a high average range (~25 points), falling slightly. In contrast, following the R2L intervention, both low and high groups improve in kindergarten to a high range (~35 points). In other school stages, the low group improves to a high average range (~25 points), and the high group improves to the top range for their schools stages (~35 points).

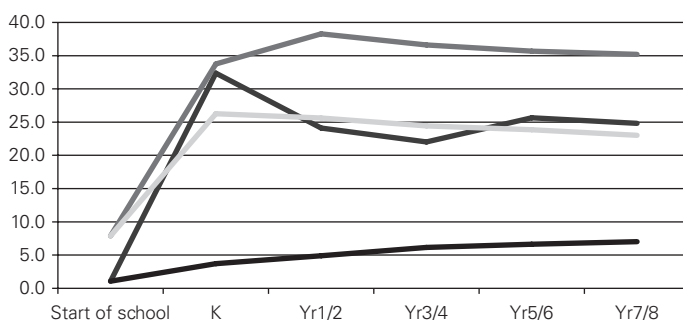
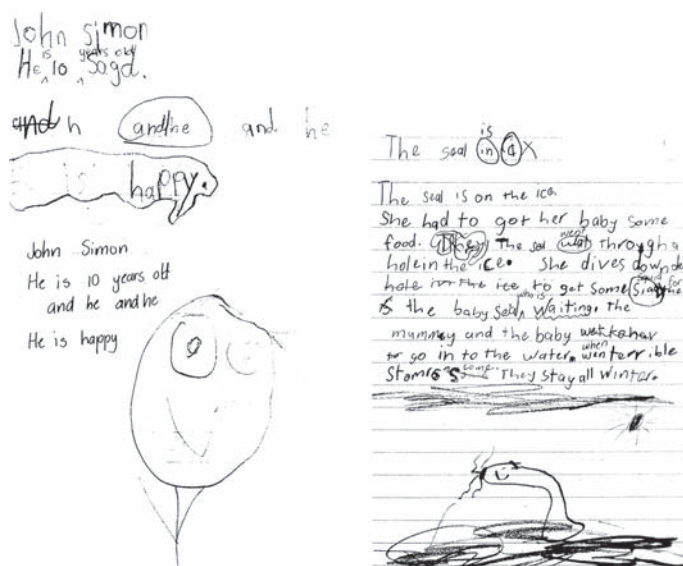


CHART 13.3 Pre- and Post-data combined.



TEXT 3–4 Outcomes of standard and R2L teaching in early years.

These generalized data are unpacked in more detail for each school stage as follows. Literacy growth of low-achieving groups is illustrated with pre- and post-intervention writing samples. For reasons of space, these samples are limited to kindergarten, middle primary and junior secondary stages.

Texts 3–4 illustrate the contrast between the outcomes of R2L and standard early literacy practices in kindergarten. The left hand Text 3 was written and drawn early in Yr1 (with teacher's translation), after a full year of standard early literacy practice in kindergarten. Text 4 on the right is by the same student 2 months later, after the R2L intervention.

The pre-intervention sample is a typical standard for the low-achieving student group at the start of Yr1/2, as shown in Chart 13.1 above (< 5 points). This student's reading level would be similarly very low. Without the R2L intervention, this student would probably have continued in the failing range throughout primary school, as shown for

the low group in Charts 13.1 and 13.3. Within 2 months of R2L teaching, the same student has independently written a detailed, coherent and legible description on a topic the class has studied, has self-corrected while drafting it and has incorporated key elements in the illustration, including the mother seal, the hole in the ice with a line for the direction of her dive, and the storm gathering in the sky above. This text is already well above the average standard for Yr1.

Chart 13.4 restates the growth rates and gap between students in Yr1/2, with and without R2L. The data show little change over two years of junior primary, in the proportions of high-, middle- and low-achieving students (with a slight improvement for the low group). In contrast, after three terms of R2L teaching, the low group are almost at the level that the high group normally achieves. This growth rate is 17 times the normal growth of the low group. For the high-achieving students, the growth rate after R2L teaching is 30 per cent above their normal achievement.

