

A STORY OF STORIES

**WHAT CAN TEACHERS LEARN FROM THE STORIES CHILDREN TELL?
“The nurturing, evaluation and interpretation of story-telling by children with
language and learning difficulties”**

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of Philosophy in Education (September 2009).

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Signed: Beth McCaffrey.....

ABSTRACT

This research took place over one academic year in a class of 7 children (6 to 7 years old) with statemented learning and language difficulties. The research aimed to explore the question “What can teachers learn from the stories children tell?” with the class teacher having the dual role of teacher and researcher. The research had two foci: the developmental evaluation of a particular pedagogical approach and an open-ended enquiry into what could be learned through the analysis of the stories told by children using a multi-perspective analysis grid. The pedagogical approach was formulated from certain guiding principles: the development of a “pedagogy of listening”, integrated and creative experiences with opportunities for multi-modal representations, the concept of “playful work”, opportunities for therapeutic play within the classroom, and the importance of giving prominence to stories and story-telling. These principles guided the development of a range of story-telling contexts within which the children told stories to the teacher who acted as scribe. The collection of 145 stories was then analyzed using the grid created for the research. This analysis incorporated an assessment of the language and story-telling skills of the children using a range of methods and an interpretation of the social and emotional meanings conveyed in the stories told. An assessment of the stories revealed that the children had made better than expected progress in their development of expressive language, but the meaning of their stories was to be found in different analyses than those used to assess language development. Teachers could learn much from the stories that the children told, but only if they interpreted the stories from a wide range of perspectives. The pedagogical approach was deemed sufficiently effective for the teacher/researcher to continue developing her practice under its guiding principles.

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CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE INSPIRATION, RATIONALE AND AIMS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT.

*“What looked like a broken window
in the phone box door
was actually a very small, lone,
levitating dinosaur”
(John Hegley, 1997:210).*

INSPIRATION

All stories have a beginning, and the beginnings of this research story were the questions prompted by this poem – what do we see and value as teachers in the classroom and what do we overlook? How can we start to glimpse the imaginative worlds of the children with whom we spend our days and how can we interact with these without becoming unwelcome intruders? Speculative questions that needed focus and refinement to guide me in my exploration of classroom life.

A greater focus for this research could already be distilled from ten years of reflective practice concerning the value of story-telling within the school curriculum, and the issues that have persistently both excited and frustrated me during this time. How central to the curriculum should story-telling and story-making be for children with language and learning difficulties? How can the value, import and artistry of children’s stories be evaluated? Can children with language and learning difficulties imagine more than they can express (in whatever form), and how can this expression be facilitated? Which pedagogical approaches best enable stories to weave their magic? The magic to “stimulate the imagination....develop intelligence and clarify emotions” (Bettelheim, 1976:35).

This research will build upon my two previous research studies – “Can the rejected become accepted? The use of story to develop empathy in young children” (MEd: University of Plymouth, 1999) and the pilot study to this research – “An investigation into ways of developing imagination in children with learning and language difficulties” (funded by the Best Practice Research Scholarships (BPRS) in 2003).

The first study took place in a class of 6-7 year olds in a mainstream school, where two of the children were being rejected by their peers and fast becoming unhappy outsiders with equally distressed parents. The necessity for intervention was given greater urgency by my

fear that once the children were consigned to the ranks of the “rejected”, their position would become entrenched. Other children would not play with them for fear that they too would be rejected – rejection becoming a contagious disease for which there was no cure except the increasingly unlikely event of acceptance. “Popular is good, unpopular is bad...and except in my dreams I (do not) side with the unloved” (Gussin-Paley, 1994:11). My ambitious dream was that over the course of a term the children’s skills of empathy could be developed to such an extent that the rule of “You can’t say you can’t play” (Gussin-Paley, 1994) could be implemented during the school day. The intervention chosen to facilitate this comprised story-telling and text-related activities designed to increase levels of self-esteem and co-operation. A range of data was collected including transcripts of children’s discussions, observations and sociometric data (a peer nomination test; a roster and rating technique and a social acceptance scale). The outcome of the study showed that the intervention had significantly reduced occurrences of openly rejecting behaviour and the observations and transcripts also indicated a development of empathy. Disappointingly however, the sociometric data revealed that the sociometric position of the children – their “star” or “rejected” status - remained stable throughout the period of time. Open rejection could be reduced it seemed (under the watchful eye of an adult), but true acceptance did not necessarily follow. My experiences in this research did however serve to further convince me of the power of story-telling within the classroom and its importance above and beyond the literacy lesson. I was also faced with an uncomfortable truth when reading the inspirational Gussin-Paley that “I was neither a good listener, nor an able story-teller when my name became Teacher ... I was a stranger in the classroom, grown distant from the thinking of the children” (Gussin-Paley, 1994:10). In truth, the essence of all my subsequent research narrates my attempts to remedy these shortcomings.

The second study took place after I had started to teach in a special school for children diagnosed with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), often in conjunction with other complex needs (for example Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), speech and language difficulties and a range of emotional and behavioural needs). The final study was a much reduced version of my original wish to investigate ways of developing the children’s imagination whilst concomitantly increasing their skills to express that imagination through a variety of forms incorporating art, music, dance and story-telling. The pilot study eventually focused on the development of children’s expressive language skills (using small-step skills based criteria derived from a variety of national assessment criteria) and an evaluation of

their story-telling skills using an adapted form of Richard Fox's (1990) "Three Worlds of Narrative". A particular pedagogical approach was trialled whereby a series of linked literacy and creative arts lessons were developed that incorporated a variety of art and play therapy techniques, including an adapted form of sand-tray therapy (Carey, 1999; Boik and Goodwin, 2000). Stories were again at the heart of this research and I had been further fuelled by the National Literacy Strategy's (DfEE, 1998) continual and insidious references to "texts"; stories (or parts of stories) important only as tools for instruction and deconstruction. I had narrowed the data collection and analysis to focus entirely upon skills (a position forced by lack of knowledge and pressures of time). The outcomes of the study however indicated that all children had gained between 9 – 27 additional skills in expressive language and 9 out of 10 children showed significant improvement in the areas of story-telling assessed. This gave me the confidence to incorporate and develop some of the pedagogical approaches trialled into my everyday practice. I also started to reflect upon ways of creating a more encompassing analysis of the stories told by children, one that could incorporate a range of perspectives – including an attempt to capture that holy grail of inner dreams and imagination in their metaphorical representations.

In both of these previous studies the focus was upon my own practice, but in this research the words and stories of the children will become the focus of analysis. This shift in emphasis was prompted by the awkward conclusion drawn from the pilot study that one powerful way of developing children's language was simply to listen to them rather than to "teach". Once I allowed the children to tell their stories without continual reminders of success criteria, I discovered that their language was richer than I had ever dreamed. The following two extracts from stories told in the pilot study exemplify why I formulated the overarching question for this research – "What can teachers learn from the stories children tell?"

"It starts a long, long time ago. A really long time ago. This is a big, nasty spider. He lives in the walls and the drains and on the trains. He's got twenty-eight eyes and no mouth. He is looking for his mum. His mum is dead. She is on a train track and the train has run over her.....it's a long time ago...twenty-five years" (Samuel: aged 8).

"The dragon is bleeding. He dies and goes to heaven in the sky. Jesus makes him better.He comes back to life and lives on the yellow and white and blue shiny mountains with silver trees" (Jessica: aged 7).

RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH

The full title of this research is “What can teachers learn from the stories children tell? The nurturing, evaluation and interpretation of story-telling by children with language and learning difficulties”. Its central purpose is to develop a deeper personal understanding about the value of stories and story-telling for the children with whom I work in a special school setting. The research process will also provide a challenging opportunity to rigorously evaluate my pedagogical approach – a process that will hopefully lead to better-informed and richer learning contexts for future classes. It will also offer the opportunity to consider how my approach both concurs with, and differs from, existing guidance on the development of speaking and listening skills, and also to reflect upon the wider question of what similarities and what differences there should be in a curriculum for children with language and learning difficulties from children without such “special” educational needs.

This study hopes to make a small contribution to a specific area of education in which there has been little previous research – the story-telling skills of children with MLD, and the importance of story-telling to their emotional development and the development of their social identities. I could find little literature of direct relevance to guide me when I first embarked on this area of research, and hope therefore that this study may offer something of interest to other classroom practitioners who work with children with learning and language difficulties across a range of contexts.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The aims of this research are mostly exploratory and concerned with the development of my own knowledge and understanding. A second essential element however, is that the research process hopes to benefit and enrich the education of the children involved.

- To explore what can be learned about children’s social, emotional, imaginative and language development by listening to the stories that they tell.
- To develop and evaluate a pedagogical approach that enables children with limited language and literacy skills to express how they feel and what they imagine. To investigate how the children can bring forth “The form of things unknown/ ... and give to airy nothing. A local habitation and a name” (“A Midsummer Night’s Dream”: Shakespeare, 1595-5: Act 5 Sc 1 1.7).

- To create and evaluate a multi-perspective approach to the analysis of stories that children tell.

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED AND ITS SIGNPOSTS

This final process of writing up this research project feels like both the beginning and ending of a long journey along a bumpy “B” road; along which several wrong-turnings have been taken. I am not sure even now if I will complete the journey, or what discoveries I might make on the way. I have never been fond of motorways (preferring the scenic route and plenty of refreshment breaks), a personality trait that is not always the best companion for focused research. In the following chapters I will try to aid both myself and the reader with signposts that make the route to the destination in as logical a fashion as I am able to fathom.

The journey will start in Chapter 2 with a review and discussion of the literature that influenced me both before and during the research, and out of which I will formulate the pedagogical principles that underlie the learning contexts in which the children tell their stories. In Chapter 3 I will aim to make as transparent as possible my own philosophical beliefs and how these affected the research methodologies chosen. I will also reflect on the influence of my dual role as both teacher and researcher and on the ethical decisions made. Details of the research process in action will be outlined - including the context, participants and data collection methods. The final part of this chapter will describe the formation of the multi-perspective analysis grid that will be used to interpret and assess the children’s stories.

In Chapter 4 the words of the children will finally be heard, as their stories will be analysed from the many perspectives on the analysis grid. This analysis will be presented as different “stories”:

- A story of progression (looking at the development (or otherwise) of language skills).
- A story of “weaving enchantments” (Nathan, Temple et. al. in Meek et. al. 1977) – the development (or otherwise) of story-telling skills.

- A story of “informed hearts” (Bettelheim, 1960) – an analysis of the emotions conveyed and the themes to emerge across the stories.
- A story of the development of social and “ethical identities” (Edmiston, 2008).

In Chapter 5 the story of each of the individual children will be told, and in Chapters 6 and 7 the journey will come to its conclusion as I attempt to answer all the questions posited along the way. These answers however will almost inevitably identify the possibilities of other research journeys for either myself or others to make.

“ ... and an ocean tumbled by with a private boat for Max and he sailed off through the night and day... and in and out of weeks and almost over a year to where the wild things are” (Sendak, 1964).

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELEVANT TO THE RESEARCH – REFLECTIONS OF ITS INFLUENCE BOTH ON PRACTICE AND AS A STIMULUS TO FURTHER ENQUIRY.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this research there appeared to be little literature that was directly relevant, but as I started to explore different areas related to the wider concepts of story-telling – including its close alliance to fantasy play and the implications of different pedagogical approaches both on story-telling in general and for children with language and learning difficulties – there was suddenly an overwhelming amount of relevant literature to be reviewed. The themes and findings of such literature however, connected with each other in ways that reflected classroom life, in that they could not easily be segregated or classified. In this chapter I have attempted to review the literature under three distinct headings, but the authors themselves defy this classification and will often be mentioned across the sections.

This chapter will be presented in four parts:

Part 1: A review of literature discussing the value of stories.

Part 2: A review of literature that discusses the role of story-making and story-telling in childhood. This will include the issues related to the importance of fantasy play, and also review the literature about the story-telling of children (and young people with special educational needs (SEN)) in different contexts.

Part 3: A review of a few examples of the wide range of literature concerned with the development of creative and inclusive pedagogies, and the issue of a “specialized” curriculum or otherwise for children with SEN. This section will focus on the concept of a “pedagogy of listening”, a brief review of therapeutic play and its place in the classroom and a short review of literature discussing the concept of a creative curriculum. The literature reviewed is limited because it could otherwise engulf the main focus of the research, but is necessary because it will have direct influence upon the learning contexts in which the children in this research will finally tell their stories.

Part 4: This section will outline the claims to originality of this research and also the areas where it aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. I will outline the particular

pedagogical principles guiding the research process and also identify the questions arising from the review of literature that it will address throughout.

PART 1: THE VALUE OF STORIES.

“To be human and to live in a meaningful way within a culture requires that we live in and through a very sophisticated, abstract system that is largely imaginary. To be incapable of fantasy is to be barred from human culture” (Vandenberg, 1986 in Cattanach, 1994: 4).

“What stories satisfy is life’s hunger for itself, its desire to exist, its desire to be turned on, and its desire to be given form and made able to flow. We want to join in the game and stories form and equip us to do so” (Cupitt, 1991 in Wood and Richardson, 1992:121).

These are just two quotations from the many that I could have used extolling the value of stories and the sense that their sharing is an essential feature of being human. Indeed, “we are the only animals that tell each other stories” (Baldock, 2006: 3), and “Sutton-Smith (1981) ... suggests that the universality of story and its primacy in human history makes it likely that “the most basic human mind is a story-telling one”” (Fox, 1993:72).

This section is particularly concerned with the stories that are shared with children by adults rather than the stories that the children themselves tell. The term “story” here is therefore not taken as synonymous to “narrative” – that “primary act of mind transferred to art from life ... that habit we call “storying”” (Hardy, 1968, in Meek ed, 1977:12), but as that habit transferred into the “form we give to fiction and call art - the mode of completed experience” (Langer, 1953 in *ibid*:73). Indeed the concept of story used throughout this research is one that relates primarily to fictional and mythic tales; tales with an expectation of a particular story grammar (initially proposed by Propp, 1928), where symbol and metaphor are integral to the meanings conveyed, and where agency is in the perspective of the third person. I am thus making a distinction in this research between fictional and personal narratives – those stories narrated in the first person that recall events from life that are non-metaphorical (ostensibly at least), and with more fluid expectations in relation to their structure. There are many similarities between the genres however, since both can be viewed essentially as expressions of meaning “of significance to the teller and of interest to the listener” (Norrick, 2000 in Grove, 2007:254) and both sharing a need for evaluation that conveys the emotional significance of the events conveyed. The distinction between fictional stories and

personal narrative may blur further as we move into the realm of the stories told by the children. It is certainly likely that the “stories” as then defined, will have far less a sense of completeness or “art” about them, and it may also be that the personal experiences of the children will appear in the same form that they would in a personal narrative; undisguised by the cloak of metaphor.

The stories that are integral to the learning contexts in the research will all be fictional stories and it is important that as teachers we have some way of evaluating the stories that we share with children. It is in this area only, that I could find any dissent to an apparently universal acceptance that stories are a valuable part of a child’s education. The area of dissent lies specifically around the value or otherwise of a particular form of story – myths and (in particular) European fairy-tales. This will be further explored later, and my own criteria for selecting the stories used in the research outlined in the description of the methodology used.

It can only be assumed that alongside others, the authors of the current National Curriculum (DES, 1989) and Primary Literacy Framework (DfES, 2006) in England share the beliefs that stories are of value in children’s lives because they still retain a relatively dominant place in the range of texts suggested. There is no clarification of their importance and relevance to the lives of children however, and it is possible that some educators may see their inclusion simply as a following of tradition, and be oblivious to the opportunities missed if the mechanical deconstruction of texts is not enriched by a more holistic and emotionally engaging approach. The revised Literacy Framework (2006) does allow more time and freedom than its predecessor (National Literacy Strategy, DfEE, 1998) for the reading and dramatization of each genre of text, but essentially the focus is upon understanding the conventions of the genres in order to become competent readers and writers of these. These are of course essential educational aims, and one of the values of stories is indeed the opportunity for cognitive development and exemplification of an art form that they afford. The value of literature in education has always been recognized as more than this however, even in the early framing of the national frameworks:

“Literature has a number of important roles to play in improving abilities in writing and speaking and listening as well as in developing the child’s imagination and aesthetic sense” (DES, 1989 para: 7.8). Knight (1996) however points out - “Note the “as well as”. The point is, that no committee was ever established to explore

how the child's imagination and aesthetic sense are developed through literature – the process is taken for granted ... The result is a curriculum essentially utilitarian in its attitude to stories, drama and poetry” (Knight, 1996, in Grove, 1998:5).

Grove (1998:2005) highlights how this utilitarian provision can become further accentuated for children and young people with learning difficulties:

“Literature may seem an irrelevance to many teachers working with students who have learning difficulties. The emphasis... has always been on developing the functional skills in communication and literacy, and it may be argued that “doing Shakespeare” is a waste of time ... However... narrative and poetry are fundamental to our emotional and cognitive functioning, providing the means by which we make sense of our experiences and relate to those of others” (Grove, 1998:8).

Moreover, “literature has a power that goes beyond words and that literature is too important to be restricted to those who can read it” (Grove, 2005: ix). Grove is referring to the relevance of texts to the lives of secondary aged students, but her argument is equally as valid for the younger children who are the participants in this research, and some of the stories that I choose to share with them may seem to be far beyond their linguistic and cognitive abilities, but will hopefully resonate emotionally and aesthetically. Even at the word level, it is self-evident that children can only develop a wider vocabulary if they are exposed to one:

“children need to be surrounded by rich language...if they are to become interested and excited about words, they will need the stimulus of constantly meeting new ones, especially in books” (Fox, 1993:49).

Before moving to other areas of development for which stories have value, it is important to explore further the claims that stories further the cognitive development of children. The National Literacy Strategy (1989) and Primary Literacy Framework (2006) exemplify how the studying and discussion of texts can become rich learning lessons for the development of vocabulary, grammar and comprehension. The interest and enjoyment they engender in children can facilitate this learning and for similar reasons stories are often used as starting points for other curriculum areas. I do not intend to refute this use of stories as a powerful learning medium, but there does need to be a balance between such teaching and establishing a time when whole stories are shared – for the stories own sake. As Baldock observed of some practitioners “A story may have scarcely have begun before the story-

teller drifts off into a discussion of the different colours on the page of the book being used” (Baldock, 2006:53). An anecdotal tale comes also from a conference I attended where fellow teacher-researchers were sharing their practice, and one teacher had discussed story-time with her children who were almost unanimous in stating a preference for a story “read all the way though without stopping”. Interestingly, Wells (1986) reveals in “The Meaning Makers” that in all the families that he studied it was – perhaps not surprisingly – the children from literate families who were at a particular advantage when they started formal education. But, most relevantly here, “of all the activities that were characteristic of such households, it was the sharing of stories that we found to be the most important” (Wells, 1986:94 in Engel, 1995:15).

Another area of cognitive development that is so important to all our lives is that of narrative competence – the ability to use memory as “the link which fastens together narrations and annotations of time” (Meek, 1984 in Fox, 1993:68). Baldock explains that:

“We rely on our memory to keep in mind the sequence of events that constitutes the story as it progresses. Without it the story would become a series of unrelated experiences...unless affected by a trauma of some kind we have a memory of who we are ourselves that is inextricably narrative in structure” (Baldock,2006:5).

He also explores how the narrative competence of young children is displayed by the books that hold their interest at different stages of development. Early books will be little more than “heaps” (Applebee, 1978 in *ibid*: 27) with a single picture on a page, but because you only look at one page at a time the earliest stages of narration are introduced:

“The easiest truly narrative sequence for the child to understand is one based on a daily routine because of the importance of that type of sequence in the child’s growing understanding of the world... traditional tales whose narrative is structured around Olrik’s law of three probably gives many children in our culture their first encounter with the potential interest of a sequence that leads to a climax rather than constituting a routine. It is because this advance is potentially problematic that the telling of these stories always entails extensive use of repetition, with the same formula, often one that can be chanted or shouted, being used on each of the three occasions.” (*ibid*: 48).

It is essential for all children to be able to narrate their own story and develop a sense of who they are and who they are becoming. Narrative competence is therefore an essential skill to develop, particularly for children who experience difficulties with the cognitive

processes of language, sequencing and memory. If they are not enabled to narrate their own story, others will attempt to write their life scripts for them – leading to disempowerment in the widest possible sense. One of the questions that will be explored in this research through the analysis of the stories that the children tell, will be if these stories reflect a development in narrative competence both in forms of simple sequencing and in any uses they make of the conventions in our culture of a story-telling mode of narration. At a different level the stories will be interpreted to see if it is possible to develop a sense of the personal narratives the children are themselves exploring.

A quite different aspect to the proposed value of stories (often linked to the value of myths and fairy-tales) is that they deal in symbolic form with the existential questions of our own humanity:

“Like the heroes and people in tales hundreds and thousands of years old, people still face violence, encounter rejection, seek love, and finally death irrespective of their particular social circumstances and cultural background. As the mythologist Wendy Doniger stresses “Myths raise certain basic questions of human meaning...myths are about the human experiences that we all share – birth, love, hate, death”(1995:1)” (Edmiston,2008:26).

Some of the earliest and most famous (or infamous) writing on the power of story was that of Bettelheim about the importance of fairy-tales. He stated that these tales (in their original forms) dealt with the “universal emotions of love, hate, fear, rage, loneliness, worthlessness and deprivation” (Bettelheim, 1976:12). The special status of myths and fairy-tales lies in their use of symbolic language to speak of cross-cultural archetypal themes. “Because there are innumerable things beyond the range of human understanding, we constantly use symbolic terms to represent concepts that we cannot define or fully comprehend” (Jung, 1964 in Greenhalgh, 1994:141).The power of the metaphorical images employed in myths and fairy-tales is firstly their polyvalency – their capacity to say several things simultaneously – and secondly their subject matter. These themes are basic to human existence. “Those existential problems (which) are crucial issues for all of us... death... ageing...the limits of our existence ...and the wish for eternal life” (Bettelheim, 1978 in Rosen, 1992:34).

The images also offer symbolic opportunities for difficult emotional tasks such as learning to tolerate loving and hating the same person, and enabling us to meet with our darker feelings

“encouraged by the fact they do not appear to be our own we can deny responsibility for them, and the discovery that others share our propensities lessens our feelings of guilt” (Lesser, 1957:240). Children as well as adults have powerful feelings, but as is so often apparent in lessons that attempt to “teach” about “emotional literacy”, there are limitations to the use of everyday language to talk about feelings.

“Stories can speak to children on a deeper and more immediate level ...this is because everyday language is a “language of thinking”, whereas speaking through a storymeans using the “language of imagining” In dreams, images and metaphors are the mind’s chosen way of processing powerful feelings in our past or present as well as having our fears and hopes for the future. A story is simply like having a dream whilst being awake” (Sunderland, 2001:4-5).

There were many critics of Bettelheim’s assertion of the value of the European fairy-tales, for reasons related both to the violence of their themes and also to the social world order they sought to preserve (rather than being universal they in fact tend to favour a patriarchal society with an established class system). Zipes (1995) critiques in particular the fairy-tales of the Grimms brothers stating that

“Like the Grimms themselves we want to continue to be baffled and amazed by our attraction to these tales, which provide clues to the crucial familial and social problems of the modern world. Unfortunately we also want to overlook these clues of ambivalent feeling by focusing on childish enchantments and happy endings” (Zipes, 1995:222).

Zipes did not in any way wish to detract from the value of stories themselves however, viewing story-telling as a potentially powerful instrument for social change:

“I tend to think that the model for the storyteller should be the little child in Anderson’s “The Emperor’s New Clothes”... the child’s single sentence is a subversive story...once this little storyteller speaks there is no longer a need for repression. The people can laugh, share this story and pass it on, just as Anderson did” ((ibid).

As for the violence and darkness of fairy-tales, this issue is still unresolved in classrooms across the country, with teachers choosing their own preferences for the original or more sanitized versions of the tales. There does not however appear to be as much of an issue regarding other myths, whose status in many ways remains intact. Myths, fairy-tales and

other stories, importantly offer children an opportunity to deal with their fears and other overwhelming feelings:

“ I have no doubt that the more a child is entertained by tales of surmountable fearful fantasies, the less that child is oppressed by the phantoms which threaten from within his or her own personal darkness” (Rosen,1990:30).

“Fairy tales taught humankind in the past and continue to teach children in the present, that the way to meet dark mythical forces is with cunning and high spirits” (Woods and Richardson, 1992:12).

The issue will not be addressed in this study, but there is still a whole area of potential research regarding both the types of stories (and possibly the security of the setting in which the children encounter them) suitable for individual children and for groups of children from different social and ethnic backgrounds. I am aware for example, that I am far more sensitive about reading stories such as Hansel and Gretel if I know there is a child living with a step-mother in the class. It is also important to ponder whether encountering “dark mythical forces” in stories is the same as encountering them in films and television, and if not, then how is this different and how do we make decisions as to suitability? The only thing I am fairly certain of in this area, is that a majority of teachers of young children will have at some time despaired about the viewing habits (of television and other media) of some of their pupils and the usually negative way that this is perceived to influence their play. This research will touch upon this area when reflecting upon the themes of the children’s stories, any influences upon them that can be deduced and any indications of their developing understanding of the society in which they live.

The view taken in this study perhaps aligns most closely to that of the Rustins (1987) who acknowledged that whilst fairy-tales and myths do reflect universal and symbolic experiences, they also inescapably reflect the culture in which they were forged. The Rustins place great value on the psychological and emotional power of literature, but look rather to the children’s writers of this century, whom they claim are “integrative and forgiving in their morality, rather than splitting and punitive” (Rustin and Rustin,1987:21). In contrast to the death or banishment of the “wicked” step-mother (for example), in fairy-tales, the Rustins refer to examples of “symbolic reconciliation” in modern literature such as that “between the boy member of the ship’s crew and one slave boy in “The Slave Dancer” (Fox,

1973) and even Manny Rat who is rehabilitated as Uncle Manny in “The Mouse and his Child” (Hoban, 1976)” (ibid).

Stories are a rich source for the study of human feelings and behaviour and children are thereby offered the opportunity to encounter characters who may both parallel their own experiences and vicariously extend their experiences and understanding of others:

“In sensing their kinship with the lives of others they are presented with the means of escaping from the bonds of narrow ego-centrality. The delighted recognition of ourselves in others and others in ourselves is one of the most potent insights literature can afford” (Fitzpatrick in Roberts, 1988:108).

Alongside the extreme and one-dimensional characters of myths, it is therefore important that children encounter characters who reflect their own complexities. Children should be presented with the fact that all is not “black and white”, but mostly grey. Gussin-Paley notes that:

“If for example in the process of pretending to be someone else children learn, even for a moment, to walk in another person’s footsteps... this is surely crucial to their continual inquiry into the nature of human consciousness” (Gussin-Paley, 1990 :61).

This leads to the concept that stories can be a forum for children to explore and identify their own social and ethical identities. Mellon (2000) sees the possibilities for this within the extreme opposites in myths. “Opposition is the foundation for morality. Character consciousness grows in the space between yes and no” (Mellon, 2000:107). Edmiston also sees the importance of mythically competing views but believes that:

“Meaning can be regarded as made in dialogic interplay among the positions of characters and readers on the meaning of a particular event. The dragon, the knight, the lady, the people, and different readers of the story all have different and competing interpretations of the events in the St. George narrative. Rather than being in binary opposition they are, in Holquist’s phrase, “in reciprocal simultaneity that yokes each of these pairings in dialogue not only with each other, but with other categories as well” (Holquist, 1990: xxvii in Edmiston, 2008:30).

Characters in all narratives “have particular social positions in relation to the other characters and how each views and interprets an encounter” (ibid: 31).

Children can identify emotionally with characters in stories but also reflect upon their actions and motivations – identifying ways that characters “should” behave. Alongside a developing emotional and ethical awareness, stories simultaneously convey the social mores of their culture. One of the explicit purposes of stories used to be as a “moral” tale, and this is still of value today. The underlying social text may however be more subtle and subversive than this, and these are the social messages that Zipes (1995) exhorts his readers to reveal. Literature can also be used however, to deliberately foster the expectations of a culture, and St. Amour concludes from her study into story-telling amongst different cultures that “stories change to fit our worlds....conversely stories may change our worlds” (St. Amour, 2003:173). She concludes that “if stories have a multi-cultural focus it is only natural that readers and participants will develop an appreciation of both cultural similarities and differences” (ibid). Again there is little evidence-based research to suggest using stories to deliberately convey the expectations of changing cultures is influential or otherwise, or even if using stories to develop desired behaviour (for example kindness and sharing), as has been common practice in education for centuries (for example, “The Good Samaritan” in the Bible) has more or less effect alone or in combination with other contextual factors.

From this review of the literature it is clear that stories have been the subject of much writing and research, but it is still not possible to definitively state their comparative value to other educational practices in the areas of cognitive, emotional, social and ethical development. There does appear however to be general consensus that stories are powerful and valuable companions in the lives of children (and indeed adults), although some stories may be regarded as being more or less suitable than others by different groups of people. This research could have become a further investigation into either reader-response to particular stories or to the proposed effect of stories in one or more areas of development. It will however, approach this area from a different angle; by developing a system of multi-layered analysis that will attempt to interpret the stories told by children (created within a learning environment in which stories and story-telling are highly valued) by looking at the areas stated above – cognitive, emotional, social and ethical development.

PART 2: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE VALUE OF STORY-MAKING AND STORY-TELLING ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN.

(1) THE ROLE OF PLAY AND FANTASY PLAY IN CHILDHOOD.

I had not initially considered that the concept of play was of particular relevance to this research, since I have not been an early years practitioner and because I did not consider that the learning contexts I was intending to develop actually constituted play. Interestingly, there has always been play in the classes of Year 2 to Year 3 children that I teach, but it has been disguised on the time-table as “independent learning”. This was not a deliberate ploy; it was simply the way that I viewed this aspect of my practice. As soon as I was guided to this area of literature its central relevance to the research became apparent. There was an immediate comparability with the concept of the value of story, in that it appears common practice to espouse the importance of both, but there is confusion about the value that they constitute and even less clarity about how these important experiences should be provided for in the classroom. The literature on play also brought into sharp focus the tensions that exist between child-initiated and adult-directed play in the classroom; which is a tension that continues at all stages of education, although it may later be described as learning rather than play. Wood has encapsulated this dilemma as essentially one between the “cultural transmission/ directive approach (and the) emergent/responsive approach” (Wood, 2009:15).

John Comenius (1592-1670) was possibly one of the earliest advocates of play as a pedagogical approach, when he stated its importance (alongside sensory experiences) compared to rote learning, and play has been on the educational agenda ever since. The recent policy frameworks in England all “provide positive validations for play as a key characteristic of effective practice in early childhood education (and) similar validations can be found in many countries” (Wood, 2009, 12). Guha (1988) however, made clear that we need “to distinguish between play “as such” and play in schools” (in Wood and Attfield, 2005:17). Once play is pronounced as a pedagogical approach then we “can’t just laugh or play for the fun of it. Truth has to be more sombre.” (Cohen, 2006:15). This is also true of course when play is viewed as being of therapeutic value, but the meaning and contexts for play will then be subtly altered. I am aware that it is a false dichotomy but the therapeutic value of play and the contexts for this will be reviewed in the third part of this chapter – and the emphasis here will be upon play as pedagogy.

Dewey wrote - “I believe that education is a process of living and not a preparation for future living” (Dewey, 1897 in Pound, 2005:21), but as Bennett et al (1997) deduced “play in school is structured (and sometimes constrained by) contextual influences, and the need to provide evidence of learning in relation to measurable outcomes” (in Wood and Attfield, 2005: 17). Clearly educational play is regarded as a preparation for future learning. This must obviously be one of the goals for education, but does an outcomes-driven approach not only deny children of experiences that may be joyous and valuable in themselves (for example free play) but ironically also decrease the efficacy of a system that supposedly wishes to create self-motivated and creative learners? This is part of the wider “content versus process” debate around the curriculum, and one that seems to sway one way and another at different times. Currently I would suggest, whilst national guidance pays lip-service to the processes of learning, to the importance of child-initiated play and to developing creativity, the narrowness of the measurable outcomes by which children and schools are still judged, leaves teachers in a world of ambiguity. This phenomenon is not only confined to the education system in the United Kingdom, but clearly also in America, where Gussin-Paley laments that:

“Expectations for incoming first-graders are quite precise, and the tension begins even before the teachers and children meet. The potential for surprise is largely gone – we no longer wonder who are you”, but instead decide quickly “what can we do to fix you?” (Gussin-Paley, 2004:47).

Play is valued within the context of an outcomes based environment as a means for achieving those outcomes; it is a utilitarian approach to play reflecting the utilitarian approach to stories in the previous section. This situation is succinctly described by Wood (2009):

“ I will argue that the focus on what play does for children, can be seen as an “outside-in” perspective, which derives from the cultural transmission/directive approach and privileges adults’ plans for play, and their interpretations of play and educational outcomes. In contrast, what play means for children can be seen as an “inside-out” perspective, which derives from the emergent/responsive approach and privileges children’s cultural practices, meanings and purposes. Both perspectives are important for understanding play in education settings, but problems arise when the former dominates the latter” (Wood, 2009:15).

