

Sequencing and Pacing of the Hidden Curriculum: How Indigenous learners are left out of the chain

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Children who can meet the requirements of the sequencing rules will eventually have access to the principles of their own discourse (Basil Bernstein 1990:75).

This chapter emerges from a long term action research project, *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn*, in which Indigenous and other Australian students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels learn to read texts across their curricula, and to use what they learn from reading in their writing (Rose, Gray & Cowey 1999, Lui-Chivizhe, McKnight, Rose & Smith 2004). In this light I examine unequal development of orientations to reading through primary and secondary schooling, and the roles of instructional and regulative classroom discourse in maintaining inequality, guided by Basil Bernstein's model of schooling as a 'pedagogic device' (1990, 1996). Four general stages are proposed for the sequencing of reading development, from pre-schooling through junior and upper primary to secondary school, constituting a literacy curriculum that underlies the overt content of school syllabi. It is suggested that children from highly literate communities access this underlying curriculum tacitly, while many Indigenous and other children from less highly literate communities are effectively excluded. Four learning interactions are analysed to illustrate how patterns of pedagogic discourse in home and school can build both orientations to ways of meaning and children's identities as successful or unsuccessful learners.

Stratifying educational outcomes

Average literacy achievements of Indigenous school students in Australia are well behind general Australian standards (DEST 1997), and as a result, Indigenous students in urban or rural communities are more than twice as likely as other groups to quit before completing high school, while over 90% from remote Indigenous communities will not complete (ABS 1996). Yet, while these problems are proportionally worse for Indigenous communities, they are not unique, but reflect wider educational inequalities, in which 10-20% of high school graduates matriculate into universities, 20-30% qualify for vocational training, while over 50% receive no further education. That too many Indigenous students fall into the latter category is an unfortunate side effect of an education system that has evolved to service an inherently unequal socio-economic order. Decades of polarised debates over pedagogy seem to have had little effect on this problem: whether the pedagogy is focused on 'competences' or 'performances' in Bernstein's terms (Rose 1999), stratification of outcomes has remained relatively unchanged (ABS 2002). The proposal of this paper is that the apparent inertia of inequality is a consequence of sequencing and pacing principles of the underlying literacy development curriculum that are deep-rooted in the structure of modern educational systems, functioning to optimise the preparation of elite students for university study, while consigning others to vocational or manual occupations (Rose 1998).

Stages in the literacy development sequence

Two central competences required for university study are firstly the ability to independently learn from reading, and secondly to demonstrate through written performances what has been learnt from reading, including both the academic field of study, and the patterns of academic language through which it is expressed. Preparation of elite students for these reading and writing skills is accomplished tacitly in the secondary school stage of literacy development by processing large quantities of curriculum 'content' in class and homework, rather than explicit literacy teaching. This strategy forces students to constantly practise independent reading, and written performances for evaluation, so that successful students acquire not only the overt content, but more importantly, extensive implicit knowledge of the genres of academic study.

Tacit acquisition of academic genres by elite students is possible because of orientations to learning from reading that these students acquire in earlier stages of the literacy development curriculum. Secondary students who have not previously acquired these linguistic orientations adequately will not be able to tacitly acquire the academic literacy for successful performances. Nor will they learn these skills explicitly, as the volume of content allows secondary teachers insufficient time to teach reading and writing skills to weaker students, even if they were trained to do so. The tyranny of curriculum pacing in secondary schooling thus simultaneously achieves successful acquisition of academic literacy for elite students and exclusion of other students from the possibility of professional training at university. Bernstein critiques the effect of this pacing on non-elite students:

The strong pacing of the academic curriculum of the school creates the necessity of two sites of acquisition [school and home]. It creates a particular form/modality of communication which does not privilege everyday narrative [the inner structure of the communicative principle children use in everyday life]. In this structure children of the disadvantaged classes are doubly disadvantaged. (1990:78).