Despite the growth using R2L, the gap between high- and low-achieving students remains at 34 per cent. While this is an improvement on the 49 per cent gap without R2L, it demands further work. The gap for this cohort of students may reduce further in following years, given consistent genre-based teaching.

Chart 13.5 restates the growth rates and gap between students in middle primary, with and without R2L. After 2 years without R2L, there has been a slight improvement in the scores of low-achieving students and a slight decrease in the high group. After 3 terms with R2L, the growth for the low group is 13 times what it was without R2L, and the high group has improved 26 per cent more than without R2L. However, the gap between the high and low groups is still 35 per cent, so further work is still needed to reduce this gap.

Growth for the low-achieving group in Year 3/4 is exemplified with writing samples from one student in Texts 5–6. The pre-intervention Text 5 on the left is an incomplete

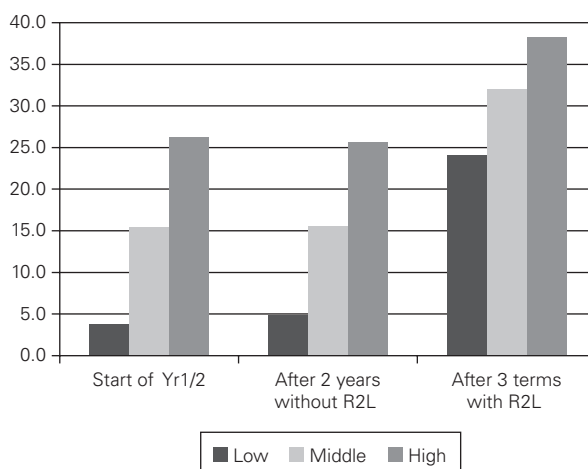


CHART 13.4 *Growth rates in Yr1/2, with and without R2L teaching.*

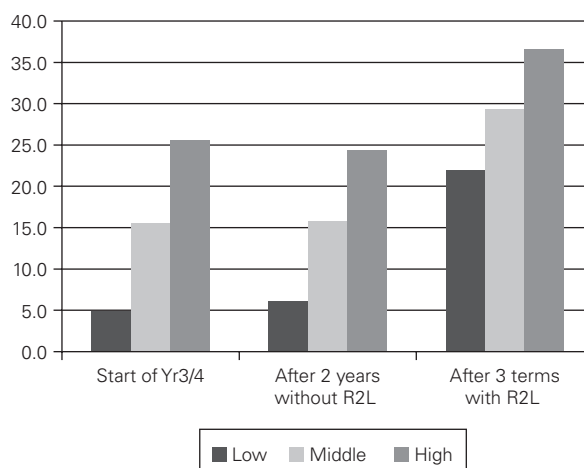
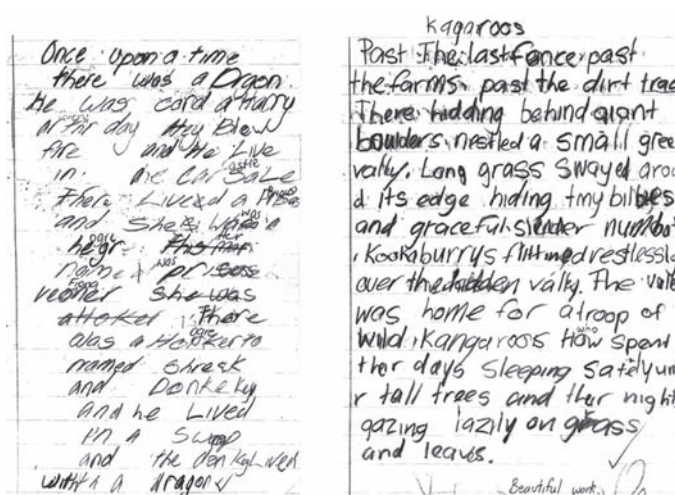


CHART 13.5 Growth rates in Yr3/4, with and without R2L teaching.



TEXT 5-6 Outcomes of standard and R2L teaching for a low-achieving students in middle primary.

recount that borrows elements from the animated movie Shrek. The post-intervention Text 6 on the right is modelled on a literary description studied in detail by the class.