This position is clearly exemplified by a statement from the “Early Years Foundation Stage” (EYFS) guidance that – “through play, in a secure but challenging environment with effective

adult support, children can explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them to make sense of the world....” (DCSF, 2008). As a teacher I am left wondering as to the exact meaning of many of those words in order to translate such a statement into practice. The play that is described in this study is taking place in such a specific context (although a context that will be interpreted in an infinite number of ways), that I am now left wondering “what is play?”

“Play” is clearly not defined by the activities often associated with it, since these may be differently described in different contexts. For example, construction “play” in the Foundation Stage may become a “Design and Technology” activity in Key Stage 1, and socio-dramatic play can easily be converted into Speaking and Listening. A definition of “play” is therefore more usefully sought by clarification of its fundamental characteristics. One such characteristic is the notion of “playfulness”. “Play” can then be defined by the attitudes and motivations of the player rather than the activity itself that is taking place.

Once we use the concept of “playfulness”, it can clearly be applied across a wide range of situations:

“Schechner argues that playing “is an ever-present possibility in all activities – we are “at play” during any interaction whenever we recognize that our “relationships are provisional” (1988:11). We are playing when we see the world as dynamic and changing. We are not playing when we see the world as fixed and static” (Edmiston, 2008:61).

A definition more easily recognizable within school settings are Meckley’s (2002) characteristics of play:

“Play is child-chosen...child-invented...pretend, but done as if it were real...focuses on the doing (process not product)...done by the players (children) not adults... (and) requires active involvement. Play is fun” (in Wood and Attfield, 2005:4).

These characteristics would be helpful guidance in distinguishing certain activities within the classroom as play or not play. The key characteristic in making the distinction however, seems to be that play is “child-chosen...child invented”. This in itself may be the distinction between the construction play freely-chosen by the child in the Foundation Stage and the Design and Technology activity in Key Stage 1, to which the child has been directed by an adult. However, once the Key Stage 1 child is engaged in the activity (and provided the

outcomes are not pre-determined), there is no reason why an attitude of playfulness should not be equally as present, nor that it should be any less fun or focused upon process.

“Playfulness” then, may be present in a wide range of activities (participated in by both adults and children), and is closely aligned to the qualities of open-mindedness, creativity, responsiveness and engagement. In order for an activity to be defined as “play” however it may be necessary that it is “child-chosen” (or “child-initiated” in the language of the EYFS (2008)). It is also linked quintessentially to childhood, and the games “played” by adults are clearly distinguishable forms of rule-bound and outcome-driven activities.

The characteristics of play so far described however, do not fully explain why it is deemed so educationally valuable. Vygotsky (Appendix 1) saw play as an essentially semiotic activity, thereby creating “early experiences of complex, abstract thinking in which action increasingly arises from ideas rather than from things” (Wood and Attfield, 2005:108). Sutton-Smith (1997) also links play with cognitive development by stating that “although play is seldom the only determinant of any of the important forms of learning that occur in children, play in childhood is progressive and may facilitate transfer of knowledge and skills between different contexts” (in Wood, 2008:113). Wood also outlines how:

“children’s play development moves along paths of increasing social, physical, affective and cognitive complexity....play typically becomes more organized and industrious, more rule-bound, and focused on ends as well as on means....in play, children often display the positive attributes and dispositions that are considered essential to lifelong learning” (ibid).

It has now become once more a complex task to define those activities within a classroom that constitute play and those that may be described as something else. It is possible however, to evaluate each situation according to a range of characteristics that can be said to encapsulate playfulness. Fromberg’s (1987) characteristics describe play as “symbolic...meaningful (in that it connects or relates to experiences) ...pleasurable... voluntary and intrinsically motivated...rule-governed (whether implicitly or explicitly expressed) (and) episodic” (Wood and Attfeld, 2005:6).

“As a result, play can be categorized as “more or less play, not dichotomously as “play or not play”. Behaviours meeting all criteria might be categorized as “pure play”, whereas behaviours with fewer components are “less purely play”. Simply

put, acts should not be categorized as “play” or “not-play”; they should be related along a continuum from “pure play” to “non-play” (Pellegrini, 1991:215 in *ibid*: 6).

The concept of a continuum of “play” is useful for this research, but it remains important to maintain a distinction between the concepts of “play” and “playfulness”. As previously discussed, playfulness can be present across a wide spectrum of activities and whilst I am now going to broaden the scope of play as an activity descriptor (from activities that are wholly child-initiated to those that may be introduced by an adult but are then “voluntary and intrinsically motivated”), it is still a narrow descriptor of an experience whilst playfulness is a much broader descriptor of an attitude.

Fromberg’s characteristics of play however can usefully be applied across a much wider range of experiences, and the value of fostering these in all educational activities (however defined) is clear to see; for example, “personal attentiveness...personal involvement and motivation.... (and) emotional engagement” (Wood, 2009:27). These three attitudes are the polar opposite to the disengagement and poor concentration that can frustrate both teacher and pupil alike. Wood then describes other characteristics of play, namely the “potentials” that a situation of playfulness creates the space to develop – “imaginative potential... communicative potential and capability....relational potential... (and) problem-creating and problem-solving potential” (*ibid*: 28). The pedagogical value of “play” and “playfulness” is now clear to see, and the opportunities it provides for meaningful learning opportunities. The challenge for teachers is to provide the context for a playful disposition to develop and, crucially, to decide upon the role of adults in the class for interacting with the children to best enhance the potentials of play. There is then the additional challenge of maintaining similar levels of engagement and motivation by encouraging and developing playfulness in activities that are more structured and less flexible in their outcomes.

Before discussing this crucial issue however, it is necessary to look more closely at the particular type of play that is most relevant to this research – role play, and particularly, fantasy play. It was in this type of play that Vygotsky observed that “a child behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour, in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself” (Vygotsky, 1978:102). It is linked closely to story-telling and “story-play” (Meek, 1991:108), which enables children “to be themselves in a real world or in an imaginary world, they can be imaginary people in that world or imaginary people in the real world” (Craft et al (ed), 2001:68). It has also been asserted that this type of play can be regarded

as authorship, because “although authorship is not of the formal, written kind, it nevertheless shares common features of plot, characterization, sequencing, scripting and editing” (Hall and Robinson, 1995 in Wood and Attfield, 2005:145). Booth’s (1994) description of the essential characteristics of drama and role-play also make clear the connections with story-telling. These include children:

“Sharing the creations of their imaginations; using story elements to structure their ideas; creating new worlds of meaning; communicating meanings explicitly to others; stimulating lateral thinking; playing out problems and possibilities; inventing, elaborating and extending themes; combining experience and creating knowledge (and) making connections between spoken and written language” (Booth, 1994 in ibid:145).

Viewing fantasy play as a type of authorship, clarifies slightly one of the definitions that may be given to “story” (when told by children) in this research. It is not planned to record the narratives that may occur during their fantasy play (although the stories themselves may arise out of this), but stories that are self-consciously told as “stories”. They will in a sense be “life transferred to art”, and a more completed form of experience than the play itself. This research seems to be establishing for itself the need to constantly move along different continua; in this instance the continuum between fantasy play and the art form we call a story.

Children also play along other continua as they encapsulate the paradoxical nature of play itself. As Wood and Attfield argue:

“Children play to detach themselves from reality, but at the same time they get closer to reality... (play involves) dialogue between reality and fantasy: real and not real: real worlds and play worlds: past, present and future: the logical and the abstract: the known and the unknown: the actual and the possible: safety and risk: chaos and order” (ibid: 7).

In Edmiston’s detailed and evocative description of the “mythic play” in which he participates with his son Michael he describes how:

“Playing in different narrative worlds gave Michael and me increasingly complex answers. Is death the end of life? Not in the world of the zombies. Yes, and no, if you are Dr. Frankenstein. Is love stronger than hate? Yes, if you love the Beast as Beauty did. No, if Mr Hyde kills you. Can good defeat evil? Yes, if you “use the force” in the world of Star Wars. Maybe if you can’t kill a murderous zombie” (Edmiston, 2008:52).

This shows how careful observation of the meaning of a child's play for the child can reveal much that could otherwise be missed, especially if an adult would actually prefer that the play was exploring other issues related to planned learning outcomes. Jones (2001) likewise exhorts us to pay attention to the play of the children we care for because "their fantasies will tell us what they feel they need to attain....but we need to look beyond our adult expectations and interpretations and see them through our children's eyes" (Jones, 2001:21 in Edmiston, 2008:59).

The whole issue of "pretending" is in itself remarkable, and can be observed in play from early childhood. "Berguno and Bowler (2004) found that three year olds ...understood enough about pretending to play pretending games (in the sense of) "being as if" (Cohen, 2006:133). Cohen asserts however, that there is a certain point in pretending when children cross an important barrier:

"Children know that you do not have to show what you feel. There are parts of your thinking that you do not need to reveal.... For the child, knowing that it can act not "for real", would seem to mark a crucial change in its sense of its own identity and its secret power." (Cohen, 2006: 63-64).

Role-play also enables children to shift between different characters and different perspectives - "...as young children become intentional players ...their playing suggests an additional knowledge they gain – knowledge of their own sense of identity...frequent skipping in and out of roles, would seem to be a way of testing identity, learning who I am through playing many roles; I test the boundaries of myself" (ibid: 182).

Individual children however, may have very different ways of exploring their identities and the roles that they adopt; as for example this description from Edmiston shows.... "whilst Michael pretended to dig up Dracula, Mary pretended to look for pumpkins" (Edmiston, 2008:59). I wonder which play would be seen as the most acceptable in a classroom? Edmiston himself states "in valuing mythic play, I found myself at odds with many of the negative or neutral judgements made by some teachers and academics about what is most often termed superhero play, as well as weapons play, violent play and war play" (ibid). Certainly one of the concerns of teachers will be that play-fighting and play-violence can all too easily become real. This could potentially be for two reasons; the first is that the children are unable to distinguish the boundaries between "real" or "pretend" fighting, or that they

simply get “carried away” with the physicality and emotion of the situation. This tendency may be greater for children who experience difficulties with making distinctions along the real and not-real continuum (for example children with autism). The second reason is that play is used as an excuse for aggression (the “I was only playing” scenario). Sutton-Smith (1997) talks about the “darker side of play” (Wood and Attfield, 2005:49), and the incidents of bullying and unhappy playtimes in all schools certainly cannot allow practitioners to blithely accept that play is always necessarily “good play”. This concept will be explored further in the section on therapeutic play.

What is still far from clear is the relationship (if any) between violent themes in play and violence in real-life (echoing the dilemma of violent fairy-tales and films in the previous section). Edmiston includes a quote from a teacher who is vehemently opposed to war play:

“Do we want to raise children who learn that we kill people when we are bad or when we don’t agree with them?... I don’t believe it is OK to pretend that someone is getting hurt. I believe that society is promoting the kind of play in children that develops a war mentality, and as teachers we have a responsibility to sabotage it” (teacher quoted in Carlsson-Paige and Levin, 1987:5 in Edmiston, 2008:59).

Katch (2001) however, who is quoted in the same book posits the opposite argument:

“One thing I have learned is making a clear distinction between pretend violence and behaviour that truly hurts or frightens children – pretend violence, like pointing a finger and saying “bang” whilst your friend falls on the ground, does not hurt anyone and the rules can be negotiated by everyone involved in the game. Real violence hurts bodies, minds and feelings, is frightening and is often closely connected with exclusion Excluding someone from the group seems to justify violence, both for the excluded child and for those excluding him” (Katch, 2001:1290130 in *ibid*: 61).

If an adult is to intervene in such play – either to stop it or to try and ensure inclusion of all – then we are faced with a real dilemma. In both situations we are trying to impose our power, and therefore not modelling the negotiations that we wish the children themselves to use in play. “Zero tolerance relies on the use of adult power in the real world to enforce a moral and behavioural imperative against powerless children operating in a fantasy world” (Holland, 2003: in *ibid*: 99). Adults must both exemplify the behaviours they wish to see and literally and metaphorically explore those ever present urges to violence and exclusion. One such possible example of practice is demonstrated in the works of both Edmiston (2008) and Gussin-Paley (1990; 2004) who through genuine interest and interchange enter the play

landscapes of the children they describe. Michael explores many ethical matters (“Why did Dr Frankenstein not use his power to do well? How could you stop someone who wants to kill?” (Edmiston, 2008:53)), and the children in Gussin-Paley’s class (whilst they never reach a state of complete equality of access to play) make startling strides both in expressions of compassion and in understanding and empathy that is eventually reflected in the greater inclusivity of their play behaviours and through their discussion of the rule “You Can’t Say You can’t Play”. The importance of trying to establish an ethos of equal participation in play is outlined early in her book:

“No one wants to force the issue. And so Clara will continue to find solace in her cubby and Angelo will stare at us as if we are strangers. Furthermore, Charlie will get used to being the boss and Lisa can push Clara out one day and Smita the next and Cynthia after that. The way we do it, exclusion is written into the game of play. And play, as we know, will soon be the game of life” (Gussin-Paley, 1990:20).

Whilst my research will not be dealing directly with superhero or fantasy play, I know that some of the plots in the story-telling that will take place may often not be to my liking. I am also guessing that it may well be the stories of the boys that will cause me the most concern. Before the research has even started I am wondering how I will react if the children start to recount long fighting sequences to the exclusion of everything else. Gussin-Paley, in an earlier work examined her own attitude to the fantasy play of the boys in her class and concluded that:

“If I have not yet learned to love Darth Vader, I have at least made some useful discoveries while watching him play. As I interrupt less, it becomes clear that boys’ play is serious drama, not morbid mischief, its rhythms and images are often discordant to me, but I must try to make sense of a style that after all, belongs to half the population of the classroom” (Gussin-Paley, 1984: xii).

This leads to another great tension for practitioners when providing contexts for play in school; which types of play are acceptable to their sense of order and control within the classroom? Play, has, almost by definition a “revolutionary nature” (Wood, 2008:115).

“In stretching towards play, children and adults may also be pulling away from reality, and may use play to subvert or challenge dominant forms of power and control. Therefore, it is the revolutionary nature of play that makes it difficult to accommodate in education settings. This is particularly salient in pure play ... which takes place outside the realms of adult control, and generates emergent and unpredictable processes and outcomes” (ibid).

Even Gussin-Paley, with her lifelong dedication to the value of play has moments that must surely be empathized with by every teacher in classrooms where play takes place:

“How do they get along at the sand table I wonder. Ours is impossible today. Everyone seems determined to ruin someone else’s play and I have little inclination or desire to sort out the messy details. Nothing would suit me better than just to cover the table” (Gussin-Paley, 1990: 130).

This leads into perhaps the most crucial aspect of the section in relation to this research; the role of the adult in play, and more centrally for my purposes, whether the positive characteristics and attitudes concomitant with play can be transferred to activities that are adult-directed to a greater or lesser extent. The children in this research will be in Years 2 and 3, and whilst they enjoy periods of “independent learning” (or “play”), they expect to do “work”. For some of them (but not all) it is a sign of “growing up” and doing the same as other siblings who may not be within a special school setting. As I am not an early years practitioner, I am also more comfortable with the concept of adult-directed activities. However, I am hoping here, to explore the concept of “playful work”, and by reflecting on the literature, to consider if this is an oxymoron, or if it is something which is possible to achieve.

Clearly interaction by older others is an essential part of play early in life, for example, when babies interact with their carers and siblings in the earliest forms of play. Edmiston’s recount of his play with his son recalls that “mythic play arose whenever Michael and I pretended to interact as the characters in the mythic narratives that captivated him” (Edmiston, 2008:33). This follows the guiding principle that “adult interactions and interventions should be tuned into what is happening in the play and should respect the flow and spirit of the play” (Wood and Attfield, 2005:182-183). Clearly this intuitive interaction could be qualitatively different to the interactions from adults indicated in the findings of the study on the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) that “potentially instructive” and “planned and purposeful play” indicate a pro-active role for practitioners” (Wood, 2009:22). Wood notes that “these (findings) are open to misinterpretation in practice, and it raises questions about whose notions of instruction, and whose plans are privileged” (ibid). It seems that in-sensitive and over-controlling interactions into children’s “pure play” are quite possible, and conversely it is conceivable that a “playful” attitude could be inserted by adults into a situation that might be described as “work”. “Spontaneous, playful interactions can occur in adult-directed activities, just as children can be deeply engrossed and “workful” in their play” (Wood and Attfield, 2005: 183).

There are clearly degrees of adult intervention from playful and responsive to non-responsive and directive, and these can be qualitatively different from each other across a spectrum of educational activities. These educational activities can themselves be viewed across the following continuum:

“In the child-initiated zone, freely chosen play activities are closest to pure play – the players will exercise choice, control and imagination, with little direct intervention from adults and no pressure for products or outcomes.... In the structured play zone, adult-directed activities may engage children in playful ways with the curriculum content: there may some elements of imagination, but with limited choice and control for children...adult directed activities are defined as “work” when they are tightly controlled, with focused instructional strategies, no choice or flexibility for the children and defined outcomes” (Wood,2009:30).

When viewing these definitions, the pedagogical approach I am closest to adopting in the research is that of “structured play”, but I have viewed it from a different perspective and called it “playful work”, because I do not think that the children themselves would view it as play, because of the level of adult direction. I am however, hoping that the activities will not only be pleasurable, but harness those characteristics of play described earlier; “ personal attentiveness, personal involvement and motivation and emotional engagement” (Wood, 2009:27) Whilst the “work” may be directive, I am hoping however, that it will also be responsive. Wood has spoken about the dangers of “mixed” pedagogies where “adult-directed activities take centre stage in planning, assessment and feedback and child-initiated activities, including play are left at the margins of practice” (ibid: 16). She advocates instead:

“Integrated approaches (where) adults are involved with children in planning for play and child-initiated activities based on their observations and interactions. Planning and pedagogical decision making are informed by children’s choices, capabilities and knowledge, which feed into further curriculum planning” (ibid).

In the pedagogical approach adopted, it is hoped that the contexts for the story-telling will be informed by the very factors above recommended for planning for play. I hope to be able to make well-informed pedagogical decisions which are both responsive to the children’s emergent or established knowledge and interests, whilst also building on that knowledge and interest in ways that challenge and extend thinking.

The concept of “playful work” also has particular connotations in relation to children with SEN. As this brief review of the literature on play has revealed; play (and in particular fantasy play), requires high level of skills in social cognition, emotional literacy and imagination. These are all areas that children with a wide variety of learning and language difficulties will find difficult, including most obviously (but not exclusively) children with autism:

“There is consistent support for the view that children with SEN are more likely to need appropriate input from adults, and more opportunities for practice, revision and consolidation (Sayeed and Guerin, 2000; Macintyre, 2001; Drifte, 2002). Adult involvement in play can have greater significance for children who have such difficulties because they can act as more skilled co-players, help to sustain interest and infect children with enthusiasm for play” (Wood and Attfield, 2005:106).

Wood and Attfield recount the research of Sayeed and Guerin (2000) in developing play with a little girl with Down’s syndrome called Em. They describe a process of “Mediated Learning Experience” where “the adult takes a focused and structured scaffolding role (whilst) interventions remain sensitive to the child’s observed responses” (ibid: 218). This sensitivity to the child’s responses and to the meaning of any play or communication for the child is essential in the precarious attempt to infer meaning and voice for another. Another account of structured “play” instruction is given in a paper presented at a conference at the University of Birmingham by Dave Sherratt in 1998. He was researching the effect of a highly structured teaching programme in developing pretend play in children with autism. His findings were that:

“The data in this study has led us to conclude that children with autism ... may be able and motivated to engage in symbolic and functional pretend play, using a structured teaching approach... We believe that the explicit teaching of play, within a highly structured social context has been critical to the success of this project. It seems unlikely that children with autism will learn pretend play efficiently through incidental imitation or self-generation of play. We believe that the sensitive use of bold, emotional acting has also contributed greatly within this project” (Sherratt, 1999).

Sherratt and Peter’s later work on drama with children with autism (2002) has influenced the planning of “playful work” experiences in the research that will later be described; and their outline of a “Prescribed Drama Structure (PDS)” will later be recognized, alongside the use of inter-active storytelling and drama-in-education techniques.

A PDS is a:

“ritualized activity that resembles a game, with a clearly defined beginning-middle-end... it enables participants to understand the essential elements of make-believe: a sense of play...the fastness of rules...accepting roles and symbols and modifying actions in the light of make-believe” (Sherratt and Peter, 2002:67-68).

Many of the other features mentioned in their work are relevant to children with language and difficulties; for example the “need to find causal coherence through their experiences; how it is that events are connected as a result of action ... (and to be) offered a reflective window on their own behaviour and that of others ...” (ibid: xvii). It is also important to provide a clear structure for some children in which they may gradually “learn how to make creative decisions and choices within broadening boundaries” (ibid: xvii). It can often be assumed that children enjoy new experiences and actively seek them out, becoming bored if they are never presented with new challenges or opportunities to be creative. For a child with SEN however, familiarity can be a security to which they cling unless given encouragement and support to enter the overwhelming world of play.

Children with SEN may also often exhibit “special play needs”, although such a “diagnosis” will not appear on any statement of SEN, despite being possible to infer from references (for example) to their difficulties with developing communication and social skills. Such “special play needs” may include difficulties with - imagination and flexibility of thought, making choices, relating to others, turn-taking, the manipulation of certain play materials and adapting to change. Such play needs will be as varied as the “special educational needs” of the children, and indeed will be inextricably linked, but as yet are given relatively little emphasis within the wealth of literature on play.

It was with this in mind however, that I read Gussin-Paley’s description of how she attended a workshop on play and was required with the other participants to pretend that they were the children playing – and from this came the title of her book “A Child’s Work” (2004):

“In time we discovered that play was indeed work. First there was the business of deciding who to be and who others must be and what the environment is to look like and when it is time to change the scene. Then there was the even bigger problem of getting others to listen to “you” and accept “your” point of view while keeping the integrity of the make-believe, the commitment of the other players and perhaps the loyalty of a best friend” (Gussin-Paley, 2004:2).

This would indeed be “work” for many children with special play needs, and the characteristics of play seen as so valuable would be entirely absent, there would be no attentiveness, motivation or emotional engagement, probably just resistance. Interestingly, some children may conversely display those characteristics in activities that we would describe as “work”, for example completing pages of calculations or (perhaps more commonly) using a computer program. The issue of the position on the play-work continuum of computer games is not one I will attempt to unravel here, nor the issue as to their comparative value vis a vis fantasy play alongside peers.

It might be appropriate here however to hand over my attempt to define a concept of “playful work” to some of the children in one of Gussin-Paley’s classes when she asked them what they thought was play and what was work:

“Teacher: What else is work in this room?

Andrew: If you colour or put your name on a thing. On a paper.

Paul: It has to be work if you tell us to do something

Teacher: How about stories? Your own stories. Is that work?

Andrew: No, because that could Star Wars or Superman

The children are in agreement. Whatever involves fantasy or creates a mess is play.

Work is achieved sitting at a table, with a teacher nearby giving orders” (Gussin-Paley, 2004:31).

And there perhaps is the kernel of this debate; the pedagogical approach will incorporate the features of both work and play as defined by these children. The story-telling itself will be at a position on a continuum between fantasy play and the production of completed art form, and the context supporting this will be developed in response to the children’s capabilities and interest with varying degrees of adult interaction and direction. Much of what we do will be work in the eyes of both myself and the children, but hopefully imbued with characteristics of playfulness to become “playful work” – adult-directed, but with flexible outcomes that are created and negotiated between child and adult. In creating this definition, I am wondering if the one essential component of “playful work” is the presence and interaction of at least one other (often, but not solely, an adult) during an activity, with the quality of the interaction being the most influential factor in the quality of the “outcome”- however nebulous this may be.

(2) A REVIEW OF RESEARCH INTO STORYTELLING BY CHILDREN ACROSS A RANGE OF CONTEXTS.

“Vygotsky (1978) tells us that “the central attribute of play is a rule that has become a desire” Story-telling is a play activity which demonstrates how this works....children tell their stories earnestly, with effort, straining to utilize their knowledge to make their stories work...yet at the same time they are telling their stories for fun, because they want to...” (Fox, 1993: 28).

This encapsulates perfectly the notion of “playful work”, or possibly in this instance “workful play”, since the story-telling in Fox’s research does not involve adult direction and is an activity freely chosen. Meek has recognized the important relationship between story-telling and symbolic play “especially in its carnivalistic aspects and the “over-the-topness” of it all” (Meek, 1993 in *ibid*: xvii), and as previously stated, fantasy play and story-telling are part of the same continuum.

The stories told by children may not have merited the wealth of literature surrounding the value of stories and play in the curriculum, but they are nevertheless widely asserted to be important to the cognitive, social, emotional and ethical development of children by those researchers interested in listening to them. This section will firstly review the general assertions made regarding the value of storytelling for children, and then review some authors who have explored the storytelling of children across a range of contexts. Each of these reviews will reflect upon the use I will make of existing research in developing the pedagogical approach and methodology for this research – and also upon the areas in which this research may add to existing knowledge.

(i) General overview of the value of storytelling for children.

Just as we can learn much about children by observing them in their play, we can also learn about many aspects of their development and inner thoughts by listening to their stories:

“As teachers listen to children tell a story, they gain insight about the children’s prior knowledge, creativity, language ability, and thinking processes while also serving to develop children’s imagination and their ability to think creatively (Jalongo, 2003; Roney; 1989)” (St.Amour, 2003:47).

The very process of story-telling enables children to further explore and develop their knowledge, their emerging sense of identity and also of the culture in which they are living:

“ Children use storying to sort out their own knowledge and ideas...even more importantly because they have short memories and restricted actual experiences, children explore the possibilities offered by the world-making of story-telling so as to enter into dialogue not with the past...but with their future” (Meek,1993 in Fox, 1993:viii).

This description of the value of “world-making” for children to both their cognitive development and their experimentation with their own identities is linked to Bruner’s description of the development of “hot” and “cool” knowledge:

“Cool” knowledge refers to how things work in the physical world, what comes first and what follows, how people and things and actions fit together. Understanding in the “hot” sense refers to understanding feelings and emotional concerns – why did my parents yell? What kind of person am I? What makes my younger brother sad?” (in Engel, 1995:35).

Because of the symbolic nature of both fantasy play and story-telling they provide children with an opportunity to “escape from the intrusive gaze of others in their actual lives, whilst at the same time giving them scope to talk about what is deeply meaningful for them in disguised metaphoric form” (Meek, 1993 in Fox, 1993: viii). If we provide opportunities for the children to tell their stories, and permit them to tell stories about things that matter then “nothing tells us more about a person than the stories he or she chooses to tell” (Smith, 1990 in St. Amour, 2003:47). The essential feature here is that the form and content of the story must be controlled by the child; it is not the type of story-telling that sits easily alongside a prescribed learning outcome:

“ Self-expression is often cited as an essential component of children’s education, but not a lot of what a child does in the classroom actually demands very much of it. I’ve seen a fair amount of sameness in pupil output, and even art rooms appear to say more of the teacher than the pupils. By contrast, story retelling releases the writer’s individuality, often to an extraordinary degree...story-telling and story retelling allows a child’s view of the world...” (Rosen, 1992:105).

The cognitive value of story-telling is also apparent because “the ability to construct narrative is closely associated with successful learning and achievement for pupils – probably because it is a demanding activity that requires them to co-ordinate a number of skills simultaneously (Paul and Smith, 1993 in Grove, 2005:72). The importance of the construction of narrative to the development of language is also seen in some of the more recent speech and language “Narrative Therapy” developments (for example the “Narrative

Packs” by Black Sheep Press) and research has shown that children are often able to produce more complex language in the context of storytelling than conversation” (Milosky, 1987: in Grove, 2005:72).

Another dimension of storytelling is its social nature. “The use of oral language in the classroom is not only enjoyable for children, but is also necessary for establishing a classroom community, developing literacy and defining children’s self” (Csak, 2002 in St. Amour, 2003:50). Individual children may borrow each others ideas but will still “preserve a style and symbolism as unique as their fingerprints” (Gussin-Paley’1990:40). This imagination “is not a unilateral function: it thrills in the company of those who share its point of view and asks the right questions” (ibid: 34). This links directly with the ideas of “...Bruner (1990) (who) considers that the viability of a culture inheres in its capacity (through story) for resolving conflicts and for exploring differences and communal meanings” (Cattanach, 1997:24). This was exemplified in Rosen’s detailed account of storytelling in the secondary classrooms in which she taught; “That’s how it was with the children I taught. They made rich stories. And while making their stories together, they made friendships. And they also made peace. *And none of it was nonsense*” (Rosen, 1990:162).

The reviews of research that follow will look in more depth at some of the claims made here for the value of story-telling, and also help to develop the pedagogical approach that will be used in the research.

(ii) Nicola Grove (1998; 2001; 2005).

The emphasis in Grove’s work is upon developing “Literature for All” (1998) or “Ways into Literature” (2005) for children and young people with a range of learning and communication difficulties. She has also looked specifically (alongside Keith Park) at how the social cognition of students can be developed through involvement with drama around Shakespeare’s “Macbeth” (2001). Grove’s practice covers the whole range of students with SEN, but her focus is specifically on those pupils with more profound and complex learning and communication difficulties than the children who will be for focus in my research. They also tend to be older students, and Grove argues persuasively for these students to be offered literature that is appropriate to their chronological age rather than their reading age.

This is because she places emotional response at the centre of all her work, which evaluates in detail the response to literature made by her students.

“Literature is part of the arts curriculum. The appeal of a poem or a story lies in its ability to excite the audience in a way which is first and foremost sensory. An encounter with words evokes sensations and physiological responses, which generate affective states – of excitement, fear, contentment and loss. Our response is both emotional and intellectual. Our ability to evaluate a work of art is dependent on our ability to engage with it at a physical and an emotional level... Viewing feelings and sensations as the basis of a response to literature changes how we think about the understanding of texts. Webb (1992) has used the terms “apprehension” and “comprehension”. Apprehension is our immediate sensory appreciation of the text, even if we cannot fully comprehend its meaning” (Grove, 2005:3).

It has been stated that “affective engagement seems to help promote symbolic understanding” (Grove, 1998: 12) and in order to develop an aesthetic response to literature Grove focuses upon “enriching texts” rather than simplifying them; so often the strategy used when working with children with any form of literacy difficulties, although in so doing the symbolic and poetic power of literature may be destroyed. Grove however deliberately seeks to “elicit strong emotional responses through atmospheric music and tones of voice” (ibid). This process of text enrichment is an inferential model that starts with “...the meaning of the text (and then the) sound and rhythm of language + rich associations + “scripts”” (ibid: 12). Whilst I will not be following this exact model, the whole concept of text enrichment will be influential in the story-telling contexts I will be developing for the children in this research.

Underpinning a notion of the possibility of an emotional response to literature is a view that the origins of language are “in the sharing of experience” rather than the “functional goals such as requesting and labelling” (ibid: 2).

“The purpose of language is above all expressive – to give form to states of mind and feeling. Children convey feelings through non-verbal behaviour until they have developed the vocabulary and cognitive ability to talk explicitly about feelings. The close tie-up between language and feeling is the basis of literature, and of poetic language, such as metaphor – stripped of emotion stories lose their power. It is only through feeling and personal involvement that a story becomes a story rather than a list of events” (ibid: 10).

In this view the actual spoken words of language are only part of the communicative aspect of expression. For the person communicating, meaning is enhanced in many ways “through

intonation, stress, gesture and facial expression” (ibid: 77), and for the person who responds “...we enrich literal meanings from our own experience and our perceptions of the setting... there is always a gap between what the speaker intends and what the listener understands” (ibid: 6). This perception has influenced one of the ways in which I will be evaluating and interpreting the stories that the children tell; I will be using Grove’s concepts of aesthetic and creative responses to literature, but in this instance evaluated as aesthetic and creative expressions of meaning (both of which will be discussed more fully in the later description of the analysis grid formulated for use in this research).

Alongside response to literature, Grove also recognizes the value of enabling students with SEN to tell their own stories:

“Being a creator of literature confers a status on an individual. To be able to express your own ideas in writing is a dignifying process. Students can take their stories home and share this pleasure...this chapter considers alternative forms of “writing” and ways of enabling students to become “authors” and experience the satisfaction that this confers” (ibid:56).

This is one of the key aspects of this research – enabling children to tell their own stories. They will then be transcribed into words and symbols for the children to take home and share. Because the children will all be able to communicate verbally to a greater or lesser degree, I will not need to be as inventive as Grove in finding ways to enable the children to express their meaning. It is useful however, to consider how the term “story” will be defined for I know that many of the children’s expressions of meaning will not produce a linked narrative for example, or even a statement with a clear beginning, middle and ending. From reading Grove, and from her reference to Gussin-Paley’s working practice quoted below, my working definition of a story will be whatever is spoken when the child has been requested to “tell a story”; provided that what is offered is an expression of meaning (as opposed for example to a request or command).

“Vivian Gussin-Paley...describes one particular student who had learning difficulties and very little verbal communication, who stood up at story time and said one word “Mummy”. That was taken as his story, and his class-mates proceeded to act it out for him, taking the roles of his family and interacting with him” (ibid: 73).