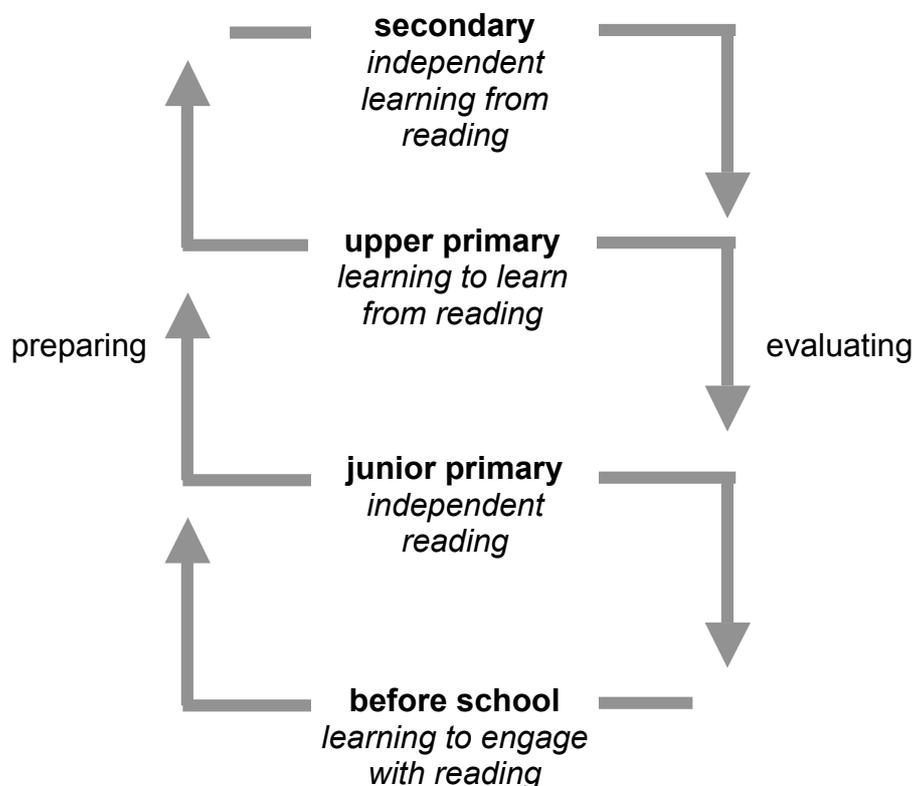
Since secondary students are evaluated on their control of literacy skills that are not explicitly taught in secondary school, what is actually being evaluated is an ability to learn these skills tacitly, an orientation to written language that is acquired in middle to upper primary school (grades 4-7). Yet even in upper primary, skills in learning from reading are rarely explicitly taught. Rather the overt upper primary curriculum tends to focus on content 'themes', using a variety of class and individual activities which implicitly support primary students to continually practise learning from reading, and to reproduce what they have learnt as written and oral performances. Students that benefit most from the underlying literacy development functions of these activities are those who are already able to read independently with comprehension and accuracy, and to write extended texts that draw on their experience of written language in reading. Again, these 'basic' skills in reading and writing are rarely taught explicitly in the upper primary stage (with exceptions such as genre-based approaches to writing (Cope & Kalantzis 1993, Martin 1999)), but are acquired through activities in junior primary years (1-3) that are explicitly aimed at practising elements of reading and writing tasks. So activities in upper primary that involve independent reading and writing actually evaluate the acquisition of these skills in junior primary.

As Bernstein points out "It is crucial to read early in order to acquire the written code, for beyond the book is the textbook, which is the crucial pedagogic medium and social relation" (1990:53). Accordingly, independent reading and writing is fostered in

junior primary by an overt curriculum focus on class and individual story reading, on letter-sound correspondences and letter formation, and on writing stories of personal experience. However for a significant proportion of students, these activities do not provide the independent reading and writing skills necessary for learning from reading in upper primary. For example, in central Australian Indigenous community schools it was found that no children had learned to read independently before grade 3, that a third still had not learned to read by grade 7, while most others were still on basal 'sentence' readers by the end of primary (Gray, Rose & Cowey 1998). These students from oral family backgrounds do not come to school with the orientations to written ways of meaning that children from literate families acquire, in up to 1000 hours of parent-child reading (Bergin 2001, Williams 1999), and junior primary activities do not give them this orientation. Again, what is being evaluated in these activities are orientations to written language that are acquired in a previous stage, in this case in the home. While they may support elite students to develop their existing literacy skills, their effect on other students is merely evaluative.