Chart 13.6 restates the growth rates and gap between students in upper primary, with and without R2L. After 2 years without R2L, the growth is very similar to Yr3/4 – there is a slight improvement in the low group and a slight decrease in the high group, so the gap is reduced to 41 per cent. In contrast, after 3 terms with R2L, the low group is now achieving above what the high group achieved without R2L. This improvement for the low group is 49 times what it was without R2L. The high group has improved 28 per cent more than without R2L. The gap between the high and low groups is reduced to just 24 per cent.

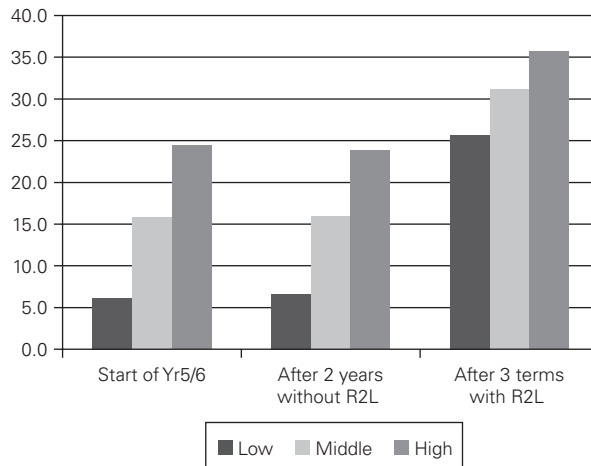


CHART 13.6 Growth rates in Yr5/6, with and without R2L teaching.

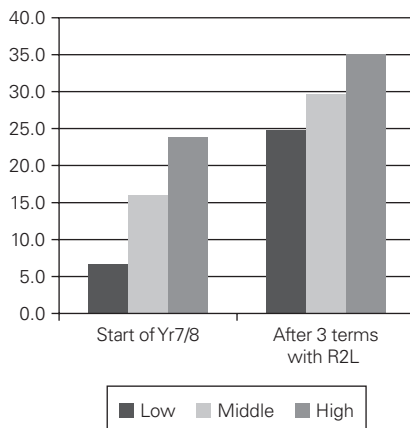


CHART 13.7 Growth rates in Yr7/8 using R2L.

Chart 13.7 restates the growth rates and gap between students in junior secondary, using R2L. Chart 13.7 does not compare the growth rates in Yr7/8 with and without R2L teaching, as these data were not available. However, given the consistent trends we have seen without R2L from Yr1/2 to Yr7/8, it may be assumed that a similar trend continues into the secondary school years. That is, the low group remains around 5 points, the middle group around 15 and the high group around 25. Nevertheless, after 3 terms with R2L the low group is now achieving slightly above what the high group achieved at the start of Yr7/8, and the high group has improved 28 per cent. This is a similar pattern to that shown above in Yr5/6. Likewise, the gap between the high and low groups is just 25 per cent.

7 Discussion

These data provide an unusual opportunity to compare the outcomes of different approaches to teaching and learning, from a large set of students, classes and schools. This is not a comparison between teachers, classes or schools, because it is averaged across a large set of schools and classrooms. Rather it is strictly a comparison between teaching approaches. What is compared in Charts 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3 are the outcomes of standard teaching practices in each stage of school, with the outcomes of carefully designed strategies in the R2L intervention. The pre-intervention scores in each stage represent the outcomes of the preceding 1–2 years of standard teaching practices. This data is unusual in that it compares these normal outcomes with those of a large-scale teaching intervention.

As Charts 13.1 and 13.3 show, the gap that begins in kindergarten normally continues throughout the following stages of school, as low-achieving students remain in the failing range, the middle group in the low average range and the high group within the high average range. The maintenance of low-achieving students in the failing range remains an intractable outcome of standard teaching practices in the primary and secondary school, as innumerable international reports attest.