Grove notes that it is only recently that any interest at all has been shown in the stories told by children with learning and language difficulties, and even now it is not a widely reported

area of research. There are two important pedagogical implications for developing the narrating skills of children with SEN; one is an awareness of the different cognitive and language difficulties that may impede this, and the other is developing a rich learning environment to both enable and encourage storytelling to take place. Grove does outline some of the features of narratives told by children with different types of developmental disabilities and of particular interest to this research is that:

“Students with language delays and difficulties tend to have problems with recalling and organizing information (Loveland and Tunali, 1993; Miranda et al 1998).... (whilst) students with autism can link events into a sequence but often they miss the main point of the story and its emotional significance (Goldman, 2002; Loveland and Tunali, 1993; Norbury and Bishop, 2003)” (ibid: 77).

She also warns however against making “too many predictions on the basis of categories of special need and level of ability (as) little comparative data is available from special populations” (ibid).

What is essential is that given “appropriate intervention, it appears that both typically developing children and those who have learning difficulties can improve their ability to tell stories (Hemphill et al, 1994)...the contexts in which stories are elicited, the materials used, and the type of story required all have an effect on the extent to which children deploy their skills” (ibid: 77-78). How these contexts can best be created, the emotional climate and the role of the adults in the intervention are central to the work of Grove and will also be in this research. One particular support that Grove does not find useful is using a sequence of illustrations for the student to weave a narrative around:

“Children tell more complex and complete stories if they believe that the listener does not know the story already. The worst situation for story-telling is where you are both looking at a set of pictures and the student knows that you know the story” (ibid: 78).

This statement resonates strongly with experiences I have had both in the common practice of sharing picture books with children in the early stages of literacy and also in some of the standard Speech and Language Therapy assessments, for example “The Bus Story” (Renfrew 1969). The children have little motivation to tell you what you already know, and what may have little meaning for them. Grove refers to a range of strategies that encourage narrative “... modelling...topic extensions...repetition – “you fell down” with expectant

intonation...expansion...verbal attention...clarifying questions...persistence... (and) information-rich feedback” (McCabe and Peterson, 1991 *ibid*: 79). She also lists strategies that will discourage narrative “...topic switching...over-use of closed or specific questions...inattention (and) repetitious feedback with no expansion” (*Ibid*). I will be using these criteria when I reflect upon my interactions with the children at the end of the research and evaluate the pedagogical approach developed.

The work of Grove will be influential on the development of this research both in the inspiration it provides for particular pedagogical approaches, and for the questions it raises in relation to what we can learn from the stories children tell. An attempt will be made to answer such questions during the analysis of the stories and the work of Grove will be used to guide this analysis in two particular areas; how can we evaluate the aesthetic and creative qualities of the children’s stories and what do the stories reveal about the children’s individual abilities and difficulties in relation to language and cognition?

Grove also shares with Gussin-Paley an awareness that “whilst philosophies and principles offer starting points, translating these into practice in the classroom can be seen as a daunting task” (*ibid*: 28). She then adds that “the sheer diversity of differences in language and communication means that approaches that work brilliantly with some students will fall totally flat with others” (*ibid*).

Both of these researchers also offer insights into how they have attempted to translate principles into practice and the wealth of practical detail provided encourages other teachers to try these approaches. The recognition of the strength of this kind of writing will influence my own research reporting and I will similarly aim to provide as much detail of the learning contexts developed so that others may adapt for them for their own use if they wish.

(iii) Vivian Gussin-Paley (1984: 1990: 1992: 1999: 2004).

Gussin-Paley is one of the most prolific writers about story-telling in young children – an activity that she sees as both an extension of, and inextricable with, fantasy play. “It is play of course, but it is also story in action; just as storytelling is play put into narrative form” (Gussin-Paley, 1990: 4). Her story-telling curriculum is based around the themes that arise

in the children's daily play, which is in direct contrast to the pre-planned and outcome-based curriculum in most educational settings.

“There is a tendency to look upon the noisy and repetitious fantasies of children as “non-educational”, but helicopters and kittens and superhero capes and Barbie dolls are storytelling aids and conversational tools. Without them, the range of what we listen to and talk about is arbitrarily circumscribed by the adult point of view” (Gussin-Paley, 1990:39).

The key role of the teacher in this process is to listen fully and attentively to the stories, to strive to understand their emerging themes and to make connections between them. “I transcribe each day's play and stories and conversation and then make up my own stories about what is happening. The next morning my reality will be measured alongside the children's” (ibid: 18). The children themselves are fully involved in discussions surrounding any of the issues developed in the stories, and their responses will often be in the form of a story. This is demonstrated by Gussin-Paley herself in the book “You Can't Say you can't Play” (1992), when the issue of exclusion from play is discussed openly but also (and perhaps more powerfully) in metaphoric form in her own series of “magpie stories”.

Gussin-Paley's style of teaching is clearly the “emergent/responsive” (Wood, 2009:15) approach and she demonstrates how she interacts with the children in the development of their stories for dramatization:

“I question any aspect of the story that I might misinterpret – any word, phrase, sound effect, character or action that does not make sense to me without further explanation. The child knows the story will soon be acted out and the action will need clear directions. The story must make sense to everyone: actors, audience and narrator” (ibid: 22).

Gussin-Paley's commitment to what will later be referred to as “pedagogy of listening” is profound, as is her quest to develop understanding without imposing her own belief structures. This is demonstrated by her agreement with the difficulty Anna Freud records as having with Melanie Klein; “Mrs Klein has told us what she believes happens to children, and we're still trying to find out what does happen by watching them and listening to them, and that's the difference” (ibid:xvii).

It is hoped that such a spirit of enquiry and open-mindedness will be reflected in this research although in many respects the classroom in which it takes place will be different to Gussin-Paley's. Two aspects of the story-telling curriculum will however be directly transposed in some of the learning contexts developed into the research; the story-telling processes of dictation and dramatization. In these processes the stories will first be dictated to an adult and then dramatized in a special area marked out by tape. This space is sacrosanct whilst stories are being performed. Commentary by non-participants is welcomed, but actors can only enter the stage if invited to do so by the author.

This story-telling curriculum and the resulting stories are the constant background to all of Gussin-Paley's work, and through these stories she reflects upon different issues and aspects of classroom life, for example issues of gender in "Boys and Girls: Superheroes in the Doll Corner" (1984): issues of friendship and exclusion in "You Can't Say You Can't Play" (1992) and "The Kindness of Children" (1999): issues of inclusion in "The Boy who would be a Helicopter" (1990) and fantasy play in "A Child's Work" (2004).

Alongside other advocates of children's storytelling, Gussin-Paley places great importance on their value to children in developing their own sense of identity and dealing metaphorically with emotional issues:

"In play the child says" I can "do" this well; I can "be" this effectively; I "understand" what is happening to me and to the other children. In storytelling a child says "This is how I interpret and translate right now something that is on my mind" (1990:10).

What is unique about the work of Gussin-Paley however, is her emphasis upon the social aspect of story-telling. She does not listen to children dictate their stories in a quiet corner, but at a story-telling table where other children are "watching, listening and sounding forth as so many characters in a Saroyan play. Nearly everyone has something to say to the storyteller" (ibid: 21). The process of dramatization, also means that the children are not just storytellers, but playwrights, and this makes them "even more sensitive to the preferences of others" (ibid:24).

"What makes children pay attention to the ideas and demands and complaints of classmates? ... the need to have a friend, and be part of a dramatic structure. Children see themselves, always, inside a story. Indeed, a friendship itself is defined in terms of fantasy roles. You are a friend if you take part in someone's play

and most likely to listen to those with whom you are acting out a series of events” (ibid: 33).

“...the case for dramatic integrity is strong... it is an essential part of the social contract and can be used as the basis for solving most behavioural problems. Do your actions belong in the scene you enter? If not, can you convince the players to alter their script, or, failing to do that, will you agree to a different role? We call it socialization which simply means – at any age- that you play your part acceptably well in the given script” (ibid: 37).

Gussin-Paley observes that Jason (the “boy who would be a helicopter”) “is not different from the rest of us. He too wants to tell us his story. Why else does he roar his motor and openly complain about broken blades if not to capture our attention?” (ibid: 34). Story-telling will of course be much less central to the daily lives of the children in my research, and their dictation will also be a far more private affair (because of my concerns to establish equal listening time for all and my own uncertainty that I could manage this at a group story-table). The interpretation of their stories and dramatizations will however include a dimension that explores what they reveal about the social context in which they are told and the connections that children are making with each other and with any emerging story themes.

Cooper (2005) reviews Gussin-Paley’s work, which she clearly admires, and wonders how it can be shown to “indirectly, but influentially promote academic knowledge” (Cooper, 2005:229). She develops a structural analysis of the dictation and dramatization techniques to demonstrate how they contribute to a balanced approach to the six characteristics of literacy development as she defines – “oral language...narrative form...conventions of print...encoding and decoding...word study and reading for meaning” (ibid: 237). Her analysis is not directly relevant to this research, but she makes two particularly interesting points about the value of this approach:

“Paley gave oral language development a tremendous boost when she realized that dictation could give young children an opportunity to talk about things they “want” to talk about...she convincingly argues that conversation decreases proportionally to a decrease in play... (and) essential to the development of narrative skills is permission to experiment with both content and language. For this reason I applaud Paley’s insistence that children’s choice of topics should not be restricted when they compose” (ibid: 238-241).

“Comprehension is often assumed to be a search for meaning in written text. What many literacy programs for young children fail to reflect however is that the ability to search for meaning is greatly enhanced by the experience of creating it. This

reciprocal relationship between reading and writing is clearly fostered through the storytelling curriculum” (ibid: 243).

One of the questions that will arise from this research will be whether the combined techniques of dictation and dramatization will provide meaningful experiences for the children when they are part of a generally different pedagogical approach to the one in which they were developed, although it is hoped that the elements of acceptance and attentive listening will be still be present. It will be interesting to compare the stories told by a group of older children with language and learning difficulties to the kindergarten children in Gussin-Paley’s classes and, in the interpretation of these, to see if similar themes occupy both groups of children and if the stories both reflect and contribute to the social context in which they are told.

(iv) BRIAN EDMISTON (2008).

Edmiston’s account of his mythic play with his son Michael has already been referred to in the review of the literature on play. I am including a short section on his work here however, because of two main contributions it will make to the interpretation of the stories that the children tell.

Whilst Michael’s play is not story-telling as such it may be seen as story-making and clearly linked to “authoring”, in the sense that this is viewed by Bakhtin (Appendix 1):

“Bakhtin sees authoring not only as an act of imagination, it is also the forming of value laden images of life as events in an aesthetic space-time that are contemplated for meaning...authoring can create ethical understanding. The particular images of battling between knight and dragon are “other” than the authoring self, are value-laden because they represent a struggle between two different value systems” (Edmiston, 2008:70).

The concept of the development of “ethical identities” will be one element in the analysis of the stories that the children tell in this research and has come directly from Edmiston’s work. I will also be using his description of the mythic themes explored by Michael in his play when analyzing the themes explored by the children in my class, to ascertain if they too return to mythic themes “ again and again, in order to explore life and death, love and hate, good and evil” (ibid:53).

(v) VIRGINIA LOWE (2007).

Lowe presents an impressively longitudinal study of the book contacts, and responses to these, of her two children (Rebecca and Ralph) from birth to 8 years old and beyond. The study is relevant to this research primarily for the conclusions it draws and for its description of Rebecca and Ralph's ongoing exploration and consideration of what is "real" and what is "not-real".

Ralph and Rebecca's "initial articulation of the question of reality came with anthropomorphism – "Animals can't talkThis first awareness as a generalization occurred at about the same age for both children (3-6.3-7)" (Lowe, 2007:161) and continued to interest them throughout their reading career although with greater intensity at different periods of time.

"Ghosts aren't real but witches are...he wants to be a real tortoise... I can't touch that spider because it's not real...that's not a real one- it's just a page of it! These were all produced by Ralph before he was 4" (ibid: 42).

Lowe uses Rosenblatt's (1978) terms of an "aesthetic stance ...required for reading fiction and an efferent one, gleaning information for reading non-fiction" (ibid) but asserts that:

"Each reading is a combination of both stances. And certainly my children did not insist on the unreality of characters during (an) actual story. They usually listened aesthetically during the reading, but carried on their efferent investigations afterwards" (ibid).

It will be considered when interpreting the stories that the children tell in this research how their understanding and expressions of "real and not-real" develop. Lowe sees it as "an important life skill that children learn to differentiate what is possible from what is imaginary. They need to understand that not everything they hear is true" (ibid: 43). This could be particularly relevant for children who have difficulties with social cognition, and explorations of "reality" will be essential to their development. From experience I know for example, the importance in using drama to make it very clear to children when I am "in role" and when I am acting "as myself"; for "real" (or perhaps more accurately what is "pretend" and "not pretend").

The conclusions from Lowe's study link with the work of Grove in their assertion that "this study has presented evidence against those who claim that children cannot cope with fantasy or with anything they have not encountered in the physical world, or with complex ideas or even with unfamiliar vocabulary" (ibid: 163). For younger children and for children with SEN (including autism) these experiences many need to be mediated and enriched, but this should not mean they are given an impoverished diet of literature.

(vi) PETER BALDOCK (2006).

The central thesis of Baldock's work is that the complex cognitive aspects implicit in the development of "narrative competence" - "the ability to understand and construct stories... (are) often under-estimated but of critical importance in curriculum planning, particularly in the Foundation Stage" (Baldock, 2006:1). He states that:

"The focus of this book is on the cognitive skills associated with narrative competence, since there appears to be some tendency to undervalue them in comparison with other cognitive skills. The problem is aggravated if the response is seen purely in terms of valuing the emotional content of story-telling" (ibid: 71).

It is hoped that the analysis and interpretation of the stories of the children told in this research will value both the cognitive and emotional aspects that they may reveal, and part of the evaluation of the research will be whether it can contribute positively to the development of children's language.

The cognitive aspects involved in narration as explained by Baldock include the constructions of memory ("the structure of narrative is crucial to the ability of children to remember episodes from their past lives" (ibid: 20)) and the development of theory of mind ("an understanding of other minds does appear to be crucial to some aspects of the child's developing ability to understand narrative" (ibid: 22)). He outlines five main components of narrative competence:

"The ability to understand or construct a chronologically structured sequence of events....to understand the passing of time and its significance, to see it as more than routine or the repetition of cycles...to understand the causal connections at work in narrative sequences...the ability to see that any narrative must be told from a particular standpoint and that different characters in a story may well have different points of view....and the ability to use conventions that attach to narrative in a particular culture, and to appreciate that conventions are precisely (that)....and may be different in other places....and can be subverted" (ibid: 68).

All of these are important aspects of cognitive development and all are areas that children with particular language and learning difficulties will find challenging. It is possible that particular emerging skills and specific difficulties may well be identified in the stories that the children tell. Baldock emphasizes the exploratory nature of the way children use language, and how, as they struggle to construct their narratives, they may often produce vivid and unusual images and constructions. Baldock warns us that “to say that they have more imagination or are in touch with some primeval source of inspiration is to fail to see the specifically intellectual effort that lies behind what they say” (ibid: 70). Whatever their differing emphases in the interpretation of children’s stories, all of the authors that have so far been reviewed unanimously agree that the construction of narratives and telling of stories is a highly beneficial activity for children and should be given more prominence than is often the case in many classrooms.

Baldock discusses some of the aspects of an environment that will encourage demonstrations of narrative competence, and all of these will be influential in developing the learning contexts for the children in this research:

“Children vary in the extent to which they are happy to take on the performance aspect of story-telling and their readiness to do so will probably depend on the availability of models...in order to enter the narrator role, children need the formal acknowledgement of that role ...inventiveness in language must be fully accepted by the practitioner who is the initial audience, even when that inventiveness rests on what are technically errors....children must have extensive access to stories and thus models from which to work (and) to be allowed both novelty and familiarity in the stories told to them” (ibid:117).

(vii) CAROL FOX (1993).

Fox shared with all the authors above the view that narrative, and storytelling in particular, are a particularly rich context for the development and evaluation of children’s developing language:

“I believe that we should be particularly careful about assessing children’s oral language on the basis of conversations with adults. It is the “range” of discourse knowledge that we need to discover by having plenty of story telling and role-play going on in classrooms, all the time, as a matter of course (Fox, 1993: 65) I found most of the children’s narratives very heavily evaluated....fairy-tales and other fantasy forms probably lend themselves to a greater degree of elaboration than

narrating a real-life experience (ibid: 97)..... Until the non-narrative genres have been learned, children use story to sort out their own knowledge and ideas, for this is implicit in the effort to create story worlds which are credible if not “real” in the sense that we actually see them around us”(ibid:194).

This last point links back to the work of both Lowe and Edmiston, who discuss the strivings of children to establish what is “real” and “not-real”. A child’s perception of what is “real” in the description above however, explains how this perception will be circumscribed by children’s particular context and existing knowledge. A particularly poignant example of this is described in the story of “The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas” (Boyne, 2006), where the young son of a concentration camp commandant, believes that the camp’s inmates who he can see from his bedroom window are farmers in pyjamas. This is the only story he can create to make sense of what he sees given his limited world knowledge.

Fox’s study was an in-depth analysis of the stories told by five pre-school children aged between 3:7 and 5:4, and there were three criteria for their selection. The first was that they were not independent readers, as Fox wanted to show the absorption of written materials in the “pre-reading” period. The second was that the children would need to enjoy telling stories and the third was that the children should have had experience of hearing books and stories read aloud from early in infancy. In the event four of the five children had parents or grandparents who were specialist English teachers. The children in my research will also not be independent readers, but there the similarity ends. It is hoped that they may enjoy telling stories, but I will not know this until the research begins; and indeed I have not previously considered what might happen if they do not. Presumably I will follow my usual practice of perseverance and try to find ways to ignite their enthusiasm.

Fox’s method of collecting the stories was simply for the children to record their stories onto tape, either at the invitation of their parents (which they were always at liberty to refuse) or at their own request. Fox stresses that “we never discussed the story to be told” (ibid: 2), and this is similar to my planned story-collecting method; although these stories of course will be elicited in a far more directive environment. The children often enjoyed playing back their stories and listening to themselves narrating. Fox then transcribed them for analysis. Her description of the atmosphere and environment in which the stories were elicited, is of course, also gently throwing a gauntlet to teachers:

“Perhaps the most important background factor for this study was the liberality and relaxed attitudes towards the storytelling of the children’s parents...if stories became silly or rude the parents accepted them and supported the spirit of what children offered. I asked the parents to try not to intervene during a story-telling unless the children themselves asked questions or sought some help....when I listen to the tapes I can often hear a sense of boundless freedom in the children, an enormous pleasure in the power of being able to say whatever they liked and being uninterrupted while they did it. I believe this is very important in revealing the true competencies of the children, and I sometimes wonder if school can ever provide such relaxed conditions, or indeed, if children can ever feel quite so confident in producing such meaningful, experimental, even excessive material for their teachers” (ibid:4).

Of course, I am sincerely hoping that such conditions can be emulated, and I will try to evaluate the story-telling atmosphere in the classroom as fairly as I can at the end of this study. There are two other important issues however. I do not intend to interrupt during the story-telling (except to clarify meaning), partly because I want to carry out a “fair” assessment of the independent language competencies of the children in the study. I am concerned however, that the “boundless freedom” of the children in Fox’s study is partly due to their already well-developed expressive skills. For children who have limited language skills, attempts at unsupported expression may just generate frustration. I will need to evaluate each individual situation as it arises to make sensitive decisions about the level and type of any intervention. It will also be interesting to compare the stories told by the children in Fox’s study in the privacy of their own home and those told in the social context of this research. It may be that this environment will have an influence upon the themes that the children explore, possibly encouraging some and inhibiting others.

There had been many studies and analyses of stories for children and stories told by children prior to Fox’s work, but they had mostly ignored the context in which the stories had been created and none of them had a sufficiently holistic approach to satisfy Fox. “The stories need to be analyzed as total structures in ways which reflect the metaphoric processes involved, in the practice of narrative as communicative discourse” (ibid: 66). Fox carried out a detailed analysis of the children’s stories focusing on many aspects of language development – “learning to use words...grammatical structure...narrative competences...sense of story structure...time relationships in stories...(and) the developing voice of the narrator” (ibid: vi), but also using Barthes’ (1970) connotative codes to “uncover many layers of meaning” (ibid:vi). Fox describes how:

“For Josh the Barthes’ codes tell us more at every structural level. The codes weave into a narrative pattern the culture of young children in the early 1980s, the literary culture of all the intertextualities, as well as the social and subjective world of the child, all of which Josh includes in a large metaphor which can be interpreted in plural ways, but which can also be generalized as himself, his life” (ibid: 171).

Different aspects of Fox’s analysis have been adapted for use in the analysis of the stories in this study – particularly the T-Unit analyses and the connotative codes – but these will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Central here, is the spirit in which Fox managed to analyze the children’s stories, as described by Meek in the Foreword to the book:

“...none of the analytic techniques is used simply to measure the children’s abilities or to reduce the stories to their constituent parts. Instead, we see how the stories invite commentaries of experts across a range of understanding and still remain the purposeful tellings of a group of children” (ibid: viii).

Indeed, Fox reported that many previous analyses of children’s stories (for example Sutton-Smith (1975-1978) and Applebee (1979)), whilst illuminating aspects of narrative skill were also “ultimately interested in what is normative” (ibid: 72). Labov’s (1972, 1982) concept of “reportability” however, is more focused upon individual differences in story-telling style: “For Labov, reportability is “the generating centre of narrative structure”, a value that immediately places the emphasis not on plot moves but “on the way the story is told”. Reportability as a criterion of narrative competence places the “listener” inside the narrative discourse, so that monologic story forms become communicative acts” (ibid: 74).

Narrative voice is a related concept that enables us to look at individual differences in story-telling and is explained by Engel in the following way:

“Narrative voice refers to the notion that every story is expressed through a person and through that person’s use of a medium, language...the style and genre in which he tells his story express who he is as an individual...psychological processes are expressed through a communicative medium...scholars of Bakhtin’s work have referred to this notion as the “speaking personality” and the “speaking consciousness”” (Engel, 1995:153).

In the final analyses of this research it is planned to tell a story around any connected themes across the stories of all the children but also to tell an individual story of each child’s

stories, and by so doing maintain the integrity of the stories rather than finally presenting them as deconstructed texts.

From the review of all the authors in the section, it is apparent that each has contributed in some way to either the development of the pedagogical approach of this research and the subsequent collection of the stories that will constitute the data; and/or to the development of the multi-perspective analysis grid that will be used to analyse the stories. In this research it is hoped to further explore some questions that have arisen from this review: "What themes can be identified across the range of stories – and are there any patterns or connections over time? (Will there be similar themes to the mythic explorations of Michael or to the issues explored by the children in Gussin-Paley's classrooms?): Are the particular learning and language difficulties of the children apparent within the stories told - and can any development of their linguistic and story-telling skills be identified within them?"

The children telling their stories in this study are different from all the other groups so far researched, and I will be waiting to hear their stories with an open mind. Baldock warns that "the five children Fox selected for her study were already unusual, we have to be careful in employing her material as criteria for what is possible for pre-school children" (Baldock, 2006:70). Grove and Gussin-Paley's work also exemplifies that neither should we have too low expectations for children with SEN. Each child needs to be responded to as an individual, celebrated and explored as a communication of meaning – whether it is the breakthrough of the single story word "Mummy" or one of Sudari's evocative contributions:

"...and one day which was when she woke up, there was a dreadful sound that was the sea making going "Swisssh swisssh, swisssh". Tinkle tinkle" went the bells. "Oh oh" went the dolls and her necklace rustled. Everything was awake. They looked outside. What had happened was the west wind was here. It was blowing and swaying the waves "sway sway" went the waves. (Sundari whistles) went the wind. But soon it all stopped and they all got back to sleep again" (Fox, 1993: 166-167).

PART 3: AN INCLUSIVE AND CREATIVE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH.

(i) “PEDAGOGY OF LISTENING” (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005).

“Most people have forgotten how to listen, they only hear what they choose to hear, and what they choose to hear is a very small part of everything around them. They hear only the loudest sounds, and they miss the small ones. They hear the shouting, but miss the whispers and some of the best stories are whispered to us on the wind” (Norman Russell in Bruchac, 1997:1-2).

Listening as an essential skill and quality of the practitioner has already been emphasized, and is central to an emergent/ responsive approach. It is now recognized as an important element in the EYFS guidance (2007) which informs teachers that:

“Looking, listening and noting is important because it helps you to develop positive relationships with children and their parents...plan appropriate play and learning experiences based on the children’s interests and needs, and identify any concerns about a child’s development” (EYFS, 2007: 2.6).

Clearly, no-one would disagree that listening is important, but there are two important issues to consider. The first is the issue of how “listening” is defined, who and what we listen to and how we act upon this; the second is how another laudable principle translates into practice. Rinaldi gives listening a very wide definition, one that locates it as an ethical and political practice within which the alterity of the other is accepted and welcomed, and where questions are forever explored without defining and limiting answers. However, this practice is not possible within a transmissive/directive approach to the curriculum, but only when the pedagogic relation is one of “self with other and not self on other” (Lewis and Norwich, 2005:177).

“Listening as a sensitivity to the patterns that connect, to that which connects us to others... listening as a metaphor for having the openness and sensitivity to listen and be listened to ...listening is emotion, it is generated by and stimulates emotions, including curiosity, desire, doubt, interest...listening as welcoming and being open to differences, recognizing the importance of the others’ point of view...listening as an active verb that involves interpretation, giving meaning to the message and value of those who offer it... listening that does not produce answers, but formulates questions.... Listening is not easy. It requires a deep awareness and at the same time a suspension of our judgements and above all our prejudices” (Rinaldi, 2001b in Dahlberg and Moss, 2005: 99).

Accepting this definition of listening requires a commitment to pedagogy of co-construction; but within this certain choices and decisions will need to be made on a continual basis by the practitioner, and many of these issues may well be related to the “choices” of the child. It has been noted that “modern individuals are not merely free to choose, they are obliged to be free, to understand and enact life in terms of choice” (Rose, 1999:87 in *ibid*: 22). The language of choice is now prevalent within education – although often it is little more than coercion in the choices it offers (for example the “choice” to conform to behavioural expectations or to leave the classroom). There is also the all-important issue of “informed” choice. It is conceivable that a child may choose never to engage with the often challenging and disheartening tasks of learning to read and write, however this choice will be made without an understanding of what it means to be an illiterate adult in today’s society. So how does the practitioner engage with the child to teach the skills it has been determined they will need without becoming directive and coercive? It may also be considered whether the choice of a child with cerebral palsy not to wear an uncomfortable and “embarrassing” splint should be respected, or if the future benefit to their comfort and mobility should override this? One of the particular issues for this research is the dilemma about the degree of intervention that adults should make with children with SEN, who may “choose” to participate only in a limited number of activities in which they feel secure. Are we actually limiting their future choices if we do not enable them to overcome their fears and experience new things? When however does invitation and encouragement become direction and even coercion? I will not be attempting to explore such urgent pedagogical dilemmas in depth during this research, but they do clarify why education is essentially an ethical and political practice – and the issue of informed consent for this research itself, will of course be raised in the discussion on the ethics of its methodology.

In this research, listening will be at its very core, and I will attempt to incorporate at least some of the qualities described by Rinaldi. The practical implications of this however are not straightforward, and probably all teachers will feel a pang of guilt when they hear the words of Luis, who says “sometimes people isn’t that nice. They move away in the middle of what I try to tell them. Even I had a teacher do this” (Gussin-Paley, 1999:10). In a classroom full of demands on the teacher’s attention, there will always be some voices that are louder and some that are not heard. When is it necessary therefore to ask some voices to be quiet so that others may be heard? Gussin-Paley, when being as painfully honest as always, does not deny these difficulties, but does finally believe that “IT IS NOT IN HEAVEN...the task of

listening to every voice is not for saints alone; it is not too hard for ordinary people in ordinary places” (Gussin-Paley, 1999: 57).

For all children – and particularly for children with language difficulties – listening really must become a whole attentiveness, bearing in mind that “communication is multi-modal and multi-faceted (and)...involves body language, facial expressions, gestures, signs and symbolization” (Wood, 2008:117). We are even made aware that for some children (and adults) their silences may be as important as their words “...silences can be telling. Danny’s story reflects the spaces in his life as much as the events” (Booth and Booth (1996) in Grove, 2001:70). I do not yet feel ready to be able to listen to all equally and fully within the general context of the classroom, and have therefore made the decision to listen to the children’s stories in a one-to-one situation, although attentiveness will also be paid to all throughout the learning contexts and during the social dramatization of some of the stories.

(ii) INCLUSIVE AND CREATIVE PEDAGOGY

An inclusive pedagogy is the ideal educational scenario in which all learners, regardless of their needs and abilities, are enabled to fully participate in the school community and move towards achieving their maximum potential. It is important to recognize however, that whilst the physical co- presence of children with all needs and abilities in one setting may be a pre-requisite to inclusivity, it is merely a starting-point. Indeed, children with SEN (or physical differences or special gifts and talents) may feel more excluded within a nominally “inclusive” setting where their needs are not met (or where they always do “special” work with an assigned adult), than in an ostensibly less-inclusive setting where they are regularly able to participate in all activities and engage with their class-mates.

It may initially seem contradictory to talk about the development of an inclusive pedagogy when working with a group of children in a special school setting. However, whilst the environment in which the research takes place may be specialized in terms of high staff ratios and small class numbers of relatively homogenous ability, it does not necessarily follow that the curriculum developed there is itself specialized. The perspective taken in this approach is based upon “a position that assumes continua of common pedagogic strategies based on unique individual differences” (Lewis and Norwich, 2005: 6). The principles and objectives of education are viewed as “common to all” (ibid: 3), and particular groups of children with SEN (in this instance those diagnosed as having moderate learning difficulties

(MLD)) are not seen as requiring a distinct curriculum or pedagogical approach particular to their group. "(If we do not take account of specific group needs, then a reasonable alternative is to take account of common and individual needs" (ibid: 215), and a responsive approach has individual needs at its core.

A review of the few studies that have been carried out with MLD children all "point to generic strategies useful for others without MLD.... But there have been calls for more intensive and deliberate teaching for this group" (Fletcher-Campbell in ibid: 188). The concept of a continuum of pedagogic strategies allows for responsive approaches to the needs of particular individuals and groups within the broad (and often contested) category of MLD. These approaches often involve "more intensive and explicit...high density" (Lewis and Norwich, 2005: 5) teaching, and as will be explored here, a pedagogy committed to multi-sensory experiences and multi-modal forms of representation (a pedagogy it may be argued that is equally applicable to all educational settings). This pedagogical approach aspires to be both "high density" and deeply enriched.

"The soul wants imaginative responses that move it, delight it, deepen it (Hillman, 1983:38).....The Earth is not flat and neither is reality. Reality is continuous, multiple, simultaneous, complex, abundant and partly invisible. The imagination alone can fathom this and reveal its fathomings" (Winterson, 1995:151)" (Sunderland, 2001: 5).

How does my vision of a "high density" and "deeply-enriched" pedagogy link with the concept of "creative pedagogy", and what role does "imagination" play? A core value of the Norwegian National Curriculum is that "Education must demonstrate how creative energy and inventiveness have constantly improved the context, content and quality of human life" (Beetlestone, 1998:1). This places creativity at the heart of education and is potentially a wholly inclusive statement, where creativity and its impact are to be for the improved quality of life for all.

In the UK the specially constituted National Advisory Committee on Creativity, Culture and Education (NACCCE) produced a report entitled "All our Futures: Culture, Creativity and Education" (1999, DfEE). This report highlighted a distinction between "teaching for creativity" and "creative teaching". "Creative teaching" is defined as "teachers using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting, exciting and effective (and)

“teaching for creativity” as forms of teaching that are intended to develop young people’s own creative thinking and behaviour” (NACCE, 1999:89).

The creative pedagogy posited in this research encapsulates both of these not entirely extricable aspects of creative education; although admittedly the bias is unintentionally towards the aspect that is most immediately possible to influence – the creativity of the teacher. The effect of this however (and indeed the guiding intention behind it) will hopefully be to enhance the development of creativity in the children – and this creativity has different aspects. The first is connected to abstract, imaginative thought and the second to the creative process and the representation of creativity.

There are two aspects to the concept of imagination – its fundamental importance to all forms of learning and its capacity to allow for creativity. Piaget posited that for a child to understand something then it is necessary for him/her to reinvent it for himself/herself. “The ability to symbolize this way is one of the foundations of learning and this capacity is helped by the capacity to use the imagination” (Piaget in Greenhalgh, 1994: 46). This is echoed by Ted Hughes’ description of imagination as the “faculty of creating a picture in our heads and holding it there whilst we think about it” (Hughes, 1988, in Egan and Nadaner, 1998:35). Imagination has also been described “as a form of playful analogical thinking that draws on previous experiences but combining them in unusual ways, generating new patterns of meaning” (Pollinator and Gardner, 1999, 213 in Hendy and Toon, 2001: 46).

This links closely with the previously discussed importance of play and developing an attitude of “playfulness”. It is notable also not just by being a mode of thinking, but because of the emotional engagement that can come from play. This is explored by Sherratt and Peter in relation to children with autism:

“Activity that is inherently playful tends to generate an emotional response, and so will ...target directly that part of the brain that may be under-functioning in children with autism (Peter 2000). Such experiences may also be more “memorable” because they are highly charged (fun, exciting, pleasurable, intriguing – even annoying or frustrating) and therefore more likely to be etched on the brain due to their emotional quality: research has shown a link between emotional arousal in the mid-brain and cortical operations of thinking and problem-solving” (Iverson, 1996 in Sherratt and Peter, 2002: 4).