To summarise, each stage in the literacy development sequence assumes and evaluates orientations to written ways of meaning that are acquired in previous stages. So practices across the secondary school curriculum implicitly assume and evaluate orientations acquired in upper primary, and practices in middle-upper primary assume and evaluate orientations acquired in early school years, which in turn assume and evaluate orientations to written meanings acquired through parent-child reading before school. These four stages in the literacy development sequence are diagrammed in Figure 1, including the focus of the reading development curriculum in each stage (in italics).

Figure 1: Stages in the literacy development sequence



Pedagogic discourse and learning to read

The *Learning to Read* project has demonstrated that all students can independently read at primary, secondary or tertiary levels, within one year of regular instruction, no matter what their starting level (McRae et al 2000). So there is no 'natural' reason why

reading should only be taught in junior primary. According to Bernstein, “The age by which a child should be able to read is a function of the sequencing rules of the pedagogic practice of the school” (1990:75). Independent reading at an early age is only necessary because tacit acquisition of the underlying reading curriculum in upper primary requires a lot more time than explicit instruction. Paradoxically, the pacing of the underlying curriculum slows down to facilitate tacit acquisition, while the pacing of the overt curriculum accelerates through primary and secondary school. This sleight of hand ensures, both that access to the underlying curriculum remains unequal, and that this inequality of access remains invisible.

However stratification is not only maintained though the sequencing and pacing of instruction in school. Bernstein reminds us that instructional discourses are always ‘embedded’ in a regulative discourse, which he describes as a “moral discourse which creates order, relations and identity” (1996: 46). While the typical forms of instructional discourse, in each stage outlined above, rank students on the basis of reading skills acquired in preceding stages, the regulative discourses in which they are embedded construct and cement learner identities, as ‘successful’, ‘average’ or ‘unsuccessful’. The everyday interactions that imperceptibly construct learner identities are briefly illustrated below with transcripts of reading lessons, firstly a parent-child reading session in the home, secondly a junior primary reading lesson, thirdly an English lesson in junior secondary, and finally a secondary reading lesson from the *Learning to Read* project.

Reading before school

Exchange 1 is an extract from a parent-child reading session with an 18 month old child and her mother.¹ The extract is analysed into five interaction cycles, in which each move is labelled to the right. In one type of move, the child selects the book or the page she wants to look at (Slct). In another move, the mother prepares the child to recognise a feature of the text (Prep). The child then identifies a text feature (Ident), the mother affirms her (Affm), and may elaborate with more information (Elab).

Exchange 1

Ch	[Brings the book, sits on her mother’s lap, and turns the book so the cover is facing right-side-up.]	Slct	1
M	The three little pigs [points to each of the pigs on the cover of the book].	Prep	2
Ch	[Opens the book and turns several pages while her mother is talking]	Slct	
Ch	[points to picture of a tree] Tee [looks up at mother].	Ident	3
M	Yes It’s a tree.	Affm Elab	
Ch	[points to another tree in the picture] Tee [looks up at mother again].	Ident	
M	Um, um	Affm	4
M	[Points to each of the little pigs in the illustrations]. Here are the little pigs. Bye bye mama [waves her hand]. We’re going to build a house.	Prep	
Ch	[laughs, waves at the mama pig in the illustration and turns the page]	Ident	5
M	Look, the first pig...	Prep	
Ch	[Turns the page].	Slct	5
M	Oh, oh, I see that wolf [points to the wolf, eyes get larger as if in fright].	Prep	
Ch	[turns page and points to wolf] Oh, oh.	Ident	
M	Oh, oh. He huffed and puffed [blowing on child] and he blewww that pig away. Very bad, isn’t he? [in different tone directed toward child as an aside].	Affm Elab	