In order for the high-achieving group to maintain its position in the high average range, these students must keep developing their literacy skills at a standard average growth rate. In terms of the R2L assessment, this standard average growth rate is about 7 score points per year or 16.6 per cent of the total possible score. However, for low-achieving students to get out of the failing range, up to a passable average range, they must develop their skills at more than double the rate of the high-achieving students. This rarely happens with standard teaching practices. Nor does it happen with targeted interventions such as phonics programmes, withdrawal reading programmes, levelled readers, levelled reading groups or special education programmes, which may produce incremental but not exponential growth (Hattie 2009).

A key reason that these interventions have little significant long-term effects on the literacy rates of low-achieving students is that they do not work with the curriculum texts that the class is studying. Instead they use low-level texts and activities that are targeted at the assessed 'ability levels' of the low-achieving students, their so-called 'instructional level'. It seems unlikely that students who are learning more slowly, with low-level texts and activities, will ever catch up with their peers who are learning faster with higher-level texts and activities.

A critical difference with R2L is the use of high-level-quality curriculum texts, which teachers select and prepare, and carefully designed strategies that teach every student in the class to read and write them at the same time. These are whole class strategies, in which the teacher is the expert guide. Crucially, the intensive Level 2 and 3 strategies are used with whole classes, as well as with small groups and one-on-one for additional support. But these intensive strategies also use the same high level texts that the whole class is studying. There are no withdrawal sessions for low-achieving

students using low-level texts and activities. Independent research has shown that better results are obtained with whole class teaching using R2L than with withdrawal sessions (Culican 2006).

8 Conclusion: Enhancement, inclusion and participation

In our discussion of language/context relations, we focused on the hierarchy of abstraction from language to register to genre. In discussing the genre-based literacy intervention above, we have also incidentally explored a hierarchy of individuation (Martin 2010), from the language community of the school, to groups of high-, middle- and low-achieving students, to individual students. In this regard, we have been concerned with differences between learners in their engagement in curriculum genres, their mastery of knowledge genres and their identities as learners (cf. Maton forthcoming). In Bernstein's terms, this hierarchy of individuation relates the reservoir of meanings in a culture to the repertoire available to a person.

I shall use the term *repertoire* to refer to the set of strategies and their analogic potential possessed by any one individual and the term *reservoir* to refer to the total of sets and its potential of the community as a whole. Thus the *repertoire* of each member of the community will have both a common nucleus but there will be differences between the *repertoires*. There will be differences between the *repertoires* because of the differences between members arising out of differences in members' context and activities and their associated issues. (2000: 158)

Each person possesses a set of strategies for recognizing contexts and for realizing the texts expected in a context, for which Bernstein uses the terms recognition and realization rules. In terms of genre and register theory, a student may be able to recognize the curriculum genre that their class is engaged in, but may not be able to realize the responses needed to participate successfully. Or they may be able to neither recognize a knowledge genre nor realize it successfully as a written text.

Yet Bernstein also points out that each person possesses an analogic potential, which we understand as the potential for expanding one's repertoire from the known to the new. A central function of the school is to facilitate the expansion of each student's repertoire to incorporate more and more of the culture's reservoir of potential meanings. For some students, the expansion of their repertoire builds steadily, year by year, in sync with the curriculum sequence of the school, while the repertoire of others lags behind, sometimes far behind. These differences in the realization of students' analogic potential are not incidental to the functioning of the school; they are central to the creation and maintenance of social inequalities, not only in the resources that education affords, but also in the personal identities that are shaped by education.

In our view, inequality of outcomes is sustained by failing to explicitly teach all students the skills they need to independently read and write the curriculum at each stage of school. Instead, successful students tacitly acquire skills at each stage that will prepare them for the next stage. The practices for each school stage, outlined above, concretely illustrate this process. Rather than explicitly teaching skills needed in each stage, students are evaluated on skills they may have tacitly acquired in preceding stages, beginning with parent–child reading and associated orientations to meaning in the home (Hasan 2009; Williams 1995, 1999b, 2001). This sequence of tacit preparation and evaluation is diagrammed in Figure 13.9.