It is of great importance to children with language and learning difficulties to be enabled to symbolize, to remember, and to develop flexibility of thought – so the development of their imagination should be central to any pedagogical approach, and this is far more than telling fantasy stories or painting pictures. Creativity and creative output is however, closely linked to imaginative thought:

“A creative response does not have to result in something startlingly original. Rather the significant factor is the act of creating; coming up with new ideas or products, or recombining existing ones, in a way that is meaningful to the person concerned (Gallagher, 1985 in Sherratt and Peter, 2002:10).

“We become truly Godlike in diligence and industry, in working and doing, which are accompanied by the clear perception or even the vaguest feeling that thereby we represent the inner in the outer” (Froebel, 1826 in Pound, 2005:15).

This is a feeling and experience equally valuable to us all, and representations enable children to share their experiences, feelings and ideas. “Children use their representations to explore, to solve problems, to think about and create new meanings. Different forms of representation enable them to address problems in various ways and gain new insights. The ability and opportunity to represent offers children a sense of control which enhances their self-image” (Duffy, 1998:9).

In valuing and encouraging creativity in children with SEN it is important to remember that creativity does not just occur in a vacuum – and the richer and more memorable the children’s experiences the more material they may have to manipulate creatively. Multi-sensory approaches will enable all children to experience events in different ways, and are inclusive of those children who may not process material in the primarily auditory and supplementary visual ways that they are usually presented in classrooms.

Grove is also aware that “it is the students’ creative output that is normally the focus of attention. However, many students with special needs will not be able to produce anything material or performance-based...we do not have to depend on an output to look at their potential for creativity” (Grove, 2005: 91). This will not be an issue for the children in this research, but is essential to consider if a pedagogy is to be truly inclusive – where all children are enabled, not only to participate equally, but to have their expressions of meaning and creativity equally valued regardless of the form of their communication. Most

pertinent to this is the following account of the multi-modal forms of expression valued in the Reggio Emilia Approach in Italy:

“The “hundred languages of children” can be expressed in many different ways, using a wide variety of materials, tools and resources. Drawing, painting, mark-making, printing, writing, signs and symbols (including Braille and Makaton), dance, mime, drama, facial and body gestures, puppets, shadow-play, plans, maps, buildings, designs, photographs, sculptures, blocks, construction materials, natural materials, computers...and many more... Imagining “a hundred languages” enables practitioners to think creatively about inclusion and involvement for all children” (Wood, 2005: 128).

This final quotation draws together the threads of the concept of a creative curriculum and its companionship (as I see it) with an integrated and inclusive pedagogy; where there is ample opportunity for the cross-pollination of ideas, attitudes and values. Cross-curricular themes and opportunities to work alongside pupils of different ages, cultures and abilities, provide opportunities for the generalization of learning and the recombination of ideas in new forms.

This wide and admittedly ill-defined concept of creative pedagogy will not be dwelt on in depth within the specific context of this research since many of its criteria cannot be met. I feel pressed however to include here the full poetic extract from which the phrase “the one hundred languages of children” is derived and which expresses the attitude and openness to engagement with the children that I hope may be approximated in this research and the practice that I hope will be avoided:

*“The child is made of one hundred
The child has
A hundred languages
A hundred hands
A hundred thoughts
A hundred ways of thinking
...The school and the culture
...tell the child
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred*

they steal the ninety-nine.

They tell the child

That work and play

Reality and fantasy

Science and imagination

Sky and earth

Reason and dream are things

That do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child

That the hundred is not there". (Loris Malaguzzi, extract from poem translated by Lella Gandini in Craft et. al. 2001: 175).

(iii) THERAPEUTIC PLAY AND ITS PLACE IN THE CLASSROOM.

There is no clear distinction between “play” and “therapeutic play”, and Wood (2008) has described “everyday play activities as therapeutic and pedagogic encounters”:

“Drawing on the Greek “therapeia” meaning attendance, I argue that play activities between human beings provide opportunities to attend or stretch towards each other, to create intersubjective, relational spaces and possibilities that contribute to health, well-being and development...indeed it is often the absence of attendance, in all its definitions, that contributes to the need for structured play therapy interventions for children and families” (ibid: 111-112).

Caplan and Caplan (1974) have also proposed several unique attributes about the process of play, which should be present in all pure play situations:

“Play is voluntary by nature, and in a world full of rules and requirements, play is refreshing and full of respite...play is free from evaluation and judgement: thus it is safe to make mistakes without failure...play encourages fantasy and the use of the imagination...enables control without compliance ... (and) play encourages the development of the self” (Caplan and Caplan, 1974 in Carey, 1999: xii).

Perhaps the difference between these two descriptions of play is that the first requires that it is relational – either with peers and/or with adults, whilst the qualities of the second description can be found in solitary play. For holistic development it is important that

children experience both of these situations, and I have earlier considered what the role of the adult might be in this, especially for those children who find elements of play difficult. In some situations, the “teaching” of play skills could actually be seen as therapeutic. One example of this is with children with autism:

“If you can manage to teach children with autism to play, Sherratt and Peter (2002) suggest this may lead to learning, and even to changes in the brain. The children’s thinking may become more flexible. Learning to play with others also draws children into a social world – and fun, something such children do not get much of” (Cohen, 2006: 160).

Another such example comes from a study of “clown training” where “several emotionally disturbed children do respond to imaginative training exercises, and show, along with greater fantasy play, considerably more joy and liveliness” (Schaefer and Kaduson, 2006: 213) This would be an area in itself that would be fascinating to research, especially as the “teaching” of play is not usually considered as part of the curriculum.

In this research, perhaps what is most relevant is the environment in which therapeutic play can flourish, and the role of the practitioner in this. In her description of object relations play therapy, Benedict outlines the characteristic of “attunement” that is central to the therapeutic relationship:

“Instead of adopting either a directive or non-directive approach, the therapist chooses her activity level and degree of directiveness in response to cues from the child. Another important facet of attunement, is assuming that all the therapist’s responses and behaviours are matched to the children’s developmental level....the therapist needs to be warm and accepting of the child...emotionally constant...allowing the child to control the interaction and activities (unless safety is threatened)” (Benedict in *ibid*: 6).

This approach, sits well with the concept of play as a “pedagogic and therapeutic encounter”, although it is an encounter between adult and child rather than between peers. Once play becomes a social activity each individual child cannot of course “control the interaction and activities”; play becomes an experience of skills in negotiation and compromise. Whilst of central importance in the classroom, this can make play activities (especially between children with poorly developed social skills – whatever their aetiology) fraught and distressing, rather than therapeutic.

The activities that I will refer to as “play therapy” in this research, will be of two kinds. The first is the use of “sand-tray therapy”, and this will be used as solitary play (unless the child using the sand-tray invites another to join him/her). I will not attempt to act as untrained therapist with the child, but will have faith that the proposed benefits of sand-tray play can be at least partly gained through the play experience alone. I will not therefore interact with the children during this solitary play nor attempt any interpretations of it. The rationale of the use of sandplay is outlined below:

“Sandplay gives expression to non-verbalized emotional issues...has a unique kinaesthetic quality...serves to create a therapeutic distance...creates a safe place for abreaction...provides boundaries...is effective in overcoming client resistance...provides an effective communication medium for the client with poor verbal skills ...creates a place for the client to experience control ..(and) deeper intra-psychic issues may be assessed more thoroughly and rapidly through sandplay” (Carey, 1999: xvi-xxiv).

Alongside this form of play therapy there will also be opportunities for creative experiences in various mediums (including clay),the purpose of which will be the children’s experience of the materials and the process; rather than the production of an artefact. As Mary Warnock suggested as far back as 1977: “More arts in the curriculum would probably be of greater social and educational value than pastoral or counselling services” (Warnock, 1977 in Greenhalgh, 1994: 140).

The second kind will be when I refer to certain “play therapy” techniques that are used in a more directive way to develop interaction with certain stories, and the rationale behind the use of these will be to encourage the quality of playfulness, and also to develop emotional engagement. As Wood notes “ ...children need to exaggerate and play with different emotions in a non-threatening situation, in order to explore how it feels to be angry, frightened, abandoned, lost, powerful and powerless” (Wood, 2005: 82).

An essential element of most play therapy is the therapist’s interpretation of children’s play and their subsequent interactions. Freudian and Jungian interpretations have been influential since its inception. Dora Kalff, the founder of sandplay saw it “as a tool that allowed children to express both the archetypal and intra-personal worlds, and connected the child to outer everyday realities. She postulated that symbolic play created a communication between the conscious and the unconscious mind” (Boik and Goodwin,

1994: 63). Freud theorized a divided self between the conscious and unconscious and Edmiston (2008), contests that Freudian analysis of play can promote a negative view of it in three ways "... the significance of play (especially play involving imagined violent actions) can easily be dismissed (as not real), diminished (as mere wish fulfilment), or pathologized (as an expression of hostile feelings)" (Edmiston, 2008: 63). He aligns himself rather with Bakhtin who "theorizes the self as dialogically engaged in ongoing internal and external social conversations with struggles for meaning among competing positions" (ibid: 64). This last view of play as the child's exploration of meaning and identity is the one adopted in this research, and interpretations of it can only ever be constructed alongside the child. The process itself however is meaningful in itself without interpretation.

In conclusion, the therapeutic aspects of play in the pedagogical approach of this research are general – encouraging playfulness, developing opportunities for the expression of emotions and creating an atmosphere of acceptance and "attendance" – and specific in the use of sandplay therapy but without any therapeutic intervention.

PART 4: THE CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE AND CLAIMS TO ORIGINALITY OF THIS RESEARCH.

This research has two foci – the first is a developmental evaluation of a particular pedagogical approach used when working with children with MLD and Speech and Language Difficulties. The second is an open-ended enquiry into what can be learned from the stories that the children tell- using a multi-faceted analysis grid, in order to inform future practice.

The pedagogical approach is not a pre-created standard intervention, but one guided by certain principles distilled from the practices discussed in this chapter. These principles may be applicable across all curriculum areas, but in this research the focus is upon the development of speech and language. Similarly, the principles are I believe broadly applicable across all educational settings because they are not a specialized curriculum (in the sense of a curriculum that is distinct from the principles of the general curriculum). Certain elements of the approach have been influenced however by the particular needs of the group for whom it has been planned, and these will be discussed in more detail below.

The first principle is to create a “pedagogy of listening” (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005:99) – where teaching is responsive to the perceived needs and interests of the children, and where allocated time is given to each child in an attempt to ensure equality of attention. Whilst equality will initially be taken as synonymous with equity and all children given equivalent amounts of time for one-to-one storytelling, this will be differentiated as necessary as the research proceeds in the interests of equality (for example if a child needs more time to express themselves because of particular language difficulties). The “listening” advocated is a practice that involves mindful attention and includes observation of non-verbal behaviours and interpretation of the children’s communications. This responsive approach will enable the details of the intervention to emerge as the research proceeds. A tension exists however, since not the entire class curriculum is developed in this way, and even in the research there will be elements that are clearly more directive (the teaching style with which I am most familiar).

The second principle is that of an integrated and creative curriculum with opportunities for multi-modal representations at its heart. This enables the children to make connections across learning experiences (and the generalization of learning is a particular issue for all children with learning difficulties) and values diversity in the opportunities it provides for children to communicate their responses in different ways. It is a reflection also of a particular view about a continuum of pedagogical approaches for all children, including those with learning difficulties, which responds to “unique individual differences” (Lewis and Norwich, 2005:6). Children with SEN do not need a specialized curriculum, but a curriculum that offers opportunities to learn and consolidate in a wide range of imaginative ways – a curriculum that is deeply enriched and memorable. Part of this provision may well include structured and incremental tasks, but these should be presented in an engaging way, with the child actively involved in the learning that is taking place.

The third principle is one from which a concept of “playful work” has been developed. This concept fully acknowledges the essential role of play (and in this context particularly fantasy play) to the holistic development of all children – and hopes to harness the engagement and intrinsic motivation that free play inspires. In “playful work” however, the role of the adult is pivotal - both in modelling ways to play alongside an exploration of alternative possibilities and in gently challenging and extending children’s language and thinking. This concept has been influenced by my experience of working with children with learning difficulties and with

autism, who often find free play difficult and therefore seek security in familiar and repetitive ways of playing. Just as teachers sometimes need to be moved out of their comfort zone, so too do children if learning is to take place. It is also formulated with regard to the assertions of Fromberg that “play serves a multiplicity of functions which depend crucially on interactions between adults and children. A consistent theme is that children (may) need to be taught how to play through modelling, as being a competent player does not always emerge spontaneously” (Fromberg, 1984 in Wood and Attfield, 1996: 63). Even in play therapy Oaklander states that many children who are “defensive and constricted, need suggestions to open themselves up to creative association. They will pick the suggestion that most fits for them, or will realize that they can think of many other possibilities” (Oaklander, 1978:32-33).

The fourth principle is that all children need some respite or therapeutic space within the busy day of the classroom – and that some activities (for example the use of sand-play and clay) can provide possibilities for healing and integration equally as powerful as a “taught” curriculum of social and emotional development. Therapeutic play provides opportunities for adults to respond to children “as they are”; fostering an atmosphere of acceptance and trust that is not conditional upon learning or improvement.

The final principle is the one that relates most closely to the practitioners who were the inspiration for this research (Grove, Gussin-Paley, Edmiston and Fox), the importance of giving stories and story-telling prominence in the lives of all children. This is based on a belief that stories and story-telling have an influence far beyond their use in literacy lessons – they are powerful tools in the development of language, but they are also crucial to the emotional development of children and to the formation of their social and ethical identities. The analysis of the children’s stories collected during this research will start to form an answer to the overall research question.

This is small-scale but specific and in-depth piece of research, and its contribution to knowledge will be in the evaluation of a particular combination of pedagogical principles (especially in the compromises and balances it explores across a range of theoretical spectrums), and working with a specific group of children – children identified as having MLD and speech and language difficulties - for whom there appears to be little dedicated research in the area of story-telling.

The second focus of the research is to explore what can be learned by attempting to analyze and interpret children's stories using the lenses of a specifically created multi-perspective system of analysis. The premise of this study is that the stories told by children are a rich source of information about their linguistic and narrative competencies and their social and emotional development and concerns. Independent or "free" storytelling by children is not only an under-valued activity in itself, but also under-analyzed when the few stories that are told are only interpreted in terms of National Curriculum level descriptors. At the outset of this research it is believed that listening to children's stories could provide a rich source of information about children that will support the development of a responsive and personalized curriculum – what can teachers learn from the stories children tell?

The questions that the research will attempt to answer will build upon the findings of the studies previously reviewed – for example, the syntactic complexity revealed by T-Unit analyses of children's stories by Fox and the mythic themes explored in Edmiston's account of Michael's play. It will aim to supplement and extend such findings (with particular reference to young children with language and learning difficulties), but will also suggest a possible proforma that could be used and adapted by classroom practitioners who would like to learn more from the stories that their children tell.

PART 5: QUESTIONS THAT WILL GUIDE THE RESEARCH PROCESS

(1) What can a multi-layered analysis of children's stories reveal about the children, their stories and the particular evaluation procedures used?

- What are the strengths and limitations of the individual assessment and evaluation methods?
- What is revealed by the various analyses, and how can these findings be used when planning future provision and learning experiences for the children?

(2) Are the learning and language difficulties of the children apparent within the stories told – and can any development of their linguistic and story-telling skills be identified within them?

- How can story-telling complement other interventions to develop speech and language skills for children with MLD?

(3) Do the stories reveal the social and emotional development and concerns of the children?

- Which social and emotional issues are revealed by story-telling – and how are these identified and interpreted?
- What do the stories tell us about the social dynamics in the classroom and the wider social context in which the children live?
- What is the role of the teacher in the acceptance or modification of world views and social behaviours displayed by the children in their story-telling and dramatizations?

(4) What themes can be identified across the range of stories – and are there any patterns or connections over time?

(5) What issues arise from the reflections on the pedagogical approaches employed to provide the story-telling contexts in the classroom?

- How did the pedagogical principles translate into practice?
- What does the research reveal about the pedagogy of story-telling and what changes will be made to practice in the future?

In the next chapter I will briefly enter the abstract realm of the philosophy and epistemological beliefs underpinning this research, and one of the issues will be the possibility or otherwise of an objective reality – of finding a “truth”. This will be an adult’s less exciting version of the real and not-real dilemma of children’s stories. Another issue will be the centrality of myself as teacher and researcher, and the inescapable fact that a brittle ego will be involved, one that needs to be both resilient and honest. This attempt to preface the next chapter is really an explanation (possibly not needed) for my insertion of the following extract to bridge this chapter’s assertion of the power and value of stories to the next chapter’s concerns:

“It doesn’t happen all at once” say the Skin Horse “You become.” It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all because once you are real you can’t be ugly except to people who don’t understand “(Extract from “The Velveteen Rabbit” – Williams, 1998).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH – THE PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO PRACTICE.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Exploration and reflection are the processes that encapsulate the spirit and methodology of this research as it aims to emulate the practitioner-based approaches reviewed in the previous chapter (for example, Grove and Gussin-Paley), whilst also pursuing its own particular questions. The research will take place entirely within my own classroom where I will be both teacher and researcher, and the dilemmas that arise from this will be discussed later in the outline of the research design.

Stories are central to the study. They will inspire the pedagogical approaches to be employed, and the stories that the children tell will become the data from which I will subsequently construct the research story. Indeed, as I start to think about the proposed research design the parallels with the children's stories are compelling. The apparently simple texts of both can be imbued with many layers of meaning and there are resemblances also in their creation - just as the stories of children reflect their personal interests so does this research story reflect mine. Both are also constrained and partly created by the social and cultural situation in which the children and I find ourselves. All of the stories could be different if we came together in another time or place, or if any of the participants (including myself) were replaced by another. This research is very much the study of a unique case.

This chapter will firstly outline the theoretical perspectives and personal beliefs that shaped the research proposal (Part 2). It will then consider the way in which the research is designed so that it can best answer its guiding questions (Part 3). Following this, but in reality permeating the entire process, are the ethical issues that arise and the decisions made (Part 4). The exact details of the proposed research design and its particular context will then be described (Part 5), alongside an introduction to the participating children (Part 6) and the planned pedagogical approaches (Part 7). The final section will explain the development of the multi-perspective analysis grid that will be used for the analysis of the children's stories (Part 8).

This next section will look at the origins of the research story and the assumptions that underlay its formulation.

PART 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES – “FICTION OR NON-FICTION?”

“What of a truth that is bounded by these mountains and is falsehood to the world that lives beyond?” (Michael Eyquem de Montaigne in Crotty, 1998:42).

The foremost question is whether or not there is an objective “truth” that is waiting to be discovered and whether or not the particular methodology that I choose will allow me to come close to such a discovery. Alongside many researchers I reject the “correspondence theory of truth” (Czarniawska, 2004: 12) which deems it possible to create “true” statements. The complications that arise when any attempt is made at representation reveal that it “is impossible to compare words to non-words” (Rorty, 1980 in *ibid*: 12). The language that I use to describe my findings will therefore be viewed as “a tool of reality construction rather than a passive mirror” (*ibid*: 12).

But can this “reality” then be constructed however I please, or is there one true “reality” waiting for an ever- more accurate construction? This dilemma has been put far more eloquently by Umberto Eco when he says: “The problem is not to challenge the old idea that the world is a text which can be interpreted, but rather decide whether it has a fixed meaning, many possible meanings, or none at all” (Eco, 1990:23). This dilemma is central to the overall question posed by this research – what can we learn from the stories children tell? Given the data and the context will we all discover the same meanings, will there be many different interpretations or is there nothing there worth learning at all?

My own stance as a researcher is interpretive, and the assumption that created the openness of the research question was that there would be many different interpretations of what the children’s stories tell us. This correlates with one espoused purpose of interpretive research as being “to clarify how interpretations and understandings are formulated, implemented and given meaning in lived situations” (Radnor, 2002: 4). Interpretations will not only be part of the analysis of the stories but integral also to their formulation within the setting of the classroom, as the children and I interpret each others’ meanings in our daily communications. Rabinow and Sullivan (1987) have actually posited that interpretive

research is not just one type of methodology but, (for the human sciences) the only method because “both the object of investigation – the web of language symbols and institutions – and the tools by which the investigation are carried out share inescapably the same persuasive context that is the human world” (in Radnor, 2004: 12).

Is this research narrative therefore, a work of “fiction” or “non-fiction”? Czarniawska would argue that there is:

“No structural difference between fictional and factual narrative and their respective attraction is not determined by their claims to be fact or fiction. The attractiveness of a narrative is situationally negotiated – or rather arrived at” (Czarniawska, 2004: 7).

This carries echoes of Eyquem de Montaigne’s quote at the start of this section, and we know that what is seen as fact in one age or culture (religious or scientific texts for example) will be seen as fiction in another culture or historical age where different meta-narratives prevail. The research process will therefore consist not of “theories pitched against reality, but of texts being pitched against other texts” (Scott and Usher, 1999: 22). The interpretations offered will always be just that – interpretations – and that is inescapably how it must be for any research conclusions. There is no “reality” to be “accurately” arrived at, although that statement as well of course is purely an interpretation.

The questions of this research allow not only for different interpretations of the findings but also for an open-ness in the research procedures as situations evolve. I am attracted to the description of life (translated here to apply to the small piece of life encapsulated in this research) as a “narrative quest...(where) life is lived with a goal, but (its) most important aspect ...is the formulation and re-formulation of that goal” (ibid: 13). The research process itself will be influenced and changed by events that occur, and the learning journey will be valuable in itself even if the final goal of some written interpretations is never attained.

Pring still exhorts however, that in order for any reflective practice to be worthy of the description of “research” – then it must imply “some sort of truth claim – however tentative and limited in its application” (Pring, 2000: 134). I find it difficult to concur with the use of the word “truth”, but I do believe that (for me) some interpretations are more useful and persuasive than others. If this was not the case there would be little point in carrying out the research, since one of my stated reasons for doing so is to evaluate whether or not multi-

sensory and interactive story-telling opportunities are experiences worthy of the significant amount of curriculum time I have given over to them. I am concerned also about the processes of assessment that take place in classrooms and how these methods privilege children's attainment against National Curriculum levels (including P levels), and wonder if alternative methods could reveal different but equally important aspects of their learning and development. Whilst accepting that any "conclusions" reached will be interpretations only and entirely context-bound, I will nevertheless be making some evaluative judgments about these that will inform my future pedagogical decisions.

So what kind of knowledge am I looking for and what is the epistemological position underlying the whole of this research? Essentially it is one of social constructionism with its assumptions that there is "no objective truth waiting for us to discover it ... meaning is not discovered but constructed ... different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon" (Crotty, 1998: 8). These meanings and interpretations will not be purely "subjective" however, since they are inextricably influenced by the phenomenon itself, as in the phenomenological concept of "intentionality". This concept belies the dichotomy of subjective and objective, describing rather a "radical interdependence of subject and the world ... subject and object distinguishable as they are, are always unified" (ibid: 46) Adorno refers to the process of constructive meaning making as "exact fantasy" (Adorno, 1931: Appendix 1) and finally that is how I would like the story of my research to be appraised, as a work in "exact fantasy". A story that requires imagination but with "exactness (invoked) ... and with creativity involved in a precise interplay with "something" (Crotty, 1998: 47).

The "something" in this particular case will be the stories that the children tell and the context in which they are produced. The words of the children will often be portrayed as the "raw data", and Wittgenstein drew our attention to the situated condition of any language use. It is this that enables us to communicate, and in this instance to understand the stories that have been told. "We understand what people say to us, not because we can get into (their) mental processes but because we "know" the language" (in Radnor, 2004: 15). We will not necessarily be able to interpret how the children understand and experience the meaning of a particular word (be that something as apparently simple as the colour "red" or more complicated such as the concepts of "good" and "evil"), but our dual understanding will enable us to communicate using these words. It will be interesting to reflect upon how

the children use an emerging vocabulary in their stories and if they use any words in a way that is not readily understandable to the listener. Similarly, I will be interacting with the children through the medium of language which is an identified area of difficulty for them, and the research will consider how we come to construct a world of shared meanings together, and how these are arrived at within the wider framework of meaning “which in its most general state is not open to negotiation” (Pring, 2000: 52).

This view of language supports the concept of intentionality – where subject and object are indissolubly united:

“Through language the meanings of things are arrived at referentially and relationally ... so although it may well be that social reality exists independently of the vocabulary of society, it cannot in fact be identified separately from the language used to describe it” (Taylor, 1995 in Radnor, 2004: 15).

The inseparable union of subject (self) and object (social world) has also been described by Schutz, when he stated that it is “impossible to understand human conduct whilst ignoring its intentions and it is impossible to understand human intentions whilst ignoring the settings in which they make sense” (Schutz, 1973: in Czarniawska, 2004: 4). When describing the research process I will be including as much contextual data as possible, both about the participants themselves and the setting in which the stories were told in order to support the interpretive process.

When we see ourselves as interpreters and constructors of meaning, there is a central tension to this process that is difficult to resolve. How much freedom do we have when constructing those meanings? Some of the constraints have already been mentioned, but it is important to recognize the extent of these within the social constructionist perspective:

“Our culture brings things into view for us and endows them with meaning and by the same token leads us to ignore other things. The social constructionism we are talking about is all-encompassing, and we need to be careful not to restrict its ambit ... it is not just our thoughts that are constructed for us we have also to reckon with the social construction of emotions” (Harre, 1986 in Crotty, 1998: 54).

Culture itself of course is forever evolving and is slowly transformed through the myriad of social interactions that take place within it and through which new sets of meaning come to be used and accepted. These new meanings however, are dependent upon the layers of

interpretation that have previously existed – the “process of sedimentation” (ibid: 59) and upon language as an inherited “system of significant symbols” (ibid: 54) that is formative in both thought (Gadamer, 1989: 378) and communication. We are forever limited by our “mind-forg’d manacles” (Blake, W. in Crotty, 1998:59) Meanings may arise in the give-and – take of human interactions, but within these interactions often lurk hegemonic interests. This is particularly the case when individuals or groups are not included in the construction of their own meanings but “other people or institutions concoct narratives for (them) without including them in a conversation; this is what power is about” (Czarniawska, 2004: 5). In the research that is planned I am clearly in a position of power – since I am an adult, a teacher and the researcher. It will therefore be vital that I am alert to the ways in which I use this power, and that I provide as many opportunities as possible for the children to be able to contribute to the research process. As I write this I am wondering if I will allow them the choice not to partake in the research activities or indeed if I would make this option available in any teaching. In my every day practice it is assumed that the children all participate in the activities that are offered them, with varying levels of choice. I only query this if a problem arises with a child finding an activity difficult to engage with and either refusing or becoming upset. I think this will be the procedure I continue to use, but may modify this view as the research develops. It is also of course part of the responsive/ directive pedagogical dichotomy discussed in the previous chapter.

The “socio-centric” view of knowledge as “a communal human construction that is formed by and forms human beings” (Soctis, 1981 in Radnor, 2004: 3) always involves interpretation within historical and cultural contexts, and means that any “knowledge” that is arrived at from this research can only be seen as “historical rather than abstract, contingent rather than determinate” (Scott and Usher, 1999: 28). It will by definition therefore be both incomplete and indeterminate.

“The symbol gives rise to thought” (Ricoeur in Crotty, 1998: 80)

Ricoeur’s phrase expresses the basic premise of hermeneutics - “that the symbols of myth, religion, art and ideology all carry messages which may be uncovered by philosophical interpretation” (ibid: 80). With the emphasis in this research on the interpretation and analysis of the children’s stories I was clear from the outset that in some sense it would be a form of hermeneutical enquiry. It shares with hermeneutics the view that the meaning of texts is much deeper than their semantic significance and that these deeper meanings may

be un-recognized by the authors themselves. The texts to be interpreted in this research are those scribed from children's oral story-telling which resonates with Schleiermacher's (1768-1834) comparison that "reading a text is very much like listening to someone speak (giving) place for a kind of empathy in the speaker-listener interchange" (in *ibid*: 93). Hermeneutical enquiry also encompasses the social constructionist view that socially derived systems of meaning are inherent in texts:

"Gaining hermeneutical understanding involves a hermeneutical circle... the interpreter moves from the text to the historical and social circumstances of the author, attempting to reconstruct the world in which the text came to be and situating the text within it – and back again" (*ibid*: 95).

Hermeneutical enquiry has long since been extended from being solely the study of ancient texts to incorporating enquiry into any aspect of the social world. The task for researchers then comes to be "one of working out as many meanings as possible of a complex social life" (Scott and User, 1999: 28). Whilst this particular research is still very much focused on "texts", it also incorporates the pedagogic context in which they were created, and an important element in the analysis of the data will be to do so from as many different angles as possible. When I read Van Manen's (1990) description of hermeneutic phenomenology, I was inspired to strive towards emulating some of the qualities he explicated in my own research. "Phenomenological research gives us tactful thoughtfulness, situational perceptiveness, discernment and depthful understanding" (Van Manen, 1990: 156). It also echoes the importance of the unity between research and pedagogy, where both require a "phenomenological sensitivity to lived experience (children's realities and life-worlds)" (*ibid*: 156), and the underlying philosophy is one "of action, always in a personal and situated sense. A person who turns towards phenomenological reflection does so out of personal engagement" (*ibid*: 154).

I have spent many hours struggling to see if I can somehow adopt a wholesale phenomenological approach to this research having already determined that my underlying epistemology is that of social constructionism. The essence of phenomenology is to "make us conscious of what the world was like before we learned to see it " (Marton, 1986 in Crotty, 1998: 80) and to "ask for that which makes a some-"thing" what it "is", and without which it could not be what it is" (Husserl, 1982; Merleau-Ponty, 1962 in Van Manen, 1990: 10). I cannot convince myself that this is possible and certainly not that I will come anywhere

near such enlightenment in this research. I can however attempt through the process of hermeneutical enquiry to construct as full an interpretive description of a particular life-world (the story-telling sessions in my classroom) as possible, whilst being continually mindful that “knowledge is like living... things are always more complex” (Van Manen, 1990: 156).

One definition given of a “good” phenomenological description is that of “an adequate elucidation of some aspect of the life-world (and) the “phenomenological nod” (Buytendijk) is recognition of an experience that we have had or could have had” (ibid: 27). This is the reason I was attracted to many of the authors and researchers who inspired this research. I read their books and could recognize the world they were describing; it seemed to “ring true”. The attempt to provoke such “nods” from some readers of this research story will require plenty of “thick” description, and leads inescapably to a specific research design, that of the case-study.

PART 3: RESEARCH DESIGN – THE CASE STUDY.

“Intensity in the examination of the particular” (Pring, 2000:41).

The case-study was the preferred method for this research since it is a strategy applicable to a situation where the focus is on a “contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, and when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2002: 13). The phenomenon in this instance will be the story-telling of children in a particular classroom and the context will be the pedagogical approach employed there, alongside the social dynamics that exist within and beyond the class. As teacher and researcher I will clearly manipulate the story-telling behaviours within a pedagogic framework to the extent that I will plan the experiences and opportunities that will encourage them to take place. Beyond that however, I will have little control over the events being researched. Indeed I will not even be able to choose the participants as this will be dependent upon the children who are admitted into my class in this particular year.

One strength of the case-study method is that it provides the opportunity to work with the “raw material in an interactive and sensitive way (supporting the) unfolding of a holistic picture” (Radnor, 2004: 37). This is achieved by balancing the data collection and interpretation processes as the research proceeds. Whilst I will probably not analyze the

stories in depth during the period of the research, I will be informally assessing and interpreting the development, interests and needs of the children as part of everyday classroom practice and this will influence how each stage of the research will evolve.

In order for this case-study to be considered of any more relevance than some extracts from my diary or an assemblage of lesson plans and evaluations it is important to tackle the thorny issue of “validity”. I have so far deliberately avoided the use of this word (because it sits uncomfortably close to “truth” claims) and now choose to adopt Radnor’s concept of “trustworthiness” (ibid: 38) in its stead. Any readers of a case-study will need to have trust in the data and analyses presented if the research is to be in any way interesting or illuminating for them. “Focusing on trustworthiness rather than truth displaces validation from its traditional location in a presumed objective, non-interactive and neutral reality – and moves it to a social world” (Mishler, 1999 in Radnor, 2004: 38).

In order to develop this sense of trustworthiness it is essential that “thick” description and “rich” data is presented to the readers, because trust will be compromised if there is “inaccuracy or incompleteness of the data ... rich data are the product of detailed, descriptive note-taking about the specific ... events you observe (and).... makes it difficult for the observer to restrict his observations so that he only sees what supports his prejudices and expectations” (Maxwell, 1996:95).

It was with these issues in mind, alongside the lessons that I had learned from the pilot study that influenced the way in which this particular research was framed. It is a compromise between what would be ideal and what I think will be practically possible – a not entirely satisfactory compromise, but one that I hope will be acceptable. In this research it will be the stories themselves that will be the “collected data” to be analyzed (although never separated from the context in which they were produced, or from their authors). It is hoped that this focus will ease the difficulties encountered in the pilot study where I attempted to record, interpret and analyze all facets of the story-telling process. I had then ignored Wellington’s warning that the “inevitable tendency with data is to over-collect and under-analyze” (Wellington, 2000: 13). I hope however that this planned reduction in data collection will still provide enough richness of detail to “facilitate multiple interpretations by allowing the reader to use his (her) own experiences to evaluate the data” (Roizen and Jepson 1985, in ibid: 100), and the story of the research process will ensure that the stories

as “outcomes” will not be “disconnected from the means of achieving them” (Pring, 2000:26). It is also hoped that details of the story-creation contexts, brief observational field-notes during the story-telling process and the complete presentation of a substantial number of stories and their analyses (in the appendices), will enhance trust in both the data collection process and the subsequent interpretations.