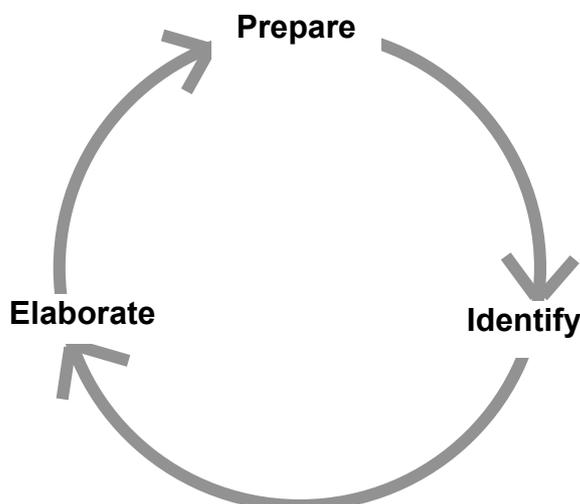
Each of the exchange cycles begins with the mother's preparation move (Prep), with the exception of move (1), in which the child selects and arranges the book, but of course these behaviours have been repeatedly modelled, i.e. prepared by the mother in earlier interactions. In each of the mother's preparations she directs the child's attention and names characters, 'The three little pigs', 'Here are the little pigs', 'Look, the first pig', 'I see that wolf'. But she also directs attention to more complex features, including expectation of events 'Bye bye mama [waves her hand]. We're going to build a house', and feelings 'Oh, oh... [eyes get larger as if in fright]'.

The child is too young to follow the narrative sequence, but is tuned in to the interaction cycle of identifying text features, for which she expects to be rewarded with her mother's affirmation. Accordingly, she responds to the first preparation move (2) by identifying a text feature as 'tee'. The mother affirms this, but also elaborates it with correct articulation in a complete sentence 'Yes. It's a tree', and the child repeats her identifying move, which the mother again affirms 'Um, um'.

In cycle (3) the mother again directs attention to the main characters 'Here are the little pigs'. This time the child recognises a more complex relation between the mother's preparation 'Bye bye mama [waves her hand]' and the illustration, which she identifies by laughing and waving at the picture. In (4) the mother tries to direct attention to the sequence, but the child turns the page. In the fifth cycle (5), the mother captures the child's attention with the expectant 'Oh, oh, I see that wolf'. The child recognises this affective meaning and responds by turning the page, and identifying both the wolf and the feeling 'Oh, oh', which the mother affirms by repeating 'Oh, oh.' This preparation provides a foundation of shared understanding for the mother to then read the text, and tell the child what it implies about the wolf's character 'Very bad, isn't he?'

Through the medium of this highly predictable interaction cycle the mother is repeatedly orienting her child to several crucial features of written stories, long before the child is even ready to follow and understand the story. These include the complex relation of illustrations to the story, judgement of characters and their actions, and expectation of problems. This interaction cycle involves features that are probably fundamental to human learning, including 'joint attention' of parent and child (Tomasello 2000), but has been uniquely adapted in parent-child story reading to maximise children's preparation for school. The type of support the mother provides to the child to understand the story in Exchange 1 has been referred to as 'scaffolding' by Ninio & Bruner (1978), and I will refer to the cycle described as the **scaffolding interaction cycle**. This is diagrammed in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Scaffolding interaction cycle



The scaffolding interaction of parent-child book reading is a type of instructional discourse that emerges from the regulative context of the parent-child relationship. It is experienced by the child as consistently positive, as the mother continually supports the child to explore the virtual world of story books, and affirms her responses; the child is always extended but never negated. Continual growing success in the joint activity of reading within this relationship will ultimately shape the child's identity as a reader and learner.

The scaffolding cycle resembles the 'triadic dialogue' or 'IRF' (Initiation-Response-Feedback) pattern of classroom discourse, described by Nassaji & Wells (2000), among others. But there are three crucial differences between scaffolding interactions and typical classroom discourse. Firstly the mother's initiating moves in Exchange 1 are not simply eliciting a response, but consistently *prepare* the learner to respond successfully; secondly her followup moves to the child's responses are not simply feedback that evaluates or comments on the response, but consistently *elaborate* shared knowledge about text features; and thirdly the mother's feedback is always affirming, whereas classroom feedback is frequently negative. By omitting the preparation and elaboration functions of scaffolded learning, the triadic IRF cycles described by these authors do not provide the level of support for engaging with reading shown in Exchange 1. And by rejecting some learners' responses, the associated negative experience can inhibit not only their learning, but the development of their identity as learners. These patterns are illustrated in the following Exchanges 2 and 3.