Figure 13.9 represents the contexts of schooling diachronically as an ontogenetic pathway, beginning with engagement in reading and talk-around-text that are characteristic modes of curriculum genres in the school. This engagement is a necessary condition for participating actively in classroom learning in the junior primary, and for becoming independent young readers and writers. This active participation and independent literacy skills are in turn the conditions for learning to learn from reading, and for demonstrating what has been learnt by writing in the upper primary, which are in turn necessary for successful independent learning in the secondary school (see Rose 2004, 2007 for further discussion). This ‘hidden curriculum’ of literacy development has evolved in the school to enable the children of literate middle-class families to progress smoothly towards university matriculation, stage-by-stage, but the practices outlined above at each school stage simultaneously ensure that children from other backgrounds are less likely to progress so smoothly.

The evaluative rules that govern differentiated progression through the school thus realize the distributive rules that govern unequal access to society’s resources. Our approach to this contra-democratic system has been to design curriculum genres that

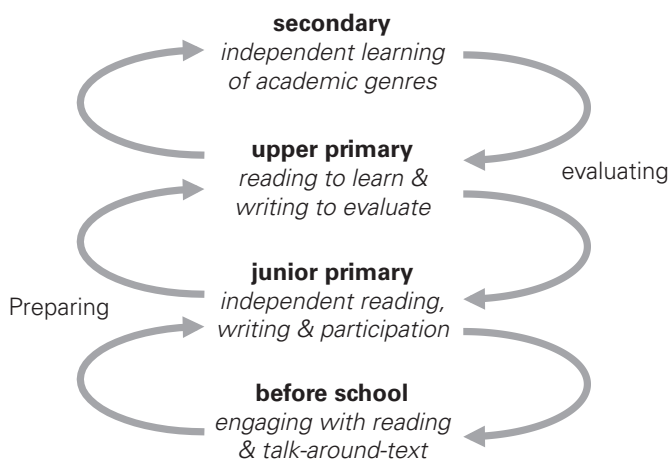


FIGURE 13.9 Tacit learning sequence in school.

can provide all students with the skills needed for success and can be integrated with curriculum teaching at all school stages. The intervention reported on here put these designs into practice.

Bernstein (2000: 5) warns that 'Biases in the form, content, access and opportunities of education have consequences not only for the economy; these biases can reach down to drain the very springs of affirmation, motivation and imagination'. To counter these biases, Bernstein (2000: 8) proposes for each student three 'pedagogic democratic rights of "enhancement," "inclusion" and "participation" as the basis for *confidence*, *communitas* and *political practice*'. 'Enhancement' we interpret as the expansion of each student's repertoire, building confident identities as successful learners as they progress through the school's curriculum sequence. In terms of genre and register, this includes accumulating knowledge of curriculum fields through reading, and control of knowledge genres in writing. 'Inclusion' we interpret as active engagement in the curriculum genres of the school, building identities as authoritative members of a community of learners. This requires enabling all students to participate successfully in curriculum genres, to be continually affirmed, and so benefit equally from pedagogic activities. 'Participation' we will interpret as an outcome of enhancement and inclusion, since both knowledge and belonging are necessary conditions for exercising informed citizenship; they are, as Bernstein says, 'the necessary and effective conditions for democracy'.

For us, the contexts of texts written in the school thus go well beyond their specific settings in field, tenor and mode. Minimally, it is also essential to consider the types of knowledge genres that are realized by configurations of field, tenor and mode. Secondly, we need to examine the curriculum genres through which knowledge genres are acquired in the school. But the purpose of these analyses is not simply to contemplate pedagogic contexts; they are merely a necessary first step towards intervening in them. For this purpose, we need a far broader view of social contexts than linguistics can offer on its own. Bernstein's sociological interpretation provides such a model, with which our linguistic understandings can be articulated. The results of the intervention reported here illustrate the power that can be generated from combining these two formidable theories of language in context.

Notes

- 1 We are indebted to Chris Cleirigh for this terminology (which he no longer deploys); we are not using the terms in quite the way he originally intended.
- 2 Genre and register are both dimensions of 'context of culture' in Malinowski's terms, and both are instantiated as text in 'contexts of situation'. Genre and register are related stratally, while 'situations' are instances of 'culture'.
- 3 The term 'discourse' is also used similarly by critical theorists and discourse analysts such as Gee (e.g. 2005).

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