“The ability to relate to a case and learn from it, is perhaps more important than being able to generalize from it” (Wellington, 2000: 96), and it is clear that the specific case to be presented here will be in many respects unique. However, its ultimate aim will be of high enough quality to share with all good stories the ability to “transcend the particularity of its plot and protagonists ...(and become) subject to thematic analysis and criticism” (Van Manen, 1990: 70). Whilst it will not be possible to replicate or generalize from the study it is hoped that it might illuminate contexts wider than its own setting (even if only the changed context of a new class group in the following year).

“The subjectivity that originally I had taken as an affliction, something to bear because it could not be foregone, could, to the contrary, be taken as virtuous. My subjectivity is the basis for the story that I am about to tell. It is a strength on which I build. It makes me who I am as a person and as a researcher.... something to be capitalized on, rather than to exorcise” (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992 in Radnor, 2004: 30).

The interpretive nature of this research and the social constructionist assumptions that permeate it, make the fact that as both teacher and researcher I am all-pervasive in the process less theoretically problematic. There will be no attempt to portray myself as a “neutral observer” or to perform the “God-trick (of) pretending to offer a vision that is simultaneously from everywhere and nowhere, equally and fully” (Haraway, 1991 in Scott and Usher, 1999: 17). The research will clearly be “my story”, but as an essential part of reflexive practice, I will attempt to maintain a reflexivity that seeks to find out how any meanings are “discursively constructed within the research process” (Czarniawska, 2004: 14). Whilst working in the classroom I will also try to maintain a “hermeneutic alertness...a certain orientation of reflexivity whilst guarding against the more manipulative and artificial attitude that a reflexive attitude tends to insert in a social situation and relation” (Van Manen, 1990:69).

Throughout the process I hope that I will be first and foremost a teacher and a “good” listener for the children’s stories. I hope to maintain a strongly pedagogical orientation and not “adopt some research perspective and language that strangely transforms and (leads me) away from a pedagogic orientation toward an orientation that is typical of some other scientific discipline” (ibid: 138). Conversely, I am hoping that the necessity to be fully aware as a researcher, will actually improve my ability to “listen” in the sense of “receiving information through multiple modalities (and) being able to assimilate large amounts of new information without bias... capturing (also) mood and affective components” (Yin, 2002:60).

For any participant researcher, familiarity with context is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Whilst it is important to try and become aware of and question all embedded assumptions and practices – an inherent belief in the formulation of this research is that a deeper understanding can better be achieved by closeness than with distant objectivity. “One learns to know only what one loves, and the deeper and fuller the knowledge is to be, the more powerful and rich must be the love; indeed the passion” (Goethe 1963: 83).

These are issues familiar to all interpretive research, but there are additional reasons why I feel it is important for teachers to be involved in specifically educational research. Linked to the concept above, I believe that teachers are uniquely placed to “appreciate and have access to the complexity of data required to understand the interactions in the classroom” (Stenhouse, 1975 in Pring, 2000:2). This does not mean that outside researchers cannot also provide illuminating stories about the nature of classroom life; but that they should be balanced with stories of which teachers are the authors. In both the pilot study and in this research as conceived, I cannot see how they could be carried out by anyone other than myself as teacher. Whilst I will have an idea as to how each session might evolve, when it comes to being in the classroom (as it is with any lesson), I will become involved with “the constant, often minute judgements by which learners adapt to evolving situations” (ibid: 120) and will need to respond and adapt in the way that I feel is most appropriate. My heightened awareness as a researcher will hopefully develop also my “capacity for discrimination in particular, complex human situations” (Elliott, 1991:53).

I am anticipating practical problems in my dual role however because of the inevitable difficulties of balancing the demands on my time and attention required by adopting two roles. In the pilot study, I frequently got to the end of lessons only to realize that I had, for

example, only partially completed an observation. This is one of the main reasons for limiting the data collection to approximately 20 stories per child over the year. I am sure that in this research also I will have to make decisions that involve either modifying some area of the research procedure or giving less attention to some other aspect of classroom life. Throughout the year, I will need to monitor this balance between teaching and researching, with the interests of the children being paramount.

I have discussed the importance of reflexivity, and making both myself and the reader as aware as possible of the effect of my personal biases and assumptions:

“By holding our own assumed research structures and logics as themselves researchable and not immutable, and by examining how we are part of the data, our research becomes not a self-centred product, but a reciprocal process. The voices of those with whom we interact ... are enhanced rather than lessened” (Steier, 1991 in Radnor, 2004: 31).

It is obvious also that I will have an effect on the data collected, and indeed as a teacher I would hope and expect that this would be the case. “Trying to minimize this effect is not a “meaningful goal for qualitative research... what is important is to understand “how” you are influencing what the (participant) says” (Maxwell, 1996: 9).

During the field - notes that are taken I will record any influence I believe that I may be having on the stories that the children tell, and I will try to be as open as possible about my thoughts and the dilemmas I face throughout the research process. I am aware however, that whilst I have talked in abstract terms about opening up my personal beliefs and biases for scrutiny, I have not yet “revealed” myself in any concrete way. So what is it necessary for the reader to know so that I am as clearly portrayed as the children later will be?

I think that one of the key personal characteristics that will be revealed throughout this research is one of confusion and tension between conflicting views. I have been a full-time teacher of Key Stage 1 children for 20 years and have worked in special school for the last 13 of these. In most respects I could therefore be described as an “experienced” teacher, and yet I still have many insecurities and concerns over my ability to provide the best education for the children in my classes. My first small-scale study in 1993, used Fox’s (1989) “Three Worlds of Narrative Framework” to scaffold the story-writing skills Year 2

children because already I was experiencing discomfort with the narrow lens of the English National Curriculum (DES, 1989) level descriptors. Both this particular research and the pilot study were also partly created in outrage at the stringent specifications of the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998), and especially its tendency to reduce stories and poems to pieces of “text” to be used as teaching tools for narrowly focused literacy objectives. Whilst this has now been replaced by the Revised Literacy Framework (DfES, 2006) with its potential for greater flexibility and creativity for teachers, the demand to prove progress by the attainment of measurable objectives continues, and the levels of attainment are now supposed to be acquired at an ever younger age.

I have found it difficult from an early stage in my teaching career to follow government strategies without question, (an echo of my personal life maybe, where demonstration and protest have been important elements), and was therefore attracted to action research as a form of “creative resistance” (Elliott, 1991:49). I want to provide an opposition to “the development of a curriculum technology which stresses the pre-specification of measurable outcomes” (Stenhouse, 1975: *ibid*: 51), but therein lies the tension. I can also see the merit at times of having clear success criteria for teaching sessions and working in a focused way towards these. Many of my lessons look different from the ones that will be evaluated in this research, both because I feel they are the most appropriate for that particular subject focus, and less admirably perhaps, because I recognize the pragmatic stance of working within targets set by the school. Whilst I may resist many aspects of current educational life, I am also inescapably part of it and share the problems of all attempts at cultural innovation from within – “the failure of the innovators to free themselves from the fundamental beliefs and values embedded in the culture they want to change” (Elliott, 1991: 48).

This leads to another tension – the fact that whilst my joy in the classroom comes from sharing creative learning experiences with the children (not easily translated into numerical data) I am also the school’s assessment co-ordinator. When I originally took this role, special schools were still largely protected from the world of “critical pathways” and data analysis, and the emphasis was upon formative assessment; of late referred to as “assessment for learning”. Suddenly however, I am discussing levels (and “sub-levels”), and the difference between “good” progress and “satisfactory” progress, and exhorting others about the importance of standardized levelling and reliable data! The irony of this is that the more I am immersed in this role, the more difficult I find it to un-shackle myself from

an ingrained need to “prove progress” in the analysis of the children’s stories. If the analyses of the stories produced during this research do not show children’s progress as measured against the National Curriculum and P Level descriptors, I know I will feel that in some way I have “failed”, regardless of what else the stories may reveal. My genuine uncertainty about the value of different assessments and evaluations has also influenced my plans to analyze the stories that the children tell from every viewpoint I can conceptualize. However, I am aware that this in itself will not free me from my particular biases, because “it is not as Lather (1991) points out a question of looking harder or more closely, but of asking what “frames” our way of seeing when we do research” (Scott and Usher, 1999: 2).

I obviously have a great personal investment in the value of story-telling within the classroom, and will hope to provide worthwhile and creative learning opportunities for the children during the period of the research. The emphasis in the pilot study was upon the learning experiences themselves as an “intervention” to be evaluated. I have changed the emphasis for this research to be upon the stories themselves – and this is for two reasons. Firstly, I hope that this focus will make me less protective of the learning experiences and less desperate to “prove” their worth. My bias will always be towards asserting their value, but hopefully this will be transparent to the readers, and enough detail will be provided for them to make up their own mind. The second was that it helped to resolve a potential difficulty, that of evaluating any teaching and learning interactions in a linear way.

As Hammersley (1997) argues:

“there is a danger in looking for too direct a relation between research conclusions and specific rules for successful practice. Human beings (and the social life in which they interact) are not the sort of things where there can be simple causal relationships between specific interventions and subsequent behaviours” (Hammersley, 1997 in Pring, 2000: 5).

This view is further endorsed by Luntley’s description of:

“the dynamic effect of each element on the other...input X may on one occasion result in output Y, but that does not mean it will next time; for in the meantime responses from the elements in the environment may change the effects which X produces next” (Luntley, 2000: 18, *ibid*: 65).

I think this statement will resonate with every classroom practitioner who reads it. Not only can similar inputs receive different outputs from different children, but from the same child and on the same day.

This does not mean that teachers cannot reflect upon practice and identify aspects that may have been better or worse, but it does highlight that any desire to improve practice “involves jointly considering the qualities of both outcomes and processes ... one cannot simply presume a direct, causal relationship... the practice of teaching also needs to be appraised in terms of its intrinsic qualities” (Elliott, 1991: 50). This means that if I wish to be viewed as a “reflective teacher”, it will be important to:

“Raise issues as much about values as about adopting an appropriate means to a given end. “What makes an “educational practice” is the set of values that it embodies – the intrinsic worth of the activities themselves” (Pring, 2000: 132).

This expands our vision and returns to teaching the ethical and creative dimensions so integral to its practice and so often ignored when it becomes simplified to a practice that aims only to implement the most efficient means to an end:

“The language of objectives, aims, teacher expectations, intended learning outcomes, is a language of hope out of which all hope itself has been systematically purged. The language of aims and objectives is a language of hopeless hope As teachers we tend to close ourselves off from possibilities that lie outside the direct or indirect field of vision of the expectations. To hope is to believe in possibilities, therefore hope strengthens and builds” (Van Manen, 1990: 122/123).

Perhaps it is hope that fundamentally fuels my persistence in carrying out small-scale research in the classroom. Hope that one day I might feel confident that I am “doing my best” and hope that flexibility and creativity can justifiably be fundamental elements in classroom life. It is also of course my own small way of satisfying a need to resist and oppose those in authority (one of many qualities I am sure that I share with the children in the class).

“Research imposes a closure of the world through representation; it is always and inevitably involved with and implicated in the operation of power” (Scott and Usher, 1999:2).

The final act of writing up the research will itself serve two very different purposes. One purpose is shared with others who believe that writing about research sustains “a conversational relation: a discourse about our pedagogic lives with children” (Van Manen, 1990: 111). The second serves no purpose to anyone except me – for whom completion will signify a certain level of recognized achievement. I believe it is important that practising teachers are part of educational research discourses, and I hope that in the act of writing I will become more able to reflect on any personal learning that has taken place, and how this might inform my future practice.

For both purposes I will need to decide on the style of writing and on what to include and omit from the final descriptions. It is important that if this case study is to have “explanatory and illuminating power” (Radnor, 2004: 38) then it must both engage the reader and also “present the most relevant evidence so that the reader can make an independent judgement regarding the merits of the analysis” (Yin, 2002: 164). It will need to enter into a “double contract” with its readers “fictional and referential; suspend disbelief as I intend to please you, but also activate disbelief, as I intend to instruct you” (Czarniawska, 2004: 136).

I discussed at the beginning of this chapter the fact that words can not merely mirror “reality” because any representation is actually a “re-presentation” and a creative act. It is important that I remain as reflexive in the concluding stages of writing, as I am in the classroom with the children. “As the map must not be the same as the territory, it is necessary to silence some of the voices that form the polyphony of the world and to give some more space to others” (ibid: 120/121). I will endeavour to ensure that the voices of all the children are a significant part of the written interpretations, but am also mindful that these “voices of the field do not speak for themselves, it is the author who makes them communicate on his/her conditions” (ibid: 62). “To use unadulterated voices is to forget that any voice is both an interpretation and in need of interpretation” (Scott and Usher, 1999: 17).

In order for research to be worthy of serving either of the above purposes it is essential that the reader has trust in the integrity of the research that has taken place. Radnor describes how any interpretive researcher who is “the research instrument (engaging) in a transactional process” (Radnor, 2004: 30) needs to be fully aware of how this process is also “ethics-in-action” (ibid: 30).

PART 4: ETHICAL ISSUES

In any research “ethical considerations should override all others” (Wellington, 2000:54).

In the previous section I have mentioned my belief that teachers as well as academics should be involved in educational research. Nevertheless it is worth considering whether research itself is always a good thing, and to justify each proposal according to three important questions: “What is the research for? Who benefits from the research? What risks are involved?” (BERA, 2004). The attitude and disposition of the researcher (teacher or academic) are also vital – as ultimately “good actions are what good people do” (Pring, 2000:143).

This research has been designed with “good” intentions – the intentions of developing my own understanding and thereby providing richer learning experiences for the children in my class – both during the research period and in subsequent years. “Dewey emphasized again and again that the only purpose of educational enquiry is to make the educator more intelligent” (Biesta and Burbules, 2003:79), and this is in fact the main purpose of this research. I am not expecting to produce definitively conclusive guidelines for others to follow, but simply to improve my own practice through making better informed decisions and by having a raised awareness of the complexities of classroom life – including the ethical and political dimensions that are so often lost in the everyday practicalities.

However, there is clearly also a selfish interest, because one reason for attempting the research is to write a thesis aiming for a qualification - and it is this dimension that will subtly alter the process from being one of everyday reflective practice to being called “research”. My reflective practice has to meet no other criteria than satisfying myself that I have evaluated a situation sufficiently to be able to make adjustments to my pedagogical practice. However, as soon as the research is to be scrutinized by others there is always the additional pressure to present it in the best possible light. I would also not be embarking on this particular research if I was not passionate in my belief in the power of story-telling at all levels, so how am I going to react if the “results” do not seem to be supporting this? I am at least aware that there may be a temptation to conceal certain findings and to highlight others, but “if the manifestation of the ethical approach is the research process” (Radnor, 2002) then through a detailed description of this, I hope it will be seen that I have behaved

ethically (even if not always effectively), and that the learning experiences I provide for the children are the best that I can, given my current level of understanding and skill. I will also try to make explicit the way in which I interacted in the classroom because:

“the way in which a researcher behaves towards participants in their research determines the status of the data and any conclusions drawn... at the very least this obligates the researcher to make explicit their behaviours, to allow the reader an opportunity to understand the researcher’s role in the construction of the knowledge that forms the centrepiece of the report” (Scott and Usher, 1999: 128).

One pressure that I do not have is accountability to any funding body or indeed to any external agency awaiting “results”. The entire research is self-driven and self-funded. I am well-aware of the pressure of accountability and the need to produce results, and feel that this has done a great disservice to the assessment procedures within schools today. A personal memory that exemplifies this is of a day that found me actively seeking a job outside of mainstream education... a day when I found myself unreasonably berating a child who should have attained Level 3 in writing in the Key Stage 1 Standard Assessment Test (SAT), but who did not “perform” and thereby decreased my own chances of “success”. I know that procedures have now changed with more emphasis on continual assessment and also that accountability can no longer be avoided behind the shield of working in “special school”, but am nevertheless still sensitive to placing myself in situations where I am relying on a child to “produce results” essentially for my own ends; to prove my worth as a teacher. It may be this that has partly shaped my reluctance to in any way frame this research so that my teaching methods can be directly related to any “progress” (or otherwise) that the children may make in the telling of their stories. Whilst I have already discussed the theoretical reasons behind this, it would be dishonest if I did not admit that it is also partly to avoid bringing any pressure into a situation that I want to be truly exploratory rather than trying to produce a given result.

The answer therefore to the first two questions - is that the very purpose of the research is to benefit myself, the children participating in the research and children who come into my class in future years. In order to ensure that the process is beneficial will also involve answering the third question by assessing if there are any risks to participants and if so then to minimize these as far as possible.

There are certain ethical guidelines that need to be followed when determining whether or not any research will be sanctioned by a particular establishment - in this instance the University of Exeter (Appendix 2), and the ways in which risks have been minimized within this framework will be outlined shortly. However, I was aware that there were already certain dilemmas (and that others would arise during the research process), where it was not possible to simply to follow a set of rules. I was therefore relieved to read the following description of human reality as:

“messy and ambiguous... and so ethical decisions are ambivalent and uncertain, they are often provisional and contested. There is no black and white, only varying shades of grey...dilemmas have no ready-made solutions; the necessity to choose comes without a foolproof recipe for proper choice; the attempt to do good is undertaken without guarantee of goodness of either the intention or the results” (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005:71).

Their description of the “agonistic politics (that take place)... in cramped spaces” (ibid: 150) also resonated strongly with me. The classroom always feels like a very cramped space, not necessarily physically, but in the amount of mind-space left free for the reflection and decision making required many times throughout a day. Agonizing over our own practice can also be a permanent condition for many teachers. Throughout the description of the research and in the analysis of the stories, I will include all the ethical dilemmas I faced and the “agonizing” over these, on however small a scale.

In order to gain ethical approval from the University of Exeter it was necessary to reflect upon the research proposal in four areas and these will be used as sub-sections for the remainder of this section.

Details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality.

A key area of concern for this research is that the participants are young children with learning difficulties – and in the “Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research” (BERA, 2004), Paragraph 14 states that “children should be facilitated to give fully informed consent”. The children will be involved throughout the year in giving consent for the dramatization of their stories both within the class and also for assembly performances. They will thereby develop an understanding that by agreeing to the performances of their stories, a range of adults (some unknown) will be hearing and seeing their work. The

children will also be asked at the end of the year if they agree to me showing their stories to adults at a “school” I attend. I will review each story collection individually with the children, to provide them with the opportunity to refuse consent for any or all of their stories being used in the research. I will also tell the children that I will be writing about their stories, and give a simplified example of what this might include; for example looking at some good adjectives they have used or comparing the length of stories or their endings. It is obvious however that any “consent” the children give will never be truly “informed”, and the context in which it will be sought, from a (hopefully) trusted teacher, makes consent more likely than refusal.

I will therefore take into account Paragraph 16’s statement that “researchers must also seek the collaboration and approval of those who act in guardianship” (ibid). I will obtain the fully informed consent from the Head teacher of our school and also discuss the matter with the parents of the children on an individual basis. It is planned to use the summer term parents’ evening to do this as this is one of the few occasions in the year when I have the opportunity to meet with parents (as the children are all brought to school by bus or taxi). Parents will be shown the stories that will be used for analysis and asked for permission to use them. They will also be offered the opportunity to read the finished research report and informed that they are entitled to withdraw consent at any point up until publication. The parents will be given a letter of consent to take home (Appendix 1) and asked to return it when they have had time to consider the request as I do not want them to feel pressurized to give agreement because of differential power relationships. I am obviously taking the risk that the letters will not be returned, but I can not see any other way round this issue. If enough letters of consent are not returned then any publication of the research will be unviable because of the small sample of children I will be working with. I am also aware that there is little likelihood that the parents will even remember that I am using their child’s stories for research by the time the writing-up process is completed and it is unlikely that they will be interested in engaging in a review of what has been written in the style in which it is presented. I will however forward them a thank-you letter and enclose some of the shorter sections of the thesis most pertinent to their child – with the invite to discuss these and to read more of the research if they wish.

One of the assurances given to parents will be that the name of their child and of the school will be kept anonymous. When I write up the research each of the children will be given a

different name, and if their stories contain any geographical detail that might reveal the location of the school then this will be removed.

Whilst I hope that I have met the ethical standards required of this research I know that there is always going to be a grey area around the level at which any consent can be said to be “informed”, and I will have to judge in each case the degree of verbal explanation that might be suitable for each parent (although each will receive the minimum outlined). I am also still unsure about the fact that I will not have received consent to collect the stories in the first place. If the focus of the research was to be the teaching methods used, then consent would need to be given at the start of the research. However, because the methods and the principles behind them are in fact no different to those that I have used for several years (whilst always altering the specific learning experiences according to the needs and interests of the children) then the research focus for which I have deemed it important to get consent is the stories themselves.

Details of the methods used for data collection and analysis and how it will be ensured that they do not cause harm, detriment or unreasonable stress.

Respecting the dignity and well-being of children is part of the professional code of conduct under which I act as a teacher, and when assuming a duty of care as “in loco parentis”. When studying the “Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research” (BERA: 2004), most of the guidelines sit easily within this research proposal – with the exception of difficulty in gaining informed consent (see above) and Clause 10 which states that “participants have the right to withdraw from a study at any time” (in Radnor, 2002:35). The children will experience the same pedagogical approaches as they would at any other time in my classroom – with the one exception that they will spend more one-to-one time with me when telling their stories. In the everyday practice of the classroom it is expected that the children participate in all the activities offered, but by the very nature of the children all experiences are adapted so that each child is able to access them, and we would hopefully be aware if any harm or distress was being caused. Clearly it would not be practical to tell the children that they could withdraw from particular activities in the classroom (related to the research) and not others. However, I am hoping that the methods of data collection (particular pedagogical experiences) will actually be a positive experience for the children because they will emulate the spirit of phenomenological research - “the attentive practice of

thoughtfulness....the same attentive thoughtfulness that serves the practical tactfulness of pedagogy itself" (Van Manen, 1990:12).

In the process of analysis I will at times be using my personal knowledge of the home lives of the children to interpret the meaning of some of the stories that they tell. It is possible that my interpretation could upset the parents or children if they knew what I was writing. I will therefore always try to be sensitive when using confidential information to inform my interpretations and attempt to put myself in the place of the parents before writing anything down. This may at times limit the interpretations made, but they are anyway just my opinion and the meaning of the story may well be differently constructed if the parents were involved in the interpretations.

Details of any other ethical issues which may arise (for example: secure storage of videos/photographs/recorded interviews).

The anonymity of the children will be ensured throughout because none of the data will identify them. If I use audio-recording as a method of recording the stories to be transcribed later, these cassettes will be re-used as part of usual classroom practice. In this research, no video-recording will take place, and any written data will be stored according to the usual practices of classroom storage.

Details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (for example, potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants).

It is possible that, because I will be so enthusiastic and committed to the research project, the children's education in other areas of the curriculum will be compromised in terms of time and quality input. This will be monitored by the Head of Department who will have access to all my planning (as is usual practice), and also evaluate the progress made by the children in the class across all curriculum areas.

A final area of ethical practice will be in the process of writing-up the research and in how detailed and transparent it is possible to make it. It is important that the detail is sufficient to provide "an opportunity for all concerned to question the researcher's interpretation of the data; (and) to offer an alternative interpretation of the evidence" (Pring, 2000:148).

Some of this detail will be provided in the next section where I will explain the specific context and procedures of the research.

PART 5: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH AND THE PLANNED METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS.

The research is a small-scale classroom case-study with a particular group of children (aged 6-7) with statemented language and learning difficulties, in the particular setting of a classroom within a special school where I will be both teacher and researcher. The children will also be supported by an experienced teaching assistant with whom I have worked for five years. Her support will be invaluable because she is familiar with my style of working and is as enthusiastic about inter-active and multi-sensory story-telling as I am. Her experience of working independently with groups of children will enable me to find the time to work regularly with the children on an individual basis.

The composition and dynamics of this particular class will also facilitate my plan to spend more one-to-one time with each child, because (unusually) none of the children have particularly challenging behavioural problems likely to interrupt these individual story-telling sessions. Of course I have had no control over the children who will be in the class whilst I carry out the research. If I had been able to choose, I would actually have included a child experiencing more complex emotional and behavioural difficulties and also a child with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The pilot study that I carried out had included children with both of these diagnoses and the indications were that they may have given rise to some different types of stories for analysis. The class is also unusual in its composition in that it includes two sets of twins – identical boy twins and non-identical girl twins. Each of the seven children will be introduced in more detail later in this chapter – three boys and four girls. Fortuitously there is an almost even balance of gender, but typically of classes throughout the school in its particular geographical location there is no inclusion of children with an ethnic group other than “White British”.

The time-scale of the research is clearly dictated by the school-setting, and will take place over one academic year from September to July. During this time the children will experience a range of multi-sensory and inter-active learning opportunities that I hope will provide them with the three basic requirements for story-telling – “experience, opportunity

and audience” (Groves, 2005:79). Full details of the pedagogical experiences explored will be discussed later in this chapter and can be viewed in their entirety in Appendix 3.

Following each experience (which could be designed to cover between 1-5 teaching sessions) the children will each tell their own story and I will act as a scribe and the first (but not always only) audience. The children will also have opportunities on some occasions to dramatize their stories for in-class performance. All of the stories scribed will be re-created for the children’s own “Collection of Stories” using the “Word with Symbols” (WWS2000) program to support their independent re-telling (Appendix 5), and for most of the children this collection will comprise 21 stories (less if a child is absent from school on particular days).

This one-to-one scribing of stories will be my only, and very simple, method of data collection – since it is the stories themselves that are the main focus of analysis. I am not planning to make observational notes during this process because I believe it is vital that I am fully present and mindful of each situation as it unfolds. Similarly I will not be making notes during any other part of the sessions that require me to be engaged with the children, because it can distract them from what they are doing and they respond best when the adults are fully attentive. Immediately after each session however, I will make some field notes of what I can remember (often discussing these with the teaching assistant to verify or challenge my observations) and these will be included in the data for each child alongside my evaluation of the session. Obviously there will be much detail that is missed in these partial and reflective field notes, but they will not be constrained by a planned observation format and most importantly the children will receive full attention.

It would not be practically possible to video the process to overcome the difficulty of missing significant elements of the story-telling process – because there will be no third adult available. Even if there was however, I am not sure that I would use this option – because it does create a different atmosphere in the room. I am sure that both I and the children would be at some level aware of being filmed (with varying degrees of excitement and discomfort) and there would consequently be subtle changes in our behaviour.

The session evaluations and field-notes will be used as important contextual information when it comes to analyzing the data, and a system of analysis will be formulated that

attempts to assess, evaluate and interpret each story in many different ways (Appendix 4). The aim of the analysis will be to answer the question “What can teachers learn from the stories children tell?” The learning that unfolds may relate to the progress (or otherwise) that the children make in their use of language and syntax during story-telling or it could alert teachers to the pedagogical implications of some of the experiences that took place. It could reveal the underlying story themes that are important for children or highlight their role in an understanding of the social world in which they operate. These are just example of the many layers of meaning that may be uncovered by an in-depth analysis, and the restricted amount of data will make depth of analysis more possible.

PART 6: DETAILS OF THE CHILD PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH.

This section will briefly introduce the children who will be the storytellers in this research and include some quotations from their Statements of Special Educational Need. The full statements can not be referenced however because of the confidentiality of these documents. Any quotations taken directly from them will be italicized in the following text so that their derivation is clear and it is known that they are the assessments of various Educational Psychologists.

Joshua and Charlie

Joshua and Charlie are identical boy twins who will be 7 years and 1 month at the start of the research. They have already been at the school for two terms. They have 3 older siblings – 2 brothers and a sister (all three are already teenagers). They have both been assessed as having “*significant global learning difficulties*” and also “*significant language difficulties*”. Both boys are keen to communicate in familiar settings but they have severe expressive difficulties which can make it hard for their listeners to understand what they are saying.

Alongside the similarities there are also differences in their profiles. The most immediately obvious is that Joshua is the most confident of the twins and Charlie is quite dependent upon his presence (their parents report that this has always been the case and that Joshua is the oldest twin by a few minutes). Unsurprisingly there is also a level of competition between the two – most noticeably over their desire to be the “best” friend of James – the only other boy in the class.

On their statements it is noticed that Joshua in particular has extreme difficulties with spatial skills “*Joshua’s performance on the spatial scale was at the <0.1 level (less than 1 in every 1,000 children would be expected to have this level of difficulty)... he has problems not only with motor control but also very significant difficulty in spatial perception and orientation... these motor difficulties appear to extend to his speech and are having a major impact on his ability to communicate*”. Joshua’s verbal and non-verbal reasoning skills are both in the 2nd percentile and are at a comparable level.

Charlie’s non-verbal reasoning skills however are seen to come out at a much higher level – in the 39th percentile – whilst the speech and language therapist felt that his intelligibility was too poor to be able to obtain reliable results in expressive language. Whilst it could be difficult to understand both boys (particularly without the support of a particular context), it was possible to understand Charlie on most occasions (although Joshua did have the habit of translating for him). It may be that he had been too over-awed by that particular assessment situation to be able to communicate to the best of his ability.

For both twins their statements make clear that they have become increasingly aware of their difficulties and that there is a danger of severe damage to self-esteem and willingness to participate in activities. In Joshua’s statement it says that “*Joshua appears very aware of his communication difficulties and this seems to be having a deep impact on his self-confidence*” and the educational psychologist reports that Charlie “*was notably quiet, serious and unanimated in our meeting*”. The recommendation for both is to “*build on (their) strengths and minimize weaknesses*”.

James

James will also be 7 years and 1 month at the start of the research and has already been in the school for a full school year. James has an older brother (14 years) who is also a pupil at our school. When he first entered school from mainstream education he was an elective mute, but a year later he communicates fully and spontaneously with his peers and also speaks to a lesser degree with adults (unless asked a direct question or asked to speak in front of a group when he remains silent or whispers inaudibly). The educational psychologist had found it difficult to accurately assess him because of his unwillingness to communicate, but concluded that his level of ability was within “*the range of Moderate Learning Difficulties... with accompanying severe expressive language delay*”. James did however

perform reasonably well on non-verbal tasks related to spatial awareness and motor control and this is reflected in the class where he excels at construction activities, art work and all forms of sport. James is also one of those children whose behaviour can be different in different situations – noticeably on the playground and in the classroom. In class his behaviour is impeccable but he is often on the fringes of aggressive play and involved in disputes on the playground. He is friends with both of the twins but will change his allegiance between the two which can often lead to discord between them. Joshua is probably the most favoured of the twins.

Tessa and Lauren

Tessa and Lauren are non-identical girl twins who will be 6 years and 3 months at the start of the research. They will be new to the school having just transferred from mainstream education. Tessa and Lauren are the youngest of five children and apart from their oldest brother (who is over 18 years old) the other brother and sister are in the secondary department of our school. Their statements of need indicate similar educational profiles – both are deemed to have “*substantial and generalized learning difficulties*” with “*severe receptive and expressive language development*”. It is believed however that their language abilities are probably in line with their non-verbal abilities.

The twins are described as “*bright and cheerful (but) with a short attention span that is to some extent a function of interest and self-confidence. (They) exhibit a significant degree of learning and performance-related anxiety that will further exacerbate the situation*”. In the case of both girls the educational psychologist states that in his opinion “*language development holds the key to improve learning*”. It was clear from their visit to the school that both Tessa and Lauren communicated in telegraphic speech and frequently responded in only single words. Their parents reported that the two girls do have different interests, with Tessa being particularly keen on music and dance, and Lauren enjoying sport – more of a “tom-boy”.

Emily

Emily will be 6 years and 2 months at the start of the research. She has been at the school for the last two years, and was assessed at a young age as having an “*underlying cognitive ability that falls in the range of moderate learning difficulties, at the level of the 1st percentile*”. Her most apparent language difficulty is the length of time she requires to both

process and express information. It is always necessary to give Emily significant time to formulate any verbal response. She is a quiet and mostly self-contained girl but can become very anxious in new situations and in any environment with loud noises.

Emily is the middle child at home with an older sister and a younger brother. Her parents maintain close contact with the school and share their concerns about her frequent tantrums at home and her aggressive behaviour towards her younger brother. At school Emily is perfectly behaved and it is difficult to even imagine her being aggressive. She is reluctant to talk about home at school and vice versa.

Poppy

Poppy will be 6 years and 3 months at the start of the research. She has been at the school for one term. It was not possible for the educational psychologist to complete an assessment of Poppy's abilities because whilst "*she began the test activities positively, as soon as the items became slightly difficult she began to lose confidence and then concentration and eventually refused further items... However, it is clear that, whatever her underlying abilities, she finds it extremely difficult to utilize them in a classroom*". It was also noted that Poppy could become aggressive when frustrated.

Poppy has been seeing the Speech and Language Therapist who reports that whilst she can speak in complete sentences on familiar topics, her repertoire is extremely limited, and she often repeats the same thing on many occasions – especially questions. One example of this is that if Poppy ever sees a baby or young child she will repeat several times over "Does s/e have a dummy? Does s/he wear a nappy?" Poppy is the first-born child in the family and has a sister who is 4 years old. In school Poppy enjoys outdoor play in the sand and water and also art activities including cutting and sticking and painting. She has started to develop a friendship with Emily.