Reading practices in early school years

Current junior primary literacy practices have a strong focus on engaging children with written stories, but there may be crucial differences between these activities and the strategies by which highly literate parents orient their children to reading. Exchange 2 exemplifies early childhood interactions around story reading.¹ The preschool class is discussing a wordless picture storybook about a snowman. The teacher is pointing to the round orange object used to make the snowman's nose.

Exchange 2

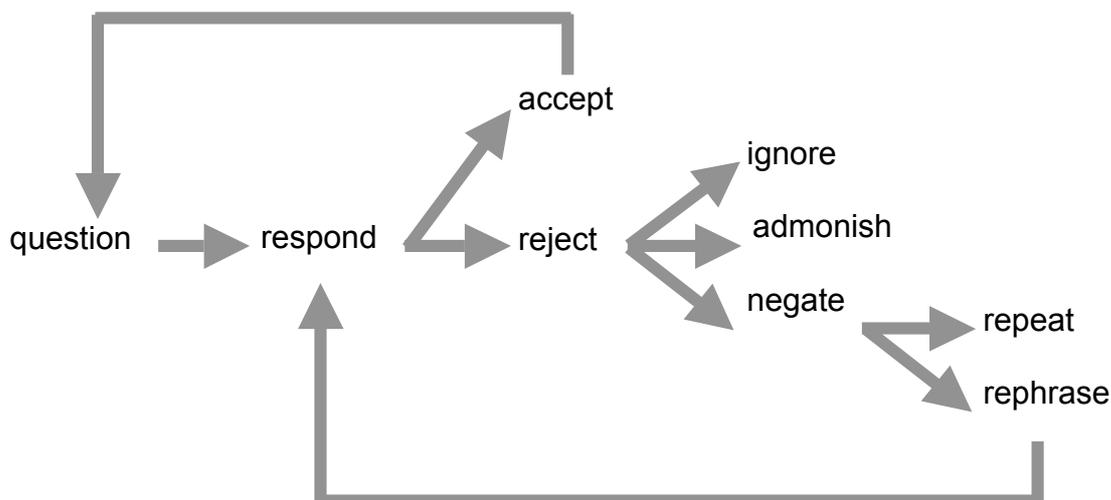
Teacher	What's that he's got, Ben?	Query
Anna & Jody	Carrot!	Ident
Teacher	[makes circular motion on round object in illustration]	Prep
Bobby	Meatball! Meatball!	Ident
Kris	Oranges!	Ident
Teacher	Yes, Kris, I think you...That's right!	Affm
Other child	Meatball! Meatball!	Ident
Anna	They're oranges!	Ident
Jody	Oranges!	Ident
Other child	Tangerine!	Ident
Teacher	Well, it's kind of oval like a tangerine. [makes oval shape with hands]	Neg

The first key feature of Exchange 2 is that there is no preparation for the teacher's initiating question (Query), except to point to the illustration and ask Ben to guess what it is. Ben offers no reply, and of those children that do respond, only Kris' is affirmed by the teacher. Anna and Jody's initial response of 'carrot' is implicitly rejected by the teacher's non-verbal narrowing of her question's criteria ('round motion'). This is a pervasive pattern in classroom discourse across all years, to insert preparations when no one can guess the

correct response. Bobby's 'meatball' response to this cue is ignored, while the 'tangerine' response is met with doubt, i.e. qualified negation (Neg). The unidentified child who repeats the unsuccessful 'meatball' perhaps doesn't yet recognise the criteria for getting affirmation. It may appear a logical response to the child, considering the visible criteria of size, colour and shape, but has already been ignored, and so implicitly rejected by the teacher.

This kind of 'triadic' questioning routine (diagrammed in Figure 3) is more complex and unpredictable than the scaffolding interaction cycle. Without adequate preparation for the initiating question, feedback to student responses is more likely to be rejection than affirmation. Responses may be rejected by ignoring, by negating, or with an admonishment (see Exchange 3 below). If negated, the question may be repeated or rephrased. If the question is rephrased the guessing game starts again. Continuous repetition of such questioning routines can lead to frustration, withdrawal or resistance by less successful students, or even to complete breakdown of educational interaction in the classroom, particularly in Indigenous community schools (Malcolm 1991). Learning may then be replaced by busywork which minimises the need for interaction and does not challenge students' autonomy (Folds 1987).

Figure 3: Unscaffolded questioning ('IRF') cycles



The guessing competition of Exchange 2 is reproduced from McGee (1998: 163) who presented it to exemplify good practice in teaching children to 'make inferences'. In my experience it represents common junior primary practice, but I believe that these children are learning something more significant than making inferences: that only some responses are acceptable to teachers; that the criteria for successful responses are not equally available to all students; and that some students are regularly more successful than others. Every teacher knows that more successful students consistently respond to their questioning, average students do so intermittently and least successful students do so rarely if at all. The pervasive instructional discourse of schooling described as 'IRF' or 'triadic dialogue' is embedded in a regulative discourse that emerges from and functions to reproduce stratified order, relations and identities. This instructional discourse may have evolved out of the kinds of scaffolding learning cycles illustrated in Exchange 1 but its form is distorted to serve a different regulative function, to produce what Bernstein has called 'specialised competences'. It should be emphasised that teachers are not trained to produce such a discourse, rather we acquire it tacitly and reproduce it unconsciously from our own years of socialisation in classrooms. This could be described as the hidden curriculum of teacher training.

Reading practices in the middle years

In upper primary to secondary years, reading and writing activities further differentiate students on their abilities to read and reproduce both text content and text patterns. Exchange 3 is from a junior secondary class including Indigenous and other students who have been read a novel aimed at adolescent readers, *Blueback* (Winton 1997). These students speak English as a first language, but most cannot read at age appropriate levels, and none read for pleasure. The activities are normal classroom practice in upper primary or junior secondary English, and are intended to extend the students' ability to analyse elements of the story, although the effect is again more evaluative than extending.

Exchange 3

T	What kind of a man is Abel? (the novel's central character)	Qry	1
St	A man.	Slct	
T	Think of the kinds of things he did.	Prep	
St	He had the fantasy of the ocean.	Slct	
T	What? Repeat that.		
St	Dreamed about the ocean.	Slct	
T	Thank you June. [writes on the board]	Affm	
T	What else can we say about him? How did he feel?	Qry	2
St	Unsure?	Slct	
T	Unsure's a good one.	Affm	
T	There's another word that means the same - A - N - X.	Prep	
St	Anxious.	Slct	
T	He was always conf ...	Prep	
St	Confused.	Slct	
T	[Writes 'anxious' and 'confused' on the board.]	Affm	
T	What sort of man was Mad Macka?	Qry	3
St	A dog.	Slct	
T	Ben, we won't have stupid answers. (Students start calling out answers.)	Neg Slct	
T	There's one important thing you should understand about Mad Macka.	Qry	4
St	He was Abel's friend.	Slct	
T	Not particularly.	Neg	
St	His family left Abel his boat.	Slct	
T	Thank you May [writes on board].	Affm	

Despite the difference in years and complexity of the text, the interactions in Exchange 3 display many of the same features as Exchange 2. There is no scaffolding for initial questions in each interaction cycle, but preparations are inserted when no students are able to guess the desired response. Unacceptable responses are ignored or negated, and only a few students are able to give responses that are affirmed and written on the board. Two differences from junior primary are that the text is now no longer used for identifying features, rather students must select responses from their imagination or memories of the text (Slct), and students are now well and truly socialised into their positions in the literacy hierarchy. Weaker readers have two options in class activities that are aimed only at the successful students; they can sit at the back of the class and disengage, hoping not to be singled out for questioning, or they can assert their autonomy by challenging the teacher's authority or the value of the activity. These kinds of responses are evident in 'A man', which the teacher ignores, and 'A dog' which is explicitly admonished.