SUMMARY TABLE OF PARTICIPANTS (at start of research).

Name	Sibling relationship with others in class	Age	Speaking and Listening attainment	Statement from Educational Psychologist
Joshua	Twin brother of Charlie	7:1	P5	<i>Significant global learning difficulties and significant learning difficulties. Verbal and non-verbal reasoning – 2nd percentile.</i>
Charlie	Twin brother of Joshua	7:1	P7	<i>Significant global learning difficulties and significant learning difficulties. Non-verbal 39th percentile Verbal: Too poor to assess.</i>
James		7:1	P5	<i>MLD with severe expressive language delay Not able to fully assess as James non-communicative.</i>
Tessa	Twin sister of Lauren	6:3	P5	<i>Substantial and generalized learning difficulties with severe receptive and expressive language development.</i>
Lauren	Twin sister of Tessa	6:3	P5	<i>Substantial and generalized learning difficulties with severe receptive and expressive language development.</i>
Emily		6:2	P6	<i>MLD at the level of the 1st. percentile.</i>
Poppy		6:3	P4	<i>Not able to fully assess due to refusal to complete sufficient items.</i>

PART 7: DETAILS OF THE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES EMPLOYED.

The principles of the pedagogical approach employed can be read in the final part of Chapter 2. It is an approach that incorporates a pedagogy of listening, an integrated curriculum with opportunities for multi-modal representation, the concept of “playful work” where adult interaction within variably structured settings extends and challenges learning, spaces for therapeutic play and the centrality and celebration of stories and story-telling.

One of the tensions to be explored in the research is the degree of compromise and balance created when working mid-way on the spectrum between a responsive and directive approach to curriculum planning. I had many ideas of teaching practices to use during this research, but also wanted to respond to the perceived interests and needs of the children – any detailed pre-planning would therefore be inconsistent with my declared beliefs. However, since an important element in the writing-up of the research is to make my practice as transparent as possible – I have written this section of the chapter on completion of the research process so that I can refer to actual activities that happened in the classroom (which can be read in detail in Appendix 2). Such detailed knowledge of the contexts in which the stories have been produced will also be vital when it comes to the interpretation and analysis of their words and meanings.

It will be clear when reading the planning of the story-contexts that there is nothing exceptionally original in the learning experiences that they offer. Indeed it seems ironic that “copying” has so often been frowned on by teachers who are some of the biggest “culprits”. The ideas for many of the story contexts were gratefully copied from others and changed to best suit my own teaching preferences and the needs of the children. Nevertheless, even without any great spark of originality the joy of planning lies in the creativity it affords (a quality undermined and stifled by prescriptive frameworks and guidelines), and importantly also in the safety of the environment in which ideas can be trialled. When we look for creative responses in children perhaps our own practices should be remembered, children also may need to rely on the ideas of others, but each representation they produce in symbolic form will be an original creation. Essential to the encouragement and development of this creativity will not be the well-planned lesson or stimulating resources, but a relationship with the adults in a class that provides security and trust.

The translation of the ideals of a “pedagogy of listening” into the classroom was exemplified in the fusion of my roles as teacher and researcher – and in my endeavour to listen to and interpret the children’s stories and contributions to group activities. The planning of the research has ensured that sacrosanct time was allocated to each child – time which is always one of the most precious commodities in the classroom and which needs to be used well. “Inside each child there is a story that needs to be told – a story that no-one else has yet had time to listen to” (Winnicott, 1984:21 in West, 1992:73). A simple, yet vital element of this research is that each child was given that opportunity.

The integrated curricular approach can be seen in many of the story-contexts – and an early example is in Story-Context 5, where cross-curricular activities are developed around the story of “Whatever Next?” by Jill Murphy. In the days prior to their story-telling the children were involved in drama activities and puppet-play (literacy); building rockets using cylinders, cones, squares and rectangles (numeracy); making food for a picnic on the moon (design and technology); mixing paint, glitter and glue to create a background for a planet (art) and then using a range of differently textured collage materials (science and art) to create the landscape features on the planet where the rocket might land. Opportunities for multi-modal representation can also be exemplified in Story Context 2 where the children explored the issues in the aboriginal folk-tale of “Dunbi the Owl” through mime, role-play, performance drama, painting, dance, musical composition, puppet-play and story-telling. As Dewey has argued “Enacting emotional experiences through story, drawing, clay, movement, puppets or music can enable the child to reach beyond generalizing everyday feeling words to a far deeper and more expressive truth ...“Art throws off the covers that hide the expressiveness of experienced things” (Dewey, 1934:104)”(Sunderland, 2000:35).

Therapeutic space may be valuable for all children (and indeed all adults), but for children with language and learning difficulties, and the emotional distress and level of frustration almost inevitably concomitant with these, I would suggest that planned opportunities for self-expression within safe boundaries should not be overlooked in the drive towards attainment. The use of sand play and other play therapy techniques had been central in the pilot study, and I had been sufficiently convinced of the value of such activities to include them once more in the contexts for story-telling. My lack of therapeutic training will not hinder the emotional value that such experiences may have for the children as “it is the

child's interpretation that is the most important (and) I would further suggest that interpretation of sand trays is not essential to the healing process" (Carey, 1999: xxi).

The sand tray used for sand play and story-telling was kept in a special place in the classroom and the miniatures used for the story-telling were not included with the other classroom toys. "If play is the language then the miniatures are the words" (ibid: xvii). It was important therefore to take care with the selection of these and I followed the guidance of sandplay therapist Lois Carey to choose as wide a range of items as possible from the following categories: "Living creatures in sufficient numbers to portray large scenes – people (as varied as possible) and domestic, wild and prehistoric animals; fantasy figures – Disney, superheroes, magical beings; scenery – buildings, vegetation, bridges and fences; transportation – by land, sea and air; equipment; implements – for roads, farms, parks, hospitals and miscellaneous items such as beads, shells and pebbles" (Carey, 1999:188).

The sand tray was used specifically for scribed storytelling on three occasions during the research period, and was first introduced to the children in this context. It was also available for children to use as requested during their free play. Three other techniques were borrowed specifically from my readings about play therapy – and one of these (the "clayscape" (Lynn Hadley in Kaduson and Schaefer, 1997:67) in Story Context 21) is closely allied to sand play in the quality of sensory satisfaction it offers. A shared quality of the other two techniques ("The Scribble" (Oaklander, 1978:37) in Story Context 4 and Tearing Paper (Dawes in Kaduson and Schaefer, 1997:222) in Story Context 16) are their particular relevance for children who have difficulties with expressing themselves in any representational form.

The concept of "playful work" can be seen in many guises in the planned story-contexts, perhaps most clearly in the use of interactive story-telling experiences and drama strategies. In all of these instances there is a degree of adult interaction, but the amount of prescribed structure varies between them. I was excited about trying out (for the first time) Gussin-Paley's dramatization technique in my own context because in her words "the dictated story is but a half-told tale. To fulfil its destiny it is dramatized on a pretend stage with the help of classmates as actors and audience and the teacher as narrator and director" (Gussin-Paley, 2004:5). Such dramatizations are everyday occurrences in Gussin-Paley's classroom, but nothing so all-embracing is planned here, rather an exploration of this technique in six of the

story contexts (3, 6, 8, 10, 15 and 20). The children told me their stories and then they chose their classmates to become the different characters in the dramatization.

In many of the story contexts some drama strategies were used (for example the thought-tracking after the sound-scape in Story Context 11), and in four of them (11, 13, 16 and 18) drama and inter-active story-telling play a major role. When planning these I tried to ensure that they included all the features that Sherratt and Peter (2002) identified as essential to a "Prescribed Drama Structure" (PDS) – "an element of make-believe with everyone caught up in the fiction from the outset; a rule-based format; an element of tension; a ritual element; interaction with others; active participation in tasks with immediate cause-effect consequences; a communal experience and some aspects of cross-curricular learning" (ibid: 77). These all involved a high degree of adult input and interaction.

Stories of course were both the stimulus and underlying theme throughout the story contexts created. The choice of stories was clearly one of personal preference but the underlying qualities that guided my choice were stories with a mythic quality (agreeing with Egan that "myths are very psychologically suited to young children" (in Edmiston, 2008:29)) and /or with a rich and rhythmic vocabulary.

The stories used in this research were: Dunbi the Owl (an aboriginal folk-tale), Jack and the Beanstalk, Whatever Next? (Jill Murphy), On the Way Home (Jill Murphy), The Bad-tempered Ladybird (Eric Carle), Rooster's off to see the World (Eric Carle), Come With Me (Maggie Walker), Nobody Rides the Unicorn (Adrian Mitchell), Alice-in-Wonderland (Lewis Carroll), Teeny-Weeny in Too Big a World (Margot Sunderland), Where the Wild Things Are (Maurice Sendak), Fairy Stories (assorted), The Iron Man (Ted Hughes) and Japanese creation myth (retold by Ann Cattanch in "Where the Sky Meets the Underworld" (1994).

Many of the story contexts began with a story, ideas were then explored and developed through a range of playful and creative activities, and they ended with a story – this time the children's own.

SUMMARY TABLE OF STORY CONEXTS USED IN THE RESEARCH

This table includes a column that outlines the rationale behind the selection of particular activities to support the story-telling in each instance. Occasionally there was a clear rationale behind this selection, but as will be seen, it was more often an intuitive choice made during my creation of the story contexts. The effect of this and changes I will make to future practice will be discussed further in the final chapter.

The entries in the third column are coded as follows:

1:1: 1:1 with teacher (away form the rest of the class)

Group: 1:1 with teacher (with group of children taking turns with the storytelling)

Class: 1:1 with teacher in preparation for dramatization with the class.

Story Stimulus	Time of Year	Context for final story-telling	Main approaches used	Rationale behind selection of approach
Sandtray Story 1	September	1:1	Sandtray	Introduction of the sandtray to the children and as initial assessment activity.
Dunbi the Owl (aboriginal folk-tale)	September	Class	Multi-activities – including music, art and assembly performance	Intuitive (and pragmatic) because I wanted to introduce working with a story over a period of time
Jack and the Beanstalk	October	Class	Storyboard and dramatization	Intuitive (and introducing dramatization technique)
Take a Line for a Walk (Oaklander activity)	October	Class	Artwork	Intuitive

Story Stimulus	Time of Year	Context for final story-telling	Main approaches used	Rationale behind selection of approach
Whatever Next? (Jill Murphy)	October	1:1	Artwork	Intuitive
On the Way Home (Jill Murphy)	November	Class	Multi-activity including artwork and dramatization	Intuitive
Description of Character (On the Way Home)	November	1:1	Artwork	Visual representation to support use of adjectives to describe physical characteristics.
The Bad-Tempered Ladybird (Eric Carle)	November	Group	Storyboard	Intuitive
Sandtray Story 2	December	1:1	Sandtray	Linked to stimulus
Rooster goes around the World (Eric Carle)	January	Class	Role-play and dramatization	Intuitive
Come with Me (Maggie Walker)	January	Class	Interactive story-telling and role-play	Title of story suggested a teacher-led group activity and I judged that class were ready to work as a group.
Nobody Rides the Unicorn (Adrian Mitchell)	February	1:1	Multi-activity including artwork and role-play	Interest of children in stimulus story inspired amount of time spent working with it.

Story Stimulus	Time of Year	Context for final story-telling	Main approaches used	Rationale behind selection of approach
Alice-in Wonderland (Lewis Carroll)	March	Class	Interactive story telling and role-play	Story was too complicated for full reading and children might need support in engaging with it.
Sandtray Story 3	March	1:1	Sandtray	Linked to stimulus
Teeny-Weeny in too Big a World (Margot Sunderland)	April	1:1	Storyboard and artwork	Illustrations in book inspired artwork. Storyboard form intuitive
Where the Wild Things Are (Maurice Sendak)	May	Class	Interactive storytelling and role-play	Intuitive
Fairy Stories (assorted)	May	1:1	Artwork	Intuitive
The Iron Man (Ted Hughes)	June	Class	Multi-activity including interactive story-telling and dramatization	Support needed to engage with length, language and ideas in the story. Choice of supporting activities intuitive.
Puppet/Toy play	June	Group	Puppet/toy play	Introducing a different context for storytelling
Individual storyboard creations	July	Class	Storyboard	Opportunity for assessment towards end of research in situation with minimal teacher input.

Story Stimulus	Time of Year	Context for final story-telling	Main approaches used	Rationale behind selection of approach
Japanese Creation Myth (in Ann Cattanach)	July	1:1	Clay work	Clay linked to the creation myth from the world of slime.

PART 8: THE ANALYSIS OF THE STORIES

The interpretation and analysis of the children's stories is the main focus of this research, and I aim to develop and evaluate a format that can be adapted and used both for research purposes and for everyday informative analysis in the classroom. This process of analysis of course, is inextricably bound up with the methodology underlying the research process. Many different models of narrative analysis already exist, and it will be helpful to review some of these before embarking on any analysis of my own.

(a) Review of "Six Approaches to Narrative" (Bamberg, 1997).

Bamberg's book usefully reviews different approaches to the topic of narrative development and as part of this review focuses specifically on the different underlying methodologies; cognitive, interactionist, constructivist, cross-linguistic, interpretivist/socio-cultural and contextual.

The cognitive approach - building complexity and coherence: children's use of goal-structure and knowledge in telling stories (Stein and Albro in Bamberg, 1997: 5-45).

Stein and Albro clearly state that narrating rests on:

"the cognitive abilities to organize content (i.e. the relation between goals, actions and outcomes) and structure (ie: episodes) into a coherent whole (ie: connecting the episodes). Stories are causally organized, goal-directed texts. As such the ability to tell stories pre-supposes a theory of human intentionality and action... obviously narrative abilities as part of other cognitive achievements develop in parallel with achievements in other cognitive domains such as memory, language, and (logical) reasoning abilities" (Bamberg, 1997:1/3).

Their views were developed from the results of analyzing stories told by children of different ages in response to given story stems. The analysis examined the complexity of structure in each story using a decision-tree model that identified “the critical dimensions included in goal-directed action sequences” (Stein and Albro in *ibid*: 8). This model posited two distinct cognitive skills required for the construction of a narrative. The first was the ability to establish explicit connections between events at the beginning, middle and end of a story (and the “goal-action-outcome” connection for each episode) and the second was knowledge about human intentionality because “stories, by nature and definition, reflect the social values, beliefs, dilemmas and goals that underlie and motivate human interaction” (*ibid*:6).

The results from the study showed that the majority of stories, even those told by the youngest kindergarten children could be described as goal-based narratives and indeed that “73% of all goal-based stories contained two or more episodes”. Even at a young age therefore it was shown that children had developed a cognitive understanding of the concept of a story. Stein and Albro also noted an increased complexity in the stories of the older children in their study and identified the characteristics of such complexity as including the dimensions of length, the inclusion of an obstacle which activates “children’s knowledge of plans of action and conditions that lead to successful or failed goal attainments” (*ibid*: 30) and an increase in the number of protagonists. “The ability to report on the internal plans of more than one character can be difficult and dependent on the knowledge children can access about characters’ intentions, feelings, plans and actions in particular situations” (*ibid*: 46).

This cognitive approach will clearly be an important element in any analysis of the stories told by the children in this research, as the children’s diagnosed difficulties in the cognitive domain and the way these may impact on the stories they tell is one specific area of interest for this research.

(b) The interactionist approach – an interactive approach to narrative (Quasthoff in Bamberg, 1997: 51-85).

This approach is in direct contrast to the developmental approach adopted by Stein and Albro where the individual achievements of the child are necessary to assess developmental progress. In the interactive approach the individual is “backgrounded in

favour of the concept of an interactive situation in which “the person” becomes an integrated part” (Bamberg, 1997: 45).

“Quasthoff ties the narrative as a product closely to the activity of narrating. This activity is discursively achieved as an interactive process, within which the narrator has been granted the floor to narrate, and the comments and interjections of the listener are in the service of the constitution of the narrative product...thus, although narrating entails a cognitive and linguistic domain, Quasthoff’s interactive approach views these as sub-domains that find their particular organizational structure in how the activity of narrating is interactively organized” (ibid).

The focus of Quasthoff’s attention was the everyday interactions between the dyad of parent and child and the analytical procedures used were “conversational analysis” (Quasthoff in ibid: 52). This ethno-methodological approach is at variance with the standard methodologies of research into the analysis of narrative and is explained thus:

“Ethnomethodology is a critical paradigm (and) its object of analysis is the organization of everyday life by the members of a social community. The prototypical form of this organization is based on highly ordered routine activities in face-to-face interaction. The ordered nature of these everyday activities is not consciously accessible to the lay participants” (ibid).

Whilst intrinsically fascinating, this form of analysis is clearly out of the remit of this research because it would require an independent observation and analysis of the adult/child interaction during the story telling process. It will nevertheless have some theoretical relevance when reflecting upon the context in which the stories are told because this approach clearly negates the validity of analyzing any story in isolation from the context in which it was produced.

(c) A constructivist approach to narrative development (Bamberg, 1997: 85-133).

This third approach does not focus exclusively on either the individual storyteller or the context in which the story is told, but suggests analysis (which is linked inextricably to the notion of interpretation) of the language used as a bridge between these two orientations.

“Highlighting the role of language in world-making and self-making seems to provide a bridge between society and self as agentive powers of and within this discursive process. On one hand the self agentively picks among the options that are presented within the particular language. Simultaneously however, the functions that the particular forms express, are in a sense preformed: They are discernible

against the social matrix of existent discourse practices, and as such, they are impenetrable for others” (ibid: 91).

Bamberg acknowledges the importance of a cognitive approach when analyzing the internal order of a narrative as a bounded unit of discourse, but introduces also the significance of “evaluative” segments in narrative that do not advance events in their temporal sequence.

“ In these segments, the narrator typically stops the event flow and steps back, revealing his or her attitude toward what has been reported this far...In terms of their function these segments are highly significant. They clarify the reason the narrative is being told....although the ability to report events in language relies on the referential function of language, using evaluative clauses and thereby signalling the point of the narrative to the audience requires that the speaker relies on the communicative or interpersonal function of language” (ibid:91-93).

The three central tenets of Bamberg’s analysis were genre, viewpoint and agency and his study provided opportunities for children to construct narratives across a range of genres that included personal narrative, explanation and third-person story construction. Following the analysis of findings from this study, Bamberg states that “what started as a quest into the acquisition of genres as “ways of world-making” (Goodman, 1978) turned into an investigation of the construction of viewpoints in children’s narrative” (ibid: 99). This interpretation of agents and their actions “always implicitly addressed such sticky issues as their moral and ethical development” (ibid: 102).

In summarizing the findings of his research and his approach to the analysis of narrative Bamberg concludes:

“I have tried to compare different ages in different narrative tasks with regard to how their lexicosyntactic choices reveal the double positioning process and show how the two levels of construing a (textual) reality and enacting an interpersonal, social relationship developmentally emerge and have an impact on each other” (ibid:125).

Bamberg’s methodology clearly aligns with the underlying social constructionist epistemology of this research and thereby has important connotations for the interpretation of the children’s stories. Of particular relevance will be the analysis of the evaluative devices used by the children and also of the way in which they make their thematic and linguistic choices according to the social situation in which their story is being told. The portrayal of “agents” (characters) and their relationships will also be central to the analysis and explored in some depth.

(d) The cross-linguistic approach – Developmental and cross-cultural aspects of children’s narration (McCabe in Bamberg, 1997: 137-175).

McCabe gives a broad definition of narrative as a “linguistic crossroads of culture, cognition and emotion ...that serves the dual functions of sense-making and self-representation” (Bamberg, in *ibid*: 133). Her approach however particularly privileges personal narratives in contrast to Stein and Albro and Bamberg (and also of course this research which actually privileges third-person fictional narrations). Whilst McCabe’s approach views the individual child as an active participant in the development of his or her narrative she places a major emphasis “on the cultural conventions within which narratives are routinely practised” (*ibid*: 135), with the role of parental interactions seen as pivotal.

“Parents model narratives for children in order to scaffold them into what is culturally valued about the characters within the narrative and simultaneously what is valued with regard to the acts of storytelling in general...these mechanisms of socialization tie the child not only into becoming a culturally accepted storyteller but simultaneously into a culturally accepted and valued sense of identity” (*ibid*).

The methodology employed by McCabe in collecting her data (the children’s narratives) was similar to the methodology employed in this research, in that the narratives were told in naturalistic conditions and although they arose out of interaction with an adult (in this instance the parent rather than teacher) “when children were asked to share their experiences, the interactional scaffold (was) reduced to a minimum in order to test children’s optimal story-telling abilities” (McCabe in *ibid*:136).

McCabe’s three-way analysis of the narratives incorporated the features of both cognitive and linguistic approaches and is similar in this respect to the multi-perspective analysis envisaged for this research. She used a high-point analysis (based on Labov (1972), a story grammar analysis (Stein and Glenn, 1979) and a dependency analysis (Deese, 1984) of when a narrative was elaborated. Interestingly however, she found that “aspects of the narrative important to ordinary people remained unilluminated by the systems on which we rely... (they remembered narratives) that were sensational in content....and to a lesser extent, the ones with good high-point form” (*ibid*: 143).

The major distinction between McCabe’s cross-linguistic approach and the approach to analysis that can be incorporated in this research is her recognition and exposition of the

cross-cultural differences in the definition of what constitutes a “good” story. She notes for example that:

“...although telling elaborate, decontextualized stories enables a smooth transition to reading stories in American classrooms, telling succinct, relatively short and unelaborated stories allows for a smooth transition to reading in Japan, where verbosity is frowned on and concise forms of story are valued” (ibid: 161).

The analysis in the research will be embedded into my own cultural aesthetic preferences and also of course the preferences of the educational system in which they take place. Nevertheless an awareness of this bias will be particularly fruitful in the evaluation of the learning contexts in which the stories are developed.

(e) Children and narratives: toward an interpretive and socio-cultural approach (Nicolopoulou, in Bamberg, 1997: 179-217).

An interpretive approach to the analysis of children’s stories is central to both this research and that of Nicolopoulou who describes it in these terms:

“I wish to emphasize the need for an interpretive approach that understands children’s narrative activity as a form of “symbolic action” linking the “construction of reality” with the “formation of identity”, that accordingly attempts to integrate the formal analysis of linguistic structures with the elucidation of “structures of meaning” and that attempts to situate children’s activity in the “socio-cultural context” of their everyday interaction, their group life and their cultural world. I also urge that research in this area be guided by recognition of the close affinity and crucial interdependence of “play” and “narrative” in children’s experience and development” (ibid: 180).

This approach views stories as quintessentially expressions of meaning, and Nicolopoulou considers that formalist approaches to the analysis of narrative are inadequate to interpret this dimension. “They leave out first, what children’s narratives reveal about their conceptions of the world...and they pass over the crucial dimension of narrative as a form of symbolic action” (ibid: 189). Interestingly she also highlights the fact that whilst analysis of the processes by which children achieve narrative competence are valuable in certain ways they can have the “ironic by-product whereby ...the stories of younger children are often not really analyzed for their own sake but instead are treated as a primitive or inchoate starting-point on the road to later competence” (ibid).

Nicoloupoulou's approach resembles the social constructionism underlying Bamberg's approach. "In both approaches the child is free to constitute for him or herself – a reality that is functional. However, the function that was served by language is achieved in the socio-cultural framework through symbolic action" (Bamberg, in *ibid*: 177). Nicoloupoulou incorporates the theories of both Vygotsky and Bakhtin when elucidating a process of interpretation that "effectively situates human thought and action in a socio-cultural context" (Nicoloupoulou, in *ibid*: 189).

"The range of genres culturally available to us, and our appropriation and mastery of them, profoundly shape the dialectic between our communicative representation of the world and what both Bakhtin and Vygotsky call the "inner speech of mental life"... The fact that individuals and communities employ not a single genre, but a complex and changing array of them means that mind and culture are structured by "voices" in conversation rather than being reducible to a single voice with a monolithic inner logic" (*ibid*: 192).

Most pertinently to this research, Nicoloupoulou also views the interpretive processes employed by Gussin-Paley as:

"guided by an informed appreciation of the interaction among its cognitive, emotional and socio-cultural dimensions...it takes as a starting point the premise that children's stories, like other scenarios they enact in fantasy play, are "meaningful texts" that if analyzed carefully, can reveal something about the way they view the world and social relationships" (*ibid*: 203).

This approach will also influence the interpretation of the stories in this research, when I consider both the emotional and social aspects of the stories told, and also when I view the overall analysis of each story holistically and attempt to interpret what the children's stories reveal about each storyteller over a period of time. Interesting also will be any cultural dimensions that may be discernible within the stories told.

(f) A contextual approach: self-narrative in the life-course (Hermans in Bamberg, 1997: 223-265).

This approach is primarily concerned with self-narration as the means by which humans order experiences. Each individual is actively involved in the process self-organization and thereby in the creation of their own identity. The individual is not seen as a stable unit however, but as "in a continuous process of meaning construction. Thus across the life-span, different selves feed back into this self-constructing process" (Bamberg in *ibid*: 218).

Methodologically, Hermans is far removed from any form of analysis that could be conducted in this research, as his data is collected via a specific interview technique (of adults) about “relevant life events in the person’s past, present and future, resulting in a number of valuations vis-à-vis these events” (ibid: 220).

However, there is one area where this approach could influence the analysis in this research. Hermans uses as a metaphor for the self as the polyphonic novel (as expounded by Bakhtin (1973)), and relates how the internal and external dialogue of characters and the themes developed in novels (and children’s stories) reveals their dialogic relation to self and society.

“The process of self-organization...opens up interesting questions for child development such as what kinds of themes children in different cultures employ for self-enhancement as well as for seeking contrast and union with others, how different narrators become differentiated, and how different narrators enter the dialogue in early child narratives” (ibid: 218).

I am doubtful if the analysis in this research can approach the level of interpretation needed to reveal much about the developing identities of the children, but an interpretation of recurring themes in their stories and also of their development of characters will make tentative assertions about the developing identities of the children and how they view themselves within the social context of the classroom.

(b) The Formulation of the Analysis Grid.

The approaches and methodologies outlined in Bamberg’s review of narrative analysis have all been influential to a greater or lesser extent in formulating the underlying principles for the analysis of the children’s stories in this research. The interpretive and constructivist approaches of Nicolopoulou and Bamberg may be viewed as of most relevance because of their consonance with the overall methodology of this research. The interactionist, contextual and cross-linguistic forms of analysis have areas of relevance but will be difficult to employ widely in this research because of its particular context and the constraints of myself as the only, and participant researcher. The cognitive approach is also highly relevant because of the educational emphasis of the research and the particular cognitive differences of the child participants. Alongside the other approaches however, it is viewed as only one aspect of analysis to be considered and it is hoped that an attempt to synergize the approaches will provide both meaningful interpretations and educationally useful

information. During the formulation of the grid on which to record these analyses I had always to balance the requirements for rich interpretive possibilities with the practicalities of how such an analysis tool might be used in the classroom (and provide the information required in educational practice today).

The grid essentially deconstructs each story by focusing on different perspectives; a process that may seem to be in opposition to my wish to develop a holistic assessment and evaluation practice. However, the construct of the grid will enable me to carry out both cross-sectional analyses focusing on specific aspects of the storytelling, for example on the themes to be found across stories, and also for reconstructing the sectional analyses into a personal story for each individual child. The sections on the grid are organized as a progressive series of analyses, starting with the surface, contextual features and developing from what could be seen as the most “objective” analyses, starting with a word count and moving onto assessment according to nationally agreed criteria, to the more “subjective” analyses – for example the themes of the stories and my personal reflections. Another way of describing this is as a movement through sections that allow for an increasingly wider range of valid alternative interpretations. For example, there are a limited number of acceptable national curriculum levels that could be assigned to a particular story, often only with room for debate across two possible sub-levels. However, when describing the “creativity” of the story there could be multiple interpretations by different people and they could all be equally valid.

Rows 1 to 4 on the grid provide all the contextual information that would be important if the stories were being moderated by a group of teachers to decide if they demonstrate evidence of achievement within a particular level descriptor. The information given will also be useful when I come to evaluate the effect of particular learning contexts on the development of the stories, in particular the amount and type of adult interaction and input both prior to and during the story-telling activity itself.

Row 5 shows the number of words in each story. This is primarily for the later calculation of T-Units, but for children with expressive language difficulties, especially for those in this study with telegraphic language or tendencies to be silent, the number of words is itself significant. Quantity may not signify quality, but it is an essential pre-requisite. I have used Fox's (1993:53-54) rules for which words may be included in the word count, and

unsurprisingly, even this section requires interpretation. For example, in the Bus Story assessment (Renfrew, 1963) all repetitions are excluded, but Fox includes these if they are seen as deliberate to enhance the story-telling, which are therefore a matter of interpretation. Fox excludes “garbles” (ibid: 53) from her word count. However, she has scribed all the spoken words of the children and placed what she regards as “garbles” (for example “false starts” and “groping for words”) in parentheses. I will be interpreting as I scribe and omitting to record what I interpret to be “garbles”, and because the stories are to be reproduced for the children to re-read they will therefore be “cleaned-up” to some extent. I will not however include any words that were not spoken, and the punctuation used will come from the children’s pauses and intonations.

Rows 6 to 9 are designed to analyze the syntactical complexity of the children’s speech and will use three different standardized assessment methods to do this. The first of these uses the Derbyshire Language Scheme (DLS) progress record to assess the type and complexity of the sentences produced. The DLS is a system of language intervention intended for children who have difficulties in developing both receptive and expressive language skills. It is a scheme made up of teaching activities linked to approximately two hundred language objectives, and therefore exemplifies the structured small-steps approach often associated with teaching children with SEN. I chose to include this form of assessment because it is used with some children in our school by the Speech and Language Therapists. It supports interpretations of phrases and sentences by category of purpose, for example as requests, questions, descriptions of movement to place or actions on objects, and by the level of information carrying words it contains, for example two or four word level. This last description of word levels is also used in the National Curriculum P Level descriptors (DfEE and QCA, 2001: 25).

The second type of syntactic analysis (Row 8) will be the analysis of T-Units described in Fox’s (1993) research, and the definition of a T-Unit will be the same as the one that she used – “Hunt (1964:1965) defined a T-Unit as consisting of “one main clause with all the sub-ordinate clauses attached to it”. A main clause connected to another by “and” will become a new T-Unit” (ibid: 52)

Fox compared both the mean T-Unit length and range of T-Unit lengths in the stories her children told with the findings of earlier studies and concluded that “I tended to favour the context and the discourse mode of my study as the explanation for my results, since my

children seemed to be both well ahead of Loban's (1967) high-ability group and O'Donnell's (1967) higher socio-economic group (of whom my children were the equivalent)" (ibid: 55). The children in this research will be 18 months to 3 years older than the children in Fox's study – but clearly not of "high ability" and from variable socio-economic backgrounds, so it will be interesting to see how they compare in this type of analysis.

The third type of analysis is the familiar assessment of the stories using the P level and National Curriculum descriptors (DfEE and QCA, 2001). I have only included the descriptors for "Speaking" (ibid: 25-26) as these seemed most relevant. Whilst there are references to story composition in the level descriptors for writing, these are at too high a level of transcription to be meaningfully applied to the children in this research. For example "... shows some characteristics of narrative ...but the form may not be sustained...the vocabulary is appropriate to the subject matter, with some words used effectively" (Level 2C) (ibid: 28). It is hoped that the children will be able to compose at this level but their transcriptional skills are most likely to be between P5 to P8.

The next section in the analysis grid (Rows 10 to 17) looks at the structural aspects of the stories – described by Grove as consisting of " introductions and closures...orientations...sequencing of actions...climax or "high point".... (and) resolution "(Grove, 2005: 74). This links with Bruner's criteria for what constitutes a narrative. " A narrative must have ... a sequence...plot...convey meaning... a high point, a tension that meets some kind of resolution...makes distinctions between the usual and the unusual (what Bruner calls canonicity and its violations)" (Engel,1985: 70-71). The grid will describe in Rows 14-16 the predicament, high point and resolution in each of the stories. Comment will also be made as to how these events are sequenced and linked together which will indicate the level of narrative competency shown. Clearly many of the stories will not meet these criteria, but they will be useful for demonstrating any development of complexity in the structure of the children's narratives.

The other rows in this section (and including Row 14) are adopted from Richard Fox's (1990) condensed summary of his "Three Worlds of Narrative". Fox's model starts from a model of narrative not based on episodes and outcomes, but on the concepts of "agents and their actions" (Fox, 1990: 103):

“All stories revolve around one or more “characters”, a character being defined as anyone or anything capable of purposeful behaviour or intentional action. Characters in stories are faced with predicaments which are resolved via action or reaction. The characters and their predicaments are set in some world, or environment, which is most often the natural physical world “(ibid).