By junior secondary school, the pacing of the overt curriculum has accelerated so that weaker readers are left well behind, with little hope of catching up. Since they have rarely experienced the rewards of teacher affirmation in primary school, they will have had little opportunity to develop the self-motivation associated with a successful learner identity. For most Indigenous students in Australia this will be the end of their formal education, usually by grade 9 or 10, unless they are able to access adult education later in life. The failure of early primary schooling to give them what middle class parents teach their children, and the relentless sequencing of the hidden curriculum and negative evaluation that follows, ensures that they will not succeed with the demands of secondary schooling, and that they don't expect to. They experience secondary schooling, not as an entry to adult life, but as a waste of time.

Alternative practices: *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn*

There is no need for this self-perpetuating injustice to be an inevitable outcome of schooling. The *Learning to Read* project has demonstrated that primary and secondary teachers can build reading into their curricula in ways that can enable the whole class to engage actively at a high level, and the weakest students to become successful readers and writers across the curriculum. The basis for this is the scaffolding interaction cycle, and an awareness of the patterns of meaning in the texts we are working with, derived from functional linguistics (Martin & Rose 2003).

Exchange 4 illustrates these possibilities with a group of junior primary students with low literacy, learning to read a modern history text on the Western Front of WW1 (Engwerda et al 1998). It begins with the teacher preparing, by explaining a complex, highly metaphorical sentence with a commonsense paraphrase, 'people dreamed they could succeed quickly', and then asking students to identify the first words, *Dreams of early successes* (1). All students are able to find and mark the words, one student identifies them orally, the teacher affirms, and then elaborates by explaining the metaphor. The scaffolding cycle is then repeated as the meaning of the sentence is 'unpacked' and discussed in steps (2-7), leading to a discussion about the futility of war (8-12).

Exchange 4

T	There was a long line of trenches all the way from Belgium through Germany. But it starts off <i>Dreams of early successes evaporated as both the central powers</i> (which is Germany) <i>and the allies</i> (which is France and Britain) <i>dug in a long line extending through Belgium to France and finishing in the south of Germany</i> . So it starts off by saying 'people dreamed they could succeed quickly'. Can you see the words that mean 'people dreamed they could succeed quickly'? Have a look there.	Prep	1
All	[look]		
T	What's the words that say that?		
St	<i>Dreams of early successes</i>	Ident	
T	Very good, that's great, <i>Dreams of early successes</i> . Let's all do (highlight) that.	Affm	
All	[mark wordings]		
T	So that means they were all dreaming, it was just a dream. It's like they were dreaming and their dreams just evaporated into thin air.	Elab	
T	Then it tells us 'when' they evaporated. Can you see 'when' they evaporated?	Prep	2
All	[look]		
St	<i>As both powers</i>	Ident	
T	That's right.	Affm	

T	'What kind' of powers were they?	Prep	3
All	The <i>central powers</i> .	Ident	
T	And what was the 'other side'?	Prep	4
St	<i>Allies</i>	Ident	
T	<i>And the allies</i> . Let's all do <i>central powers</i> (which was Germany) <i>and the allies</i> .	Affm	
All	[mark wordings]		
St	<i>And the allies</i> .		
T	Germany and Austria, they were on one side, and the allies were on the other.	Elab	
T	Then it tells us what they 'did'. Can you see what they 'did'?	Prep	5
All	[look] <i>Dug in a long line</i> .	Ident	
T	OK. Let's just do <i>dug in</i> .	Affm	
All	[mark wordings]		
T	Dug in means they 'dug trenches', right?	Elab	
St	Yep.		
T	Then it tells us 'where' that line extended from.	Prep	6
All	<i>Belgium to France</i> .	Ident	
T	OK, <i>Belgium to France</i> . And it kept going.	Affm Elab	
T	'Where' did it keep going to?	Prep	7
All	<i>South Germany</i> .	Ident	
T	The <i>south of Germany</i> , OK. Right through, so right through those three countries, which you can see on your map there.	Affm Elab	
St	How far would that be?	Qury	8
T	1000km, so from Melbourne to Sydney.	Infm	
T	Can you imagine trenches going all the way from here to Sydney.	Prep	9
St	That'd take ages and ages to dig.	Slct	
St	How long would that take them?	Qury	10
T	Well, there's millions of guys, so they're all lined up opposite each other, shooting each other.	Infm	
St	That's crazy.	Eval	
T	Crazy, yeh.	Affm	
St	Exactly how many people died in World War 1?	Qury	11
T	About 20 million died in World War 1.	Infm	
T	How many people are going to die in Iraq do you think?	Prep	12
St	Hundreds of thousands.	Slct	
St	Too much.	Eval	