The “Three Worlds of Narrative” are thereby seen as - character, predicament and setting – but with “character” being the most complex of these and requiring elaboration under the four headings of “ description, social interaction, inner world and relationships” (ibid) (Rows 10 to 14). Fox then established five core descriptions of successive levels of characterization, formulated on the basis of repeated examination of a large number of children’s stories (Fox, 1987, 1990). “The most general directions taken by developing characterization can be summarized crudely as follows: From outer physical states and attributes to the inner world of the mind...From stereotyped characters to individuals...From characters as marginal, to characters as central, to the writer’s interest” (ibid: 104). Fox then retrospectively discovered that his five levels of character complexity “corresponded extremely closely to Robert Selman’s levels of “interpersonal understanding” (Selman, 1980)” (ibid). The analysis of the characters in the children’s stories may not only reveal their levels of development of narrative competence, but also their levels of empathy which will reflect their emotional development. This is the first challenge to my attempts to segregate the different forms of analyses that will inevitably overlap, and will be an area to be evaluated when the analysis has been completed.

The analysis on the grid uses the first three levels of Richard Fox’s framework and also includes some additional statements that I have inserted to provide more “finely tuned” examples of what may be seen in the children’s stories. One example of this is in Row 11 which looks at the development of social interaction between characters. Level 2 in Fox’s framework describes “interaction via physical action and exchange and one-sided communication” and Level 3 - “real dialogue – a two-way communication with exchanges of information, thoughts and plans”. I have inserted an additional Level 2 statement for stories that include “some simple two-way dialogue”. This raises the regularly occurring issue when creating or adapting assessment criteria for children with SEN, namely, how small should the steps be in order to provide accurate and useful information, and when does this incremental approach eclipse the wider picture and restrict our view of the children’s competencies and the curriculum most suited to their needs?

The next section (Rows 18-20) focuses on the rhetorical aspects of story-telling outlined by Grove - "use of figurative language....well-known sayings...repetition for effect (and) use of formulae and conventions" (Grove, 2005: 74). Three of these are incorporated under the one heading - "use of language for effect" (Row 18), and this heading will also incorporate the prosodic features described by Sutton-Smith (1981) in Fox (1993) "... alliteration... assonance... (and) rhythm" (ibid: 73). Sutton-Smith believed that the prosodic modes of story organization ("verse stories") progressively gave way to "literate" modes with a logical plot structure. This analysis takes Fox's view however, that "prosodic organization of story material is not so much an indicator of narrative immaturity as a value in its own right, a value which could lead children in the direction of poetry" (ibid). The final type of language to be included in this row is one that I have added - "words with special meaning to the group at the time". This will have links with the social aspects of storytelling and the findings of Gussin-Paley that the children often borrow each others images more than those of the stories they are read:

"Creeped downstairs" comes from Ira. Every year certain phrases are planted and take root, the shoots continually coming up in stories and in play....the use of a communal symbol is as tangible a demonstration of socialization as the agreement to share blocks and dolls....we read at least two books a day to the entire class...yet the literary symbols and traditions taken up by a roomful of children are most likely to originate in their own stories" (Gussin-Paley, 1990:40-41).

Rows 21-22 will be used to analyze the aesthetic aspects of the stories - influenced by Grove's explanation of "aesthetic" judgements:

"Although aesthetic judgements are both relevant and subjective, there is general agreement that aesthetics is concerned with the fitness of form to purpose, artistic creativity, and cultural relevance" (Grove, 2005: 97).

These two rows will be personal interpretations of the creativity of a story (defined in this sense as being innovative or unusual, adding something new to the situation or combining ideas in new ways for the child concerned), and the impact that the story has on the group. "This relates to Geertz's idea that art is not perceived in isolation, but is part of a network of social and cultural interactions" (ibid). This section has clear relevance when exploring the social aspects of storytelling, and the story's impact on the group will be reliant upon any field notes that I am able to record. In this section of the grid it will be more difficult for anyone outside of the context in which the story was created to make any interpretations. I have omitted Grove's third aspect of aesthetic response - "congruence" - since this seems

more relevant to evaluating a response to literature rather than story-telling itself, being defined as “the aptness ...between the form of the student’s response and the meaning of the text” (ibid).

The next section deals with the emotional aspects of the stories and their central themes. Through this analysis, it is hoped that I will be able to glimpse those issues of concern to the children and their developing sense of identity.

The first three elements to be covered – range (Row 23), intensity (Row 24) and appropriateness (Row 25), are once again borrowed from Grove’s framework for evaluating her students’ responses to literature (2005:94) – and will ask “How many different feelings can the (child) express in different contexts?...How involved does the (child) become in the imaginative experience... (and) does the emotion expressed fit the context” (ibid)? These concepts will be subtly altered when they are looked for in a child’s own stories rather than how they respond to another’s creation, but they will I think, still be useful. When evaluating the response to literature it is possible to interpret a wide range of non-verbal expressions of feeling. This may also be possible in this analysis if there are field notes describing a child’s emotional state when telling the story, but this section will mostly be focused on the scribed stories themselves and it is unlikely that the children will use many actual descriptions of the feeling states of their characters.

Row 26 will therefore list any evaluative devices that can be found in their stories. Fox (1993) used Labov’s (1972) categories of evaluation in the analysis of her stories, and “found that all but two of his categories were present across 21 of the 24 stories I analyzed” (Fox, 1993: 97). Labov had 4 overall categories – “intensifiers.... Comparators correlatives (and) explicatives” (ibid), which he further broke down into 28 categories. I have included two of Labov’s categories, intensifiers and comparators, into Peterson and McCabe’s (1993) more straightforward analysis of evaluative devices in children’s narratives. I have included comparators because Fox saw this as an important category since “for Labov all these forms compare what did occur and what did not...this suggests that the generating centre of narrative...is about far more than “what happened”, and is linked to the multi-layered, metaphorical meanings of stories” (Fox, 1993: 98).

Peterson and McCabe (1993) elicited personal experience narratives from children about a time when they had experienced target emotions. The list of evaluative devices then used in

this analysis grid were derived from the coding of these stories : “emotional states of frames of mind...cognitive and perceptual states....speech of participants... hedges... negation ...intensifiers, gratuitous terms or qualifiers...onomatopoeia or sound effects...repetition of words (and) idea repetition” (Peterson and McCabe (1993) in Biggs, 2001: 803-4).

The final row in this section will interpret the main themes in the story told. I will be adopting Barthes’ (1970) assumption in his description of the “symbolic code” that “structures the larger themes or ideas organized over the whole narrative. Often these themes are not relayed to the reader by the direct authorial voice, but are reflected in the myriad of happenings, descriptions, characters and so on. The reader must make the connections.... in stories told by very young children one might expect very basic and simple oppositions – goodies and baddies for example” (Fox, 1993: 172). It will be interesting to analyze if the stories reveal the opposing mythical themes discussed in Edmiston (2008), and also if some of the themes are similar to those in Gussin-Paley’s classes, for example “In his fantasy play no one has arrived to take the school child home; the child is “lost at school”. Jason’s helicopter will be the agent of rescue, from school to home. The ultimate fear and loss, Jason tells us, is separation” (Gussin-Paley, 1990:147).

The penultimate section on the analysis grid I have called the “social aspects” of story-telling, but these will already have also been analyzed in other parts of the grid – for example in the section on “aesthetic aspects”. Row 28 will detail the source of any of the story material (if known), and the list referred to in the grid is taken from Fox (1993, 15-16). She does note however, that “it needs to be said that in spite of the 11 sources of material I have given for the stories – the subject matter of most is the children themselves...in terms of they way they felt about things... In this sense all of the stories must be profoundly autobiographical” (ibid: 20).

In Row 29, another of Barthes’ connotative codes will be used, this time the “cultural code”. “The cultural code reaches out from the text to the social world, which it is implied by the narrative discourse, the reader will recognize and accept as real...Barthes calls these allusions “superlative effects of the real” (1970)” (Fox, 1993: 172). This notion is similar to Culler’s (1975) concept of the five levels “vraisemblance”. Two are most relevant here:

“First Culler proposes that literary works draw upon a socially given text, the ordinary everyday world with people in it....the second kind of text authors draw on

is cultural. Here the narrative assumes implicitly that there will be shared cultural knowledge between the reader and the text” (ibid: 79-80).

Fox found that “ the children in my study....do...like to show what they know about the world...the cultural code is surprisingly strong and is particularly useful in this context for revealing intertextualities lying below the surface of the children’s storytelling” (ibid: 172).

The final section (Row 30) is a space for any personal reflections that will not easily fit anywhere else on the grid. However thorough an assessment or evaluation procedure is thought to be, stories (and most other actions or products of children) can never be easily reduced into component parts because there is almost always something else it seems important to say. Each individual section of this grid will be evaluated during the analysis process and future improvements suggested.

The analysis as conceived will be almost entirely completed by myself, although I will be asking another Key Stage 1 practitioner to moderate the P Levels and National Curriculum levels evidenced in the stories. I am already aware that the process would be more revealing and meaningful if a group of people were involved in the interpretations. I will however be discussing the analysis and interpretation of some stories with my supervisors and Appendix 5 includes a range of examples of both the stories and their analyses, so that any interested reader can use the analysis grid to develop their own interpretations.

TEMPLATE OF THE ANALYSIS GRID.

Context	
1.	Name and C.A.
2.	Story Title
3.	Initial Stimulus
4.	Story telling-Context
5.	Number of words
Syntax	
6.	DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level
7.	DLS-Example sentence- Highest Level

8. T-Units	Total T Units	Mean T Unit lengths	Longest T-Unit
9. NC Level AT1: Speaking			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)			
10. Character : description			
11. Character: social interaction			
12. Character: inner world			
13. Character: relationships			
14. Predicament			
15. Climax/High point			
16. Resolution			
17. Story setting/environment			
Rhetorical aspects			
18. Use of language for effect			
19. Figurative Language			
20. 'Story' Language			

Aesthetic Aspects	
21. Creativity	
22. Impact	
Emotional Aspects	
23. Range	Range score:
	Adjectives/adverbs:
	Action/dialogue:
24. Intensity	
25. Appropriateness	
26. Evaluative Devices used	
27. Story 'Theme'	
Social Aspects	
28. Source of Story material	
29. Cultural Code	
Reflections	
30. Comments by teacher/researcher on any other aspect	

CHAPTER 4: CROSS-SECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE CHILDREN'S STORIES.

Introduction

The analysis grid described in the previous chapter was used to analyse each of the one hundred and forty-five stories told by the children. The stories that this analysis created about each individual child will be told in the next chapter whilst this chapter will focus upon the different aspects of the children's stories that are revealed by analysing them using multiple perspectives. This process reflects the beliefs underlying the whole research, that different meanings can be constructed from the same phenomena. This approach was also influenced by Czarniawska's (2004) account of "multi-stories" and the example he gives of the novel, "An Instance of the Fingerpost" (Pears, 1998).

"It is a kind of a history of a medical invention (the transfusion), and is situated in seventeenth century Oxford. It contains four stories accounting for the same course of events. The readers can choose which one to believe, but the final effect is rather that of understanding why the stories differ as they do" (Czarniawska, 2004:60).

Whilst the same person will be telling the four "stories" within this chapter, they will each be told from a different perspective and each story may have more relevance and interest to different readers and for different purposes. The four stories will be called:

- **A story of progression:** using assessment criteria that can be quantified and reproduced as numerical data – the Derbyshire Language Scheme (DLS), analysis of T-Units and National Curriculum and P Levels.
- **A story of weaving enchantments:** assessing and analysing the qualities that makes one story "better" or "worse" than another -including narrative competence, characterization, story setting, the degree of creativity shown and the rhetorical skills of the story-teller.
- **A story of informed hearts:** Analysing the range and intensity of emotions conveyed in the stories (including through evaluative devices), and the themes of central importance to the children.
- **A story of the development of social and ethical identity:** Analyzing what the stories reveal about the social dynamics in the classroom and the wider social and cultural context in which they are told.

Whilst starting with the forms of assessment most familiar to schools today, the analyses will then trial alternative ways of analyzing and interpreting stories. These ways are, as mentioned in the previous chapter, less precise and more open to alternative interpretations. This is in response to the statement that:

“...people usually attempt only to assess those aspects of education which seem to lend themselves to precise measurement, and that other aspects become victims of what may be called the “disappearance by default” syndrome. The notion that what can’t be measured doesn’t exist – and vanish in a kind of educational Bermuda Triangle” (Goodman in Grove, 2005:101).

Before I start to deconstruct and analyze the stories, I am therefore going to quote three examples of complete stories here, to give a more holistic view of the range and type of story that are being interpreted:

“Mummy got baby. On slide. Go home” (Poppy, Story 1).

“The fairy’s in the park. She goes down the slide. Dinosaur there. Goodie dinosaur. They go on the roundabout. Big frog hops on. “Ribbit!” Lots of dinosaurs and the shark is coming. They all want to play. Fairy says “Take turns!” Dad comes and fairy goes home for tea” (Lauren, Story 14).

“A hammer-head comes along. He has tentacles that he stocks up with food. He has tentacles from his ears that chop people in half and pick things up. He picks all the skeletons up except for little skeleton. Little skeleton is sad. Then Fireball comes along. He’s wobbly. He’s got stinger things that can sting the bad guys. He’s got eyes so that he can see what is happening. He stops Hammerhead and they have a fight. Fireball wins, but Hammerhead stings him and then he dies again. Little skeleton has gone back to his house because he’s too scared of the fight. The two aliens come from an alien planet and they come in their helicopter and they rescue the little skeleton and put him in their planet” (Joshua, Story15).

In order for the reader to relate more easily to references to the stories in the following analysis I have included below the story context (either the name of the stimulus story or the main activity) that relates to each story number. An example of a story arising from each context is included in Appendix 5.

Story Number	Story Context
1	Sandtray Story 1
2	Dunbi the Owl (aboriginal folk tale)
3	Jack and the Beanstalk
4	Take a Line for a Walk
5	Whatever Next? (Jill Murphy)
6	On the Way Home (Jill Murphy)
7	Description of character
8	The Bad-Tempered Ladybird (Eric Carle)
9	Sandtray Story 2
10	Rooster Goes Around the World (Eric Carle)
11	Come with Me (Maggie Walker)
12	Nobody Rides the Unicorn (Adrian Mitchell)
13	Alice in Wonderland
14	Sandtray Story 3
15	Teeny-Weeny in too Big a World (Margot Sunderland)
16	Where the Wild Things Are (Maurice Sendak)
17	Fairy Stories (assorted)
18	The Iron Man (Ted Hughes)
19	Puppet/Toy play
20	Story board
21	Clayscape

A STORY OF PROGRESSION.

The quantifiable data collected for each of these sections was collated in both table and graph form. Some of these will be used in the main body of the text, and the full versions can be seen in Appendix 6.

PART 1: NUMBER OF WORDS IN EACH STORY.

This was the most straightforward of the data to collect, and probably the least valuable in its own right. However, some interesting points did emerge. The first was that whilst quantity was certainly no guarantee of quality, a certain quantity was at least a pre-requisite to achieving a degree of quality. This will be reflected in the later sections, both in discussing the length of T-Units, and in differentiating between National Curriculum and P Levels. It is also important for children with language and learning difficulties to develop the confidence to speak at length. The data that arose from this simple word count did also reflect the individual differences in speech and language difficulties for these children.

Table 4.1: Mean and range of word counts for each child

Child's Name	Mean word count	Range of word count
Charlie	74.5	27-153
Emily	74.5	15-245
Poppy	47.6	7-131
Joshua	82.4	32-191
Tessa	57.2	25-133
Lauren	47.8	14-123
James	90.0	21-225

The children whose stories had the lowest mean word count - Poppy, Tessa and Lauren – were the children with the most specific language difficulties, including difficulties with receptive language, retaining new vocabulary and speaking consistently in complete sentences. Charlie and Joshua's main area of difficulty was with phonology which did not affect their comprehension of language nor their expressive language once they had the confidence to speak. Emily's main difficulty was with her delayed processing, but given time to respond and to tell her story she was also able to speak at length. James, whose stories

produce the highest mean word count, raises a different issue. He would often not speak at all in certain situations, so it may be surmised that the storytelling situation did actually suit him. However, the range of word counts between stories for all the children was considerable, which immediately raises questions about the contexts in which they were told. As will be seen from the complete table in Appendix 6, there is no general conclusion that can be drawn, since the highest word counts do not occur necessarily towards the end of the research nor across the same story context, and the same applies for those with the lowest word count. The reasons would seem to be more individual and complex than this.

The other issue that arose in deciding the number of words in a given story, was that although I had clarified on the grid guidelines the words that should or should not be included, I still had to make a subjective decision on some occasions. For example in Emily's retelling of Little Red Riding Hood (Story 9), I had to decide whether the character's name should count as one word or four words. I decided to count it as four because other children do not remember and use the complete name, but rather "Red Riding", "Little Red Hood" or other combinations. This minor point illustrates that however clear and objective an assessment is designed to be, in practice issues such as this will always arise, and concomitantly with the complexity of the assessment.

PART 2: DERBYSHIRE LANGUAGE SCHEME (DLS) ASSESSMENTS

The DLS assessments focus upon language development at the level of sentence construction, and the analysis grid used here, assessed both the "best-fit" level across all sentences (or phrases) used in the stories, and examples of the highest level sentences in each story. The "best fit" level is the DLS level demonstrated most consistently throughout the story, whereas the "highest" level refers to an occasional demonstration of a more complex sentence or phrase.

The tables below outline how the numerical scores reflect the DLS levels and then a summary of the findings from this analysis (full details in Appendix 6).

Table 4.2: Numerical equivalents for DLS Word Levels.

DLS Word Level	Numerical Value
2/3 Word Level	2
3WL (E): Three Word Level (Easy)	4
3WL (H): Three Word Level (Hard)	6
4WL (E): Four Word Level (Easy)	8
4WL (H): Four Word Level (Hard)	10
4WL (H+): Four Word Level (Hardest)	12
4WL+ (Demonstrating speech at above 4WL)	14

Table 4.3: Mean “best fit” and “highest” DLS levels over all stories told by each child and the “best fit” and “highest” DLS scores in their last 3 stories.

Name	Mean “best fit” DLS level	Mean “highest” DLS level	“Best fit” DLS scores in last 3 stories			“Highest” DLS scores in last 3 stories		
Charlie	7.8	11.1	10	10	10	14	10	14
Emily	9.5	11.1	12	12	8	14	14	14
Poppy	6.3	7.6	8	10	8	10	12	10
Joshua	9.1	10.6	14	A	14	14	A	14
Tessa	8.2	9.2	10	10	10	10	10	10
Lauren	6.9	9.7	8	6	10	8	10	10
James	9.1	11.6	10	8	10	14	14	14

(A= Absent)

The table demonstrates that the children all made progress over the year, according to the DLS criteria, in the complexity of their sentence (or phrase) structure and the number of information carrying words that they were spontaneously able to use. This is shown by a comparison of the scores achieved in the last three stories compared with mean scores (of all 21 stories) shown in the previous columns; and the scores are consistently higher. Many stories also contain sentences that are a higher level than the “best fit”, and this trend is

more noticeable when the full table of results is viewed. From the table above it may be concluded that Joshua is now consistently using language at higher than 4WL (H+). The DLS does have materials relating to work at five word level and beyond, but this was not available in school and I had no experience of it. It would have been useful however in assessing some of Joshua, James, Charlie and Emily's sentences. Even by Story 8 for example, Charlie was speaking sentences such as "*The nasty wasp was eating honey that had dropped to the ground*". The graphs also clearly reveal the inconsistency of DLS levels achieved over different story contexts. Whilst the overall trend was upward, there were many regressions along the way, and it is suggested that this may be reflected in the other findings and in new learning generally; new skills can take a while to become embedded and consistently used. They may also require an appropriate context for their demonstration and some of the story contexts were clearly more appropriate than others for different children.

At each level of competency the DLS gives examples of different sentence/phrase types that may be used. In the context of the stories, the sentence/phrase types most commonly used were: movement to place, use of attributes, actions (intransitive) and actions on objects. The sentence/phrase types least used were: moving position of object, transfer to person, questions and requests. This may be related directly to the context and the purposes for which the children were speaking. For example, they would clearly be more likely to make requests during a meal-time or when shopping.

One purpose of using the DLS assessment criteria, was to see if the small-step approach could demonstrate progress and identify areas for future teaching. In some instances, the progression was clear to see. If we take the sentence type "Movement to Place" in Emily's stories there is an obvious progression from "*It's going to it's house*" (Story 4:4WL (E)) to "*she landed on a bumpy planet*" (Story 5) and "*a frog came up behind me*" (Story 6: 4WL (H)) to "*They go and have tea at Poppy's house with her mummy*" (Story 10: 4WL+). The more complex sentence however is using more everyday language than the previous two constructions. The criteria also does not credit Emily for the range of tenses she uses correctly across these sentences and neither do they later identify her need for input on certain irregular past tenses as demonstrated in Story 17, "*She maked a dress...she goed to the Ball... they falled in love*". Even that identification however does not reveal the whole picture, because later in the same sentence she correctly states that "*he went to*

Cinderella's house". It may be that Emily's earlier mistake is because she is remembering the phrase "Cinderella you shall go to the ball", and has translated this into the past tense. Another regularly used sentence type was of "action on object", and progression can here be seen in examples from Tessa's stories: she moves from "*Cracked her head open*" (Story 3: 3WL (E)) to "*Ambulance man mended Tessa's head*" (Story 6: 4WL (E)) to "*The pig pushed the wolf into the fire-people*" (Story 17: 4WL (H)). These examples also highlight the difficulties I had in translating story sentences into the examples given in the DLS assessment criteria which are based on functional everyday language. I am not sure for example, if "wolf" counts as an object, but there is no separate category for "action on character".

Similar issues arose throughout the assessments, where, because of the nature of the story language it was difficult to assign a DLS level. Examples of such sentences included, "*and they all lived happily ever after* (Emily, Story 1)...*fairy whizzes on roundabout really, really, really fast* (Poppy, Story 14)...*the window in the door is cracked* (Joshua, Story 11)...*a long time ago I made the world*" (James, Story 21). It was also difficult to assign value to the use of particular vocabulary, or the inherent interest of a sentence. This is of course beyond the remit of the DLS, and will be evaluated in a later section.

A third common sentence type in use throughout the stories was that of including attributes, and this was one area in which the story context did significantly affect the word levels awarded. In Story 7 for example, which is actually a character description, all the children except for Poppy and James produced a sentence at 4WL (H) or higher because they met the criteria of "two adjectives in a phrase" – for example, "*He's got red eyes, green chest, gold, purple and blue arms* (Joshua)... *He's green with a big, orange mouth*" (Emily) These particular examples not only demonstrate the influence of the context, but might also raise the issue of "fairness" in assessment. The children were describing their characters by looking at paintings they had created, thus the emphasis on colour. Could it fairly be said therefore that these sentences were examples of 4WL (H) or had they been produced in too supported a context? In the context of the DLS assessment, the answer is probably that they would not count. Children are only deemed competent at a given word level if they can use information carrying words without gleaning clues from the environment. The interesting point from my perspective however, is whether the children start to use the concept of character descriptions spontaneously across a range of story telling contexts.

It should be noted, that whilst I was familiar with the DLS assessments I was not experienced in using them and found this section of the analysis the most difficult to complete. I did discuss the assessment with the Speech and Language Therapist in school, and followed her advice when necessary of focusing upon the number of information carrying words to ascertain a level, rather than trying to assign each sentence into one of the exemplars. This notion of “word level” number is later returned to in the section on the P level descriptors.

PART 3: T-UNIT ANALYSIS

In using this analysis I was interested to compare the findings of Fox’s (1993) study which included children aged between 4.1 and 6.1 at its completion, and the children in this study who were aged between 7.0 and 7.11. Fox compares her findings with those of Loban (1967) with children aged between 5.0 and 6.0 and O’Donnell et al (1967) with the mean age of the children being 5.10. The children in Fox’s study were all from a higher socio-economic group (as were the children in O’Donnell’s), and, it would seem also of high ability (as were the children in Loban’s study). The children in this research are very different both because of their age and their diagnosed learning and language difficulties. Two of the children could be said to come from a higher socio-economic background whilst the other five were entitled to free school meals. Loban (1967) and O’Donnell et al (1967) “established a correlation between length of T-Unit and syntactic complexity...T-Unit length (i.e. syntactic complexity) was also found to increase with age” (Fox, 1993:52). Fox’s study added to this finding that the mode of discourse (in this instance narrative and story-telling in particular) could be an important determiner of T-Unit length:

“I tended to favour the context and discourse mode of my study as the explanation for my results, since my children seemed to be well ahead of both groups...my analysis in fact was producing similar findings to Rosen’s analysis of writing- a greater “range” of T-Units for one subject than for a whole age-range in the earlier studies” (ibid: 55)

The difference in age seemed appropriate because a common phrase in children’s statements of SEN when they entered our school was that s/he “is functioning at a developmental level two to three years behind his/her chronological age”. It is not possible of course to directly compare a seven-year old child with learning difficulties to a five-year old child without, because the five-year old child is able to learn without difficulty and

progress at pace. The two to three year “gap” between the two thus increases as the children get older, and the social and emotional effects of this are also influencing factors. That debate aside however, it seemed a useful starting point to compare the groups of children, and the age differential would at least place any comparisons on a slightly less unequal footing. I have included the three sets of findings below for comparison, and used the same method of calculating mean T-Units (main clause with its sub-ordinate clauses) as that outlined by Fox. The first two tables are reproduced from Fox (1993:54)

Table 4.4: Mean and Range of T-Unit Lengths in Loban (1976) and O’Donnell (1967).

RESEARCH STUDY	AGE-RANGE/ MEAN AGE	MEAN T-UNIT LENGTH	RANGE OF T-UNIT LENGTH
Loban (1976)	5.5 to 6.0	6.8	6.00 – 8.00
O’Donnell et al (1967)	5.10	7.07	4.00-9.5

Table 4.5: Fox’s (1993) T-Unit analysis of narrative monologues of 5 children.

	Josh	Sundari	Justine	Jimmy	Robert
Age	5.0-6.1	5.4-5.7	4.1-5.2-4.9	4.9	3.7-4.1
Total number of stories	73	19	30	20	26
Total words	24164	7195	2613	2308	3854
Total T-Units	2910	799	305	281	585
Mean T-Unit	8.3	9.0	8.5	8.2	6.7
Range of mean T-unit length	6.1-13.3	5.9-13.6	6.2-14.2	6.4-15.0	5.1-9.7

Table 4.6: T-Unit analysis of the stories of the 7 children in this research.

	Charlie	Emily	Poppy	Joshua	Tessa	Lauren	James
Age	7.1-7.11	6.5-7.3	6.2-7.0	7.1-7.11	6.4-7.2	6.4-7.2	7.1-7.11
Number of stories	21	21	21	19	21	21	21
Total words	1555	1555	1000	1422	1201	1003	1891
Total T-Units	198	246	192	211	200	169	292
Mean T-Unit	7.8	6.3	5.2	6.7	6.0	5.9	6.4
Range of mean T-unit length	4.6-12.5	3.1-8.8	2.1-9.7	5.0-10.2	3.8-10.2	2.3-12.2	4.3-10.8
Range of longest T-Unit length	7-19	5-19	3-19	7-18	7-21	4-18	5-18

The mean T-Unit length used by the children in my research was consistently lower than the children in both previous studies – with the exception of Charlie whose mean T-Unit length of 7.8 was higher than any of the children in Loban and O’Donnell’s study, and higher than Robert, the youngest child, in Fox’s study. It is of course, not possible to know if the mean T-Unit lengths would have been shorter if the discourse had been other than narrative, since there was no comparative study. Other interesting comparisons can however also be made. The first is between the numbers of words produced by the two groups of children. Sundari for example produced 7195 words in 19 stories compared to Joshua’s 1422, and he was one of the most prolific in the group. This raises questions about both the effect of the children’s language difficulties on their output, and about the school context in which the story telling took place. I will return to this in the evaluation of the pedagogy, for whilst I was not consciously aware of limiting the amount of time that the children had to tell their stories, it may be as Fox hypothesized that school can never “provide such relaxed conditions, or indeed children can (n)ever feel so confident in producing such meaningful, experimental, even excessive material for their teachers (as their parents)” (ibid:5). However, it may also be that because expressive language is difficult for the children it may require too great an effort from them to produce sustained texts, so their preferred mode of communication is in shorter bursts. Some of the children may like these communications to be frequent and

therefore seem to be “always talking”, but this is different from being able to sustain a narrative, or even a longer conversation.

The second area of particular interest is in the range of T-Unit lengths produced by the children, and these findings are similar to Fox’s in that the range is much greater than that produced in either of O’Donnell’s or Laban’s research (with the exception of Joshua, whose range is 5.2 and the greatest range in O’Donnell’s study was 5.5). Particularly interesting is that the highest number in the range for the children in my study is consistently higher (this time with the exception of Emily) than the mean T-Unit length of the children in Fox’s study. This indicates that at some times and in certain contexts the children are able to provide syntactically complex sentences, and I further explored this by examining the longest T-Units in each of the stories. All of the children were, in at least one story over the year, able to formulate a T-Unit that was between 18 to 21 words long, and the 21 word T-Unit was spoken by Tessa who had an average length of only 6.0.

Fox “scrutinized all T-Units consisting of over 12 words to see if a set of categories would emerge which would explain their length” (ibid: 57), and found five categories that involved grammatical transformation “...dependent clauses...narratized speech...reported speech...passive...co-ordinating clauses” (ibid) and other T-Units that were borrowed from the “oral tradition, which has other ways of making long T-Units ... lists (nouns and attributes)...formulae(ready-made phrases from songs and stories)...repetition...topic...(and) unclassified (which usually contain one or two attributives)” (ibid:57-58).

Below I have listed the longest T-Unit produced by each child and then examples across the stories of each different category of T-Unit to see if they are all represented in the children’s stories. The children’s stories were also analyzed to ascertain if a certain category of longer T-Unit is more frequently used than others.

Longest T-Unit produced by each child:

Charlie (Story 16: 19 words) “*There was a castle made of diamonds with a king who was a bit bad and a bit good*” (Co-ordinating clause).

Emily (Story 19: 19 words) *"The monster with five legs, one big eye and one little eye crept behind the zebra to scare him"* (Part list of attributes).

Poppy (Story 20: 17 words) *"At (local place name) the people from the train played in the park on the swings slides and roundabout"* (Co-ordinating clause with part list of nouns).

Joshua (Story 18: 18 words) *"He's got lots of green poisonous spikes on his body and blood fangs and eyes of flashing colours"* (List of attributes).

Tessa: (Story 18: 21 words) *"He's got big brown and white eyes and a big round circle body and with long fingers and funny sharp nails"* (List of attributes).

Lauren: (Story 21: 18 words) *"When it was a long long time ago I made fire a lake and really big fat flowers"* (Part formulae and part List of nouns).

James (Story 16: 18 words) *"He smelt a massive massive massive – more massive than his – cake from home with a gangster on top"* (Part repetition).

Examples of the 10 categories of T-Units across the stories:

- Dependent Clause: None
- Narratized Speech: *"Then the second gangster scored another goal but the referee said it was a foul"* (Charlie: Story 20). This was the only example found.
- Reported Speech: *"The King of Jopardy said "Kill him with a fork and a knife"* (James: Story 12). There were a few examples of dialogue, but often just spoken without reference to the identity of the speaker.
- Passive: None
- Co-Coordinating Clause: *"Ladybird cried and took her home and sat her down and had a cup of tea and a biscuit"* (Tessa: Story 8). There were several examples of this category of T-Unit.

- List of Nouns or Attributes: *“(A monkey) played on the swings and roundabout and big slide with his friends, a monkey called Gemma and tiger called Danny”* (Tessa: Story 20). There were many examples of lists of attributes during character descriptions. This was the most common type of longer T-Unit. For example, *“The Wild Things have three eyes and one nose one mouth and different coloured buttons”* (Lauren: Story 16).
- Formulae: *“And they played “Ring-a-Ring-a Roses” and “Farmer’s in his Den”* (Poppy: Story 8). There were a few examples of this, but nowhere near the number of examples found in Fox’s study.
- Repetition: The only example I could find of this was in James’ longest T-Unit recorded above.
- Topic: None.
- Unclassified: *“Meanwhile my brother and his friend were up to mischief playing sword fighting”* (Emily: Story 20). This does not include any attributives but I am not able to place it any of the other categories, and think it is interesting because of its obvious syntactic complexity.

As could be seen from my categorization of the children’s longest T-Units, I was not always sure how to do this as each T-Unit often showed features of more than one of the categories. The children in my research did not use the same range of categories as those in Fox’s study; they were more limited to either co-ordinating clauses or lists of nouns or attributes. The lists of attributes in particular owed a great deal to the context in which they were produced, and the lists of nouns connected by “and” are a familiar feature of emerging childhood speech and writing. Clearly, a longer list of nouns and the use of a range of adjectives all add detail to what could previously have been a brief and unelaborated utterance. What is seen as strength in this analysis however is probably not a trait that would continue to be valued as the children’s speech or writing matured. This category did seem to be less syntactically complex than, for example, the use of reported or narratized speech. It is noticeable that the only regularly used grammatically transforming T-Unit was the co-ordinating clause, with some emerging use of reported speech. It may have been that

the use of dependent clauses and passive tenses were as yet beyond the capabilities of the children in this study.

The conclusions that I would tentatively draw from this analysis of T-Units is that the discourse of story-telling is a particularly rich one for enabling children to speak at length and to display a range of different syntactic competencies. To be more certain of this however, I would need to carry out a comparative analysis of their speech in other situations – for example when relating a personal narrative. However, I would concur with Fox that:

“The results of the T-unit analysis implies that we could seriously under-estimate children’s linguistic competencies if we evaluate them on the basis of one “chunk” of language” (Fox, 1993:63).