Each preparation gives students a meaning cue to identify the next key words in the sentence, either a commonsense paraphrase such as 'people dreamed they could succeed quickly', or a type of 'wh' meaning: 'when they evaporated', 'what kind of powers', 'what they did', 'where did it keep going'. Students must then reason themselves from these cues to identify the actual words in the text. This task is made far easier by giving position cues, telling them where to look next, as they mark each wording in turn, e.g. 'Then it tells us...' Actively reasoning about meanings enables students to understand the wordings as they identify them, and eventually to generalise from these to other instances, as they learn to read more texts at this level. The teacher's elaborations explain metaphors and new concepts, define terms such as 'dug in' and invite discussion. Understanding and engagement with the meanings of the text opens up the possibility for informed critical discussion, which begins as the students come to recognise the complex picture of trench

warfare encoded by this sentence and the surrounding text. This leads to reflection on the carnage of war in general, which the Western Front epitomises. In this stage (8-12), students ask questions (Query), the teacher gives information (Inform), and students evaluate (Eval). Crucially, although one or more students may articulate the wording in each cycle, every student is actively engaged in finding and marking wordings from the preparation cues. Simple management strategies, such as taking turns or directing preparation cues to individuals, can ensure that all students in a class get continual practice in successfully identifying and articulating responses.

Democratising the classroom

The scaffolding cycle can support all students to operate at much higher levels than they can independently, as Vygotsky's (1978) model of 'proximal development' in social learning predicts. This means that any learner can potentially be scaffolded to read any text that is within the range of difficulty for their age or grade level, as Bernstein envisioned:

It is certainly possible to create a visible pedagogy which would weaken the relation between social class and educational achievement. This may well require a supportive pre-school structure, a relaxing of the framing on pacing and sequencing rules, and a weakening of the framing regulating the flow of communication between the school classroom and the community(ies) the school draws upon (1990:79).

We are now in a position to be quite specific about these requirements in relation to literacy pedagogy. Firstly junior primary practices need to support all students equally and explicitly to read independently, starting with strategies of one-for-one word recognition in the context of the stories they are reading.² Secondly, the framing on sequencing of reading instruction must be relaxed so that it continues to be taught explicitly throughout all educational stages, as part of the overt curriculum, as exemplified in Exchange 4. While this may marginally relax the pacing of the 'content' curriculum, the pacing of the underlying literacy development curriculum will be accelerated through explicit instruction, benefiting all students.

And finally, opening communication between Australian Indigenous communities, homes and schools in the last two decades has led to significant improvements in student retention and positive attitudes to schooling, but has not yet produced the same results for educational achievements (DEST 1997, 2002). In my view this might occur in two ways. A long term strategy may be to weaken the framing regulating the flow of communication between classrooms and teacher training faculties, so that all teachers are pre-service trained to teach equally to all students in their classes, and not just the elite. But to get results within this generation, we may have little choice but to bypass the entrenched class interests dominating the teacher training profession, to develop effective in-service training programs such as the *Learning to Read* project.

Notes:

1. Exchanges 1 and 2 are deliberately reproduced from McGee (1998:163-4), to illustrate contrasts in pedagogic discourse between home and school that this author did not recognise.
2. Beginning readers must learn to recognise one written word in a text for each spoken word ('one-for-one word recognition'). Children with extensive parent-child reading experience may achieve this independently, but others require more intensive support, for which teachers are not adequately trained.

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