The oral nature of the story-telling encourages the use of added detail and emerging vocabulary (especially adjectives in the examples given above). It also “expands the scope of what (the children) are able to make words do, makes space for them to try out new structures and take the risk of getting them wrong” (ibid). The different categories of T-Unit however, are different in the syntactic complexity they reveal, and the T-Units linked to oral story-telling may be easier for the children to learn and start to use spontaneously, than those categories requiring grammatical transformation. The use of dialogue and its translation into reported and narratized dialogue may well be a skill that could be fostered by regular story-telling, and may have occurred if the research had continued for longer. It would be interesting to consider in the context of T-units, as with the DLS assessments, whether story-rich environments and opportunities for story-telling themselves foster the development of syntactic complexity and grammatical correctness, or whether specific focused teaching might be more effective for certain skills, or whether a combination of the two would be more effective.

In both cases also the focus is upon the phrase or sentence as a unit, rather than upon the connections and coherence of those sentences linked together, or upon the quality of the individual words chosen. The overall meaning of the stories is taken into account in the next form of analysis – assessment of the stories using the National Curriculum and P level descriptors.

PART 4: NATIONAL CURRICULUM (NC) AND P LEVEL DESCRIPTORS.

These are the assessments used in all state schools in England, and it is progress and attainment according to these level descriptors that determines the “success” not only of pupils, but also teachers, schools, local authorities and even governments. The children’s progress according to these particular criteria was therefore something that I had a vested interest in when analysing the data.

NC and P Levels assessments for each story.

If the story is assessed at midway between levels it will be recorded as .5. So if a story is assessed as fully meeting all the criteria for P7, and some but not all of P8, it is recorded as P7.5

Table 4.7: NC and P Levels for 21 stories told by the 7 children.

Story	Charlie	Emily	Poppy	Joshua	Tessa	Lauren	James
1	P7	P6	P4.5	P5	P5	P5	P5.5
2	P7	P7	P4.5	P5	P5	P4.5	P5.5
3	P7.5	P6	P5	P5.5	P6	P6	P6
4	P7	P6	P4	P6	P6	P5.5	P7
5	P7.5	P8	P5	P6	P6	P6	P6.5
6	P7	P8	P6	P7	P6	P6	P6.5
7	P8	P8	P6	P7	P6	P6	P7
8	P8	1C	P7	P7.5	P7	P6.5	P7.5
9	P6.5	1C	P6	P7	P7	P6	P6.5
10	1C	P8.5	P6.5	P7.5	P7	P6	P7.5
11	P8	P7	P6	P7.5	P6	P6	P7
12	1C	P8.5	P7	A	P6	P6	P7.5
13	1C	P8.5	P6.5	P8.5	P7	P6	P8
14	1C.5	1B	P6.5	1C	P7	P6.5	P8
15	1B	1B.5	P7	P8.5	P6	P7	P8.5
16	1B	1C	P7	P8.5	P7.5	P8	P8
17	1A	1A	P6.5	P8.5	P6.5	P7	P7.5
18	1A	1B.5	P7.5	1B	P8	P7.5	P8

Story	Charlie	Emily	Poppy	Joshua	Tessa	Lauren	James
19	1A	1B	P7	1C.5	P7	P8	P8
20	1B.5	P8.5	P7.5	A	P7.5	P7	P7.5
21	2C	1C.5	P7	1B	P7.5	P7	P8

The levels have been recorded as numerical values for plotting on the graphs in Appendix 6 and these demonstrate, alongside the tables, that the trend is upward for all the children, but noticeably not linear for any of them. The pattern of attainment is very different for each of the children. Lauren for example remains at P6 or P6.5 for ten consecutive stories but when she does progress to P7 she then continues to tell stories assessed at either P7 or P8 without reverting to P6. Emily however, who makes faster progress and moves from P6 to P8 within five stories and attains 1C by Story 8, then tells a story assessed at P7 in Story 11 and reverts to P8.5 at Story 21 when she has been working within the National Curriculum levels for the previous six stories. The profiles are so individual it is not possible to draw any conclusions from these pathways, but they do indicate, both that the contexts of the story telling have different effects for different children, and also highlight the danger of summatively assessing a single piece of work at single point in time. In order to get a clearer view of progress over the year I have therefore calculated the mean level achieved by each child in the first five stories they tell and in the last five. The results can be seen in the following table:

Table 4.8: Comparison of Mean Level of Stories 1-5 and Mean Level of Stories 17-21

	Mean level of stories 1-5	Mean level of stories 17-21	Amount of progress
Charlie	7.2 (P7)	11.3 (1A)	+4.1
Emily	6.6 (P6.5)	9.9 (1B/1A)	+3.3
Poppy	4.6 (P4.5)	7.1 (P7)	+2.5
Joshua	5.5 (P5.5)	9.3 (1C)	+3.7
Tessa	5.6 (P5.5)	7.3 (P7)	+1.8
Lauren	5.2 (P5)	7.3 (P7)	+2.1
James	6.1 (P6)	8.0 (P8)	+1.9

Each one point of progress represents either movement up a complete P Level or a National Curriculum sub-level (i.e.:1C to 1B). Whilst individual targets for the children differ slightly, the general overall targets for the school stated that “good” progress was demonstrated when pupils moved up one level (one point) over a year and “outstanding” progress, was if they moved up two levels (two points) over a year. Using these standards five of the children made greater than expected progress and Charlie, Emily and Joshua made progress of over three levels (points), which is unusual (although not unknown) within the school setting. Tessa and James who did not quite achieve two points of progress nevertheless moved up two levels, and were just 0.2 and 0.1 points below the two points respectively.

This degree of progress could again tentatively support the findings in the previous section (both in this research and by Fox (1993)) that storytelling is a particularly rich context for children to demonstrate their speaking skills. The levels that the children demonstrated in story-telling were also not the overall speaking level that seemed to be the “best fit” for each child that was recorded on their achievement records at the end of the year. This was because storytelling is a specific activity that does not involve all of the skills required for full achievement of the speaking criteria. So Charlie for example although he was telling stories at Level 1A, was given an overall assessment of Level 1C at the end of the year. This was because his difficulties with pronunciation and with taking turns in groups meant that he could not consistently meet the criteria of Level 1B ; “ Communicate clearly...(and) take turns in a range of situations and groups” (DfEE, 2001:26). Similarly, whilst James was consistently using language that met the criteria of P8 during both individual and group story-telling sessions, he continued to be non-participative in many other group situations and certainly if these included unfamiliar people. In these situations he would struggle to be assessed as P6. I therefore gave him an overall assessment of P7. This raises the crucial question of whether our all-important summative assessments of children should reflect them at their “best” or their “worst”. Many children (and perhaps particularly children with specific learning difficulties and with autism) can have uneven profiles whereby they not only demonstrate different levels of ability in different situations, but may be able to meet some criteria at one level, whilst still having difficulties with criteria at a much lower level. For example, Charlie’s group-work skills will probably remain much lower than his expressive language skills in other situations for a considerable period of time. “Communicating clearly”

is also a difficult area to assess for children who have long-term pronunciation difficulties – is it sufficient if the communications are clear to the people who are familiar with them? It is obviously important that data that is to be used comparatively for a range of purposes should be consistent across a range of assessors and contexts. However, the level descriptors that are used here are open to widely alternative interpretations and this next section of the chapter will touch briefly on this complex issue that could be discussed in great depth if there was the time and space. The process in schools is for teachers from within and across schools to moderate work to develop portfolios of exemplars of work given a different level. This practice has changed in more recent years from single pieces of work as exemplars to a range of pieces of work to show sustained achievement over a range of contexts. The importance of this practice has already been exemplified in the analysis of the children's stories. The moderation process also only has value if full details are given of the context in which the work was produced. This is particularly so for children working at the lower P levels when much of their work is supported to differing degrees.

For the analysis purposes of the research each story was assigned a level although that would not be my everyday practice. In line with end of year summative assessment practice however, I did ask an experienced mainstream Key Stage 1 teacher to moderate with me. We worked separately and then came together to discuss our decisions. The outcome was that whilst we agreed on many of the stories, we also both shared uncertainty about a large number (48:33%) of them, and therefore assessed them as midway between levels. We were both experienced Key Stage 1 assessors, so the number of stories of which we were unsure is perhaps surprising. However, I think that I have become less certain about allocation of particular levels the more experienced I become and the more closely I look at different pieces of work. There were also a small number of stories (7:5%) in which we differed on the levels awarded, and in each case I had awarded the higher level. This highlights a particularly pertinent point about the moderation process in general. The teacher who knows the child whose work is being scrutinized may not be able to be as dispassionate in the assessment as a teacher who is not, and will therefore look more for the positive aspects. The independent assessor however, is far more likely to notice the deficits in the work and focus upon these. The independent assessor however, does not have full experience of the context in which the work was produced. This proved particularly vital in this research when we were assessing what was actually a piece of speaking (although when transcribed appeared more as a written story). This did prove difficult

because scribed words do not convey the intonations of the speaker or the reactions of their listeners. In usual practice video recordings must be essential if any moderation of speaking is to take place, although even then the impact and meaning to the intended audience cannot be conveyed.

To illustrate the points made above I will describe one of the stories where we differed in our assessments. The story was one told by Emily towards the end of the research, and written for acting out with the class:

“My sister and me went to her best friend’s house. We ate tea. My mum was still at the hospital. She ate there. Meanwhile my brother and his friend were up to mischief playing sword fighting. They both hit each other and their nanny said “Stop it!” They both kept on hitting. Then my sister came back (I really banged the table). She was so cross that her brother was being silly. Then sister said “Come back I’m going to hit you!” He didn’t come back. The nanny and her, they both went off to the beach to get her brother. They both laughed. “Brother please can we both stop fighting?” Brother says “yes”. They kissed then. Nanny kissed them too. “I love you brother”. They both played together”. (Emily: Story 20).

I had assessed this story as Level 1C, and my colleague had assessed it at P8. The reasons for our differences lay in our understandings of how far this story “conveyed meaning” (DfEE, 2001:26). It clearly met all the criteria of P8, in that many of the sentences link 4 key words. There was also ample evidence of Emily using a “growing vocabulary to convey meaning to the listener (e.g.: to convey feelings and evaluations)” (ibid). The story was also one that met the Level 1C criteria of “communicating about matters of interest”. I knew from the context that the group had been interested in this story, and in fact it was quite cleverly written for a class dramatization because the boys enjoyed the sword fighting and the “naughty” parts, whilst the girls also enjoyed the happy resolution at the end. My colleague also recognized that this story topic of familiar family life would be of interest to an audience of young children. We also both agreed that a reasonable amount of relevant detail had been given – for example in the clarification of who ate tea where and exactly what was said between characters in the heavily evaluated dialogue. I had included the exclamation marks in the scribing to show where Emily had spoken with expression. My colleague however, when reading the story without prior knowledge of Emily’s home-circumstances or the context of the telling did not think the meaning it conveyed was clear

enough – for example in the section “Then my sister came back (I really banged the table). She was so cross that her brother was being silly”. It appears that there was some confusion with the stance of the narrator, but I had placed the sentence in parentheses because Emily was actually describing her actions when she was telling the story and it was used in the dramatization as a stage direction. The other part of the story that was not developed clearly was the reason why the brother and sister should suddenly decide to stop fighting “They both laughed”. This story was therefore assessed as P8.5 in this research.

The above description of a discussion around one story could be repeated for many others in the research, and each will have its own particular interest. There were two general issues that arose however. The first of these was interpreting the wording of the statements, and deciding for example what constituted a “growing vocabulary” (P8) or when a story that “conveys meaning” (L1C) improves to become one that “clearly conveys meaning” (L1B). Connected to this was the interpretation of what is not in the descriptors – for example whether length of utterance has any bearing on the level awarded. This issue was particularly highlighted in the guided story-telling situations where the children only had to speak a short part of a story before it returned to group drama (Stories 11, 13, 16 and 18). In this supported context and when the children did not have to think about a complete story structure they could often produce more complex sentences and use a different vocabulary than they would in their independent story-telling. For example, in Story 10, Tessa produces the following sentences as part of an interactive story-telling session “*I can feel a bumpy tree...there is spiky grass outside...Oh no! It was a mouse! It has circle patterns carved on it...A big grey spider. He bites with all his blue teeth*”. In her next story however, she returns to using more familiar vocabulary, although continues to use dialogue spontaneously. “*The bird and the unicorn were friends. The bird flew off to see a fish and ate it. The bird then flew to knock on doors for money. The unicorn said “You’ve got money now and made him give it back”* (Tessa: Story 12). When the children started to tell their own longer stories this sometimes also had a deleterious effect on their ability to sustain meaning – a similar trait that is seen when children start to write longer pieces of work.

These issues are ones I had always been aware of however, but the next issue is one that had only been on the fringes of my thoughts before this research - the role of the listener when an assessment is being made of the effectiveness of the speaking. This is an essential criterion from P8 onwards. This was initially highlighted again by discrepancy in

the moderation of one of these stories. In Story 16, Joshua had described the Wild Things as *“gangsters with eyes on their legs and no eyes on their heads”*. My colleague had found this image to be internally inconsistent because of course gangsters do not have eyes on their legs. Whilst this description may not have been one of Joshua’s more mature use of words I gave him more credit for this description because I had observed the way it had been both spoken and received by the audience of friends. It was intended to be both humorous and shocking, and had the desired effect. The role of the listener is also important when it comes to assessing the content and subject matter of the story. It is most often of course the teacher who is the final arbiter of a level (despite the recent increase in the use of peer evaluations), and the subject matter of some stories are inherently more interesting and appealing to different teachers. My colleague had difficulty with the violence conveyed in some of the stories, and I found myself becoming irritated by some of the returning “park” and “happy ending” themes. We both recognized that this subjective view did influence our decisions about “meaning” and “interest”, and perhaps the judges of this should have been the audience to whom the children were speaking. I also noted, that if the criteria for Level 1B is to “convey meaning, making what they communicate relevant and interesting to the listener” (DfEE, 2001: 26), then many teachers probably fail to meet this level for some of their pupils every day.

It should be noted that the P level descriptors used in this research have recently been revised alongside the guidance that accompanies them. One statement in the new guidance clearly reflects what has been amply demonstrated in this research - that finding a level description that best fits a pupil’s performance can only be done “over a period of time and in different contexts, using ...professional judgment” (QCA, 2009:37). The framework now given for recognizing attainment for pupils with SEN is adapted from the “Levels of Experience” framework in “Religious Education for All” (Brown, 1996 in Grove, 2005:93) and is described as “ Encounter: Awareness: Attention and Response: Engagement: Participation: Involvement: Gaining skills and understanding” (QCA, 2009: 35). This ensures that assessments take full account of the context in which they occur, and also diminishes the view of an “objective”, independent assessor as somehow ensuring greater “fairness” and consistency.

The changes that have occurred in the level descriptors are as follows:

- P5 now requires a minimum vocabulary of 50 words
- P6: There is no longer a requirement to use 3 key words; this has been moved to P7. There is the additional requirement however to use prepositions such as “in” or “on”, and pronouns such as “my” and “it” correctly.
- P7: It is specified that the conjunction to be used is “and”, rather than that being one possibility. The example given of conveying meaning is the same example, but now as a grammatically incomplete phrase rather than a complete sentence – “We going cinema on Friday” rather than “We are going to the Cinema on Friday”.
- P8: The need for a “growing” vocabulary is replaced by the need for an “extensive” vocabulary, and there is now a need to use conjunctions that suggest cause – for example “cos” to link ideas.

The requirements for P6 and P7 appear to have been slightly simplified and have also become more specific. The requirements for P5 and P8 appear to be increased, although it is not clarified how “extensive vocabulary” should be interpreted nor how it is perceived to be different from “growing”. I do not think that these new descriptors would greatly alter the results in this research, although some stories that were assessed as P8 may be re-assessed as P7, and some stories assessed as P6 may be re-assessed as P7.

PART 5: REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESSES OF ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS DISCUSSED IN THIS “STORY OF PROGRESSION”.

The processes of assessment and analysis discussed in this story are linear and based upon a hierarchy of skills that can be translated into numerical data. These can provide simplified snapshots of the attainment and progress of one child over a period of time, or can compare many children at one given time. Such data is more manageable at the whole-school or local authority level than detailed written or spoken evidence about each individual child’s attainment, and seems therefore to have become the main language for describing progress within schools (mostly using data derived from the NC and P Level descriptors). The analysis of the numerical data generated in this research has demonstrated that such data can indeed provide useful information, and, far more significantly it can generate questions for further exploration; questions that might not be so easily discernible amongst a wealth of written detail. Even my starting discussion on the data generated from what I thought would be fairly meaningless word counts, highlighted

what was to become an on-going enquiry about the importance of “quantity”, and its relationship with “quality” when evaluating the developing stages of spoken and written composition.

One of the dangers of such an approach to assessment however, is the encroaching tendency to describe children in terms of their “numbers”; for example, “Tessa is a P6” or “Poppy is at 3 Word Level”. Such a reductionism is also translated into the process of assessment itself. I found myself looking at the stories focused through the “lens” of a particular framework, and could look for certain criteria (for example long T-Units, use of conjunctions, or numbers of information-carrying words), without even fully comprehending the subject matter and meaning of the stories I was reading. This is particularly an issue when assessing large numbers of pieces of work as when my colleague and I moderated all 142 stories in a day. The other interesting aspect of this multi-perspective analysis was that when I “changed the lens”, not only did I notice different things, but the same phrase or sentence could be given a different value. So, for example whilst reference to the intonation of the story-teller could effect the NC/P level assessment awarded, this would not affect the DLS or T-Unit analysis at all. Similarly, whilst story-book language was valued both in the NC/P level descriptors and by contributing to longer T-Units, it was difficult to reconcile with any of the DLS exemplars.

The benefits of small-step hierarchical approaches to assessment are in the opportunities they provide for specific identification of strengths and weaknesses in children’s skills, and to be able to see progression when this may not seem obvious. An example of this is where Lauren’s DLS word level is often lower because of her tendency to omit the main subject from the sentence. Progress in this area can clearly be identified through the following three extracts “*Go park (Story 1)....Go to Rainbow Land where it is safe (Story 12)....Hippo come and saved giraffe by pulling him out (Story 19)*”. Lauren is providing much more detail in the second extract, but only identifies the main subject in the last extract. There are two main issues to discuss here and the first relates to the use of hierarchical assessments to identify future teaching for children. In this particular example, teaching could occur incidentally and as a genuine request for clarification; “Who went to the park”, followed by modelling the correct construction, “the girl went to the park”. The second issue relates to the context of the story-telling, because it is only in the third story that the preceding context does not make clear who the subject of the sentence would be. In that story Lauren has two friends

walking to meet giraffe in the woods before he is eaten by a giant spider, and she needed to make clear that it was hippo rather than zebra who saved giraffe.

There are many advantages to having precise knowledge of the language constructions and vocabulary children are able to use or not to use, because it is then possible to target teaching to develop those skills. The question then to be addressed of course is how this is done, and the emphasis that any specific teaching will be given in the curriculum. It is also important to recognize that different assessment frameworks emphasize different aspects of language development, and the learning contexts offered to the children will affect their opportunities for practising the desired skills. For example in the DLS assessments, success at 4 Word Level is dependent upon an ability to use four everyday information carrying words, for example, "Karen walk big swing". This type of phrase is much easier to elicit from a child in the contrived setting of a language group, but in everyday use there has to be a need for the child to differentiate the swing as a "big swing". In assessments of 4 Word Level at P8 however, the child is expected to also "link" the four words, and to include the language of stories in their repertoire. The example given is "The big hairy giant shouted at Finn" (DfEE, 2001:26). It can be quite difficult to elicit this type of spoken language from children working at below Level 1, because they may not see the need to provide that amount of information, unless they are simply remembering and repeating the phrase. If they are retelling the story using information from illustrations they might simply point at the hairy giant and say "He shouted at Finn", and in order for the word "hairy" to be included, there might need to be a purpose for the description, such as distinguishing between a giant who is hairy and a giant who is not.

When assessment criteria carry the importance for teachers and schools that the current NC and P Level descriptors do, any identified "gaps" in children's skills will almost inevitably be focused upon more than their "gaps" in other areas which may not be so closely scrutinized. It is of vital importance therefore that the criteria outlined in those national assessment criteria are worthy of such emphasis. I am disappointed by both the old and new P8 Level descriptors that specify the discourses in which linking four key words may occur, "communicating about own experiences or in telling familiar stories". This may mean that children are more often asked to recount their "news", or tell stories using the illustrations, which in my experience are not always the most fruitful source of rich language. I also

predict that there will be an increase in the amount of time teaching children to connect sentences using the word “because”.

I am noticing as I write this “story of progression” that I constantly need to provide detailed examples to explain an issue, but these only serve to raise further issues. Kelly has stated that:

“Accuracy in assessment is related inversely to the complexity and the sophistication of what is being assessed. And since education is a highly complex and sophisticated process, educational assessment can be regarded as measurement only in the remotest possible sense” (Kelly, 1992: 4 in Carr, 2001:11).

Whilst this “story” may be read as a story of “progression” rather than “regression”, for which I am extremely relieved, any of the assessments made of the children’s stories have been arrived at due to a combination of situational and subjective decisions. Behind each of the numbers on the tables or behind the pathways on the graphs, there is a far more complex and detailed story than these assessments can adequately represent. The all-pervasive factor of context has been returned to repeatedly in this discussion and is referred to by Perkins’ (1992) as “distributed cognition” which is described as...

“The “person plus”...the surround – the immediate physical, social and symbolic resources outside the person – participates in cognition, not just as a source of input and receiver of output, but as a vehicle for thought... the learning process becomes a “transaction”. Individual learners engage in activities and their participation changes the activities while at the same time they are changed by the activities” (Carr, 2001:8).

All curriculum and assessment frameworks contain assumptions about progression in learning and the ways in which teaching can be organized to structure progression. However actual learning for individual children is not the same as progression in curriculum content, and this may be more evident in children with learning difficulties than those without. There has been some recognition of this in the latest QCA guidelines that state:

“For pupils with learning difficulties, progress is not necessarily only movement up a hierarchical ladder of skills and knowledge. Lateral progression is also important...planning for progression for individuals or groups might focus on: skill development/ breadth of curricular content/ a range of contexts for learning/ a variety of support equipment/ a range of teaching methods/ negotiated learning/

application of skills and knowledge and understanding in new settings and strategies for independence” (QCA, 2009: 17-18).

This discussion relating to “progress” to assessment seemed particularly pertinent here because of the discussion of the NC and P levels. The next “story” in this chapter will look at the analysis of the children’s stories from a different perspective, that of analysing what enhances the quality of their particular discourse – story telling.

A STORY OF WEAVING ENCHANTMENTS.

“Stories are special creations; they strike some essential chord in the human soul. Stories are enchantments and they take some weaving” (Source unknown).

This story will look at how an “enchantment” can be evaluated, and whether it is possible to elucidate the path of developing skills and qualities that constitute the telling of a “good” story. “Story” is defined here as meaning the creation of a fictional work of art, although some of the stories in this research may bear more resemblance to personal narrative, depending upon the skills and intentions of the story-teller. Syntactic complexity, as discussed in the previous section may contribute to the quality of a story, but it is only one ingredient. The role of the reader or listener, as emphasized in the NC levels, will also continue to be a vital part of the process of “enchantment”, for there is little doubt that individuals respond to different stories or literature in different ways. The subjectivity inherent in this response however, does not preclude the possibility of identifying certain criteria that increase the likelihood of a story enchanting its listeners.

The criteria analyzed below include character, setting and predicament taken from the “Three Worlds of Narrative” and identified by Fox (1990). This “story” will firstly consider the development of characterization in the children’s stories and then their descriptions of the settings in which the stories take place. The “third world” of predicament, will be included in an analysis of narrative competence and include the whole story from opening to resolution. It will then consider where stories show a degree of creativity, defined in the guidance to using the analysis grid as “being innovative, unusual, or bringing something new into being”, and whether this creativity is sometimes a reflection of the child’s developing cognition and

language skills. Finally this story will analyze how the children deliberately use language for effect, and are starting to develop the rhetorical skills of the story-teller.

PART 1: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT.

Fox (1990) identifies four aspects of character development – description, social interaction, relationships and inner world.

Character Description

The first level of skill in character description is when characters are identified but not described. The children all identified a range of different characters across their stories. Some of these characters would occur only once, whilst others would make repeated appearances. Examples of this were the gangsters and dinosaurs in Charlie and Joshua's stories and references to family members and named friends in the girls' stories. Poppy and Emily in particular regularly occurred in each other's tales. A variety of animals appeared in all the stories, but this may have been influenced by the context in which the stories were created – the sand tray toys included many animals as did some of the stimulus stories read; for example "Dunbi the Owl" and "The Bad-Tempered Ladybird". Emily's stories were noticeable for her inclusion of fairy-tale characters, and three of her stories were retellings of known traditional tales. Tessa's characters were different to the others because she was interested in giving them actual names; for example the "*monkey called George*" and the "*tiger called Danny*". Some of these names I recognized as being those of her siblings, but I do not know if other names also related to real people.

The second level of skill is when characters are described by simple stereotyped labels, and (an additional criteria that I had included) when one or two simple adjectives are used to describe their appearance. The children started to describe at least one of the characters in their stories at this level from early on in the research. The use of these descriptions was often either to emphasize a particular quality; "*really nasty horrid ant (Charlie)... evil step-sisters (Emily)... giant snake (Joshua)*" or to differentiate one character from another, for example; "*mummy octopus and baby octopus (Poppy)... skeleton friends and evil skeleton (Joshua)... baddie dinosaur and goodie dinosaur (James)*". The adjectives most frequently used related to size differentials and qualities of goodness and badness. There was also some concern to identify when characters were magic or not. It was interesting to compare the types of characters that peopled the children's stories, and a particularly stark

comparison can be seen between the story-worlds of Emily and Joshua. Emily's characters were "*my friend Poppy, hungry ant, happy ladybird, girl snake, kind king, magic queen, friends, best friends, baby brothers and sisters, evil step-sisters, my sister's best friend*" and Joshua's were "*a small bird, nasty wasp, nasty ant, happy ladybird, giant fish, ginormous, ginormous gorilla, really strong, bad boys, giant snake, skeleton friends, bad skeleton, evil skeleton, pink good bug, the evil one, baddie dinosaur, flying bug, alien covered in black gunge (and) alien polar bears.*"

The third level of skill is when characters are described by simple global traits and are given a more detailed physical description or description of their behaviour. The story contexts were designed so that in Stories 7, 11, 15, 16 and 18, there were particular opportunities for the children to describe a character and to create a painting or picture of this character to support this. In these descriptions it was apparent that all the children were able to describe a character in more detail, but some were limited almost entirely to the colours and features they had used in their paintings; for example "*It's a crab. It's big and orange and purple and green. It's got sharp pincers*" (Tessa: Story 7)". James is also exact in describing his painting of the space-bat-angel-dragon, but starts to interweave a sense of suspense "*He's got brown skin and black finger-nails. He's got blue earrings. He's got two eyes and orange eyes. He's got a brown mouth. It's just a hole. There's one big tooth. He's got red hairs on the edges of his body and orange legs. Snow is falling around him. He's come to eat people with his big mouth and one tooth*" (James: Story 18). All of the children were able to identify behaviours of at least one of the characters they described, but such descriptions seemed to be of particular importance to Charlie and Joshua. Charlie's first dragon description is of a dragon that has "*loads of fire. He won't run out. He catches people and animals with it. He has purple sparkles and red wings so that the other dragons can see him in the night-time*" (Story 7), and Joshua's space-bat-angel-dragon is "*a blood-sucking monster that sucks blood out of bodies. He's got poisonous spikes on his body and blood fangs and eyes of flashing colours. He burns everything and eats old grannies*" (Story 18).

Three particularly interesting points arise from this analysis. The first relates to the learning contexts in which the children created their characters, and I can now see all too clearly that they favoured the boys who delighted in creating descriptions of dragons and monsters, whereas the girls may have been able to engage more imaginatively with a description of different, less "bad" characters. Tessa expresses her own preferences in spite of me

however, and the Wild Things become creatures who are *“happy with black hair and big red tummies and fat eyes”*. The second point is that it is at this level that the different learning styles of the children are beginning to reveal themselves. Poppy and Tessa’s descriptions are short and mostly literal in their description of what they can see. James is similar in this trait, although is able to construct more elaborate descriptions. Lauren, Emily, Joshua and Charlie are starting to engage more imaginatively with their created characters but at varying levels. The third and perhaps most telling point of all is that it is only Emily and Charlie who transfer these experiences and create more detailed characters in their independent story-telling. Emily does this once towards the end of the study when she creates the *“monster with five legs, one big eye and one little eye crept behind zebra to scare him”* (Story 19) and Charlie does so in three stories. The first of these is in Story 12 when he creates the enigmatic character of a polar bear who *“plays a trick on the unicorn...is a good dancer... makes the penguin die with a magic spell (and) comes back to the land to give a show”* He introduces a *“big disgusting monster with six orange eyes and big teeth and poisonous spikes and legs”* in Story 19, and by Story 21 he creates the all-encompassing dragon *“with spikes all along his back and fire coming out of his mouth. He flies over his world every day...dragons can’t swim...the dragon is too fierce. He burns them with fire and poison drips out of his mouth”*. Charlie is starting to make his characters an essential part of the plot and to refer to their characteristics throughout his stories.

Social interaction

In some of the stories told by all the children, there was no social interaction at all because the story consisted of only one character. Examples of this can be seen in Story Context 5 where the teddy flies to another planet and returns home without encountering another character; *“Teddy was at the house and he was in the bath and he found a rocket. He went to the sun and he went into the sun. It was hot and he landed. He got out of his rocket and looked around. Then he found some water. Hot water. Then he went back to his home”* (Charlie).

In some further stories there was only interaction at Level 1, that of shared activity or adult permission. This shared interaction sometimes consisted of meeting another character, but with no further developments (*“met a hedgehog and hedgehog had a ball”* (Joshua)), joint movement to a place (*“the girl and the man went up the hill”* (James)) or inferences to playing (*“lizards on the see-saw”* (Lauren)). Most stories however contained social

interaction between characters at Level 2, where interaction is via physical action and exchange and one-sided communication.

The physical interaction that did take place between characters was overwhelmingly that of conflict. This was particularly the case with the boys, but also accounted for over half of the interactions in the girls' stories (with the exception of Poppy). This physical action often constituted the climax of the story; "*Incredible Hulk fights the dinosaurs and strangles them (James)...monster whacks the pig (Emily)...Spiderman and the army came and shot all the dinosaurs (Joshua)... dragon flies down and eats the elephant (Tessa)*". Other physical interactions involved rescue from dangerous situations ("*Emily chased the witch away and looked after me (Poppy)...hippo came and saved giraffe by pulling him out (Lauren)*") and actions that are expressions of love and friendship; "*gangsters go in their house and have gangster chocolate together (James)...mummy octopus tried to get baby asleep (Poppy)...the prince came and the danced together. They falled in love (Emily)*".

All of the children use some one-way dialogue in their stories, but this is mostly limited to one or two instances over all of the stories, and again is often used to signify conflict; "*Go away you nasty wasp...the evil one's coming! (Joshua)..."One, two three" the giant said "Ha! Ha! Ha!"(Lauren)....Queen shouted "Off with her head" (Emily)*". As can be seen by the last two examples given, it was in dialogue that the influences of story language could most clearly be seen and this was also the case in some instances for Tessa, who at this level was the most prolific user of dialogue. There are echoes of stories in both "*Can you see the dark, the dark?"(Story 17)* and "*What are you doing biting me for? What have you got big eyes for?" (Story 19)*. Other examples of her dialogue however are clearly taken from everyday speech, "*I want to come! I want to go shopping!"(Story 15)*.

At Level 2 there is also some development of simple two-way dialogue. Charlie's stories contain no dialogue at this level and James, Poppy, Lauren and Joshua use it only once. Tessa uses it twice although at a very simple level ("*Can I play?" the penguins say "Yes"*) but Emily uses it in four stories. Whilst one of these constitutes a re-telling of the conversation between the wolf as grandma and Little Red Riding Hood, other examples show she is able to interweave dialogue easily within her story structure. "*Hello" said the hungry ant "have you got any food?" "Yes, I've got some ham sandwiches. Would you like to share them with me?" (Story 8)*.

The social interaction between characters in the children's stories was reflective of much of the children's play with toys. Play for Charlie, Joshua, James, (and to a lesser extent) Lauren, largely consisted of action and conflict. Their toys would be made to fight and run and jump and die, often with accompanying noises, but rarely with dialogue. The play of Poppy and Tessa was often pre-occupied with random kissing and cuddling and looking after babies, whilst Emily's play was more considered and tended to follow known scripts from stories or real-life – for example re-enacting a story or having tea at a friend's house.

Relationships between characters

When using this section of Fox's (1990) framework, I found it difficult at Levels 1 and 2 to decide if extracts of the children's stories represented social interaction or relationships between the characters. For example, much of the shared action is also representative of implicit co-operation and friendship; *"there were some fire-people, they live with the pigs (Tessa)...Emily and Poppy went on holiday in a caravan (Poppy)"*. Most references to the relationships between characters occur at Level 2 where there is "co-action or arbitrary conflict without reciprocal co-ordination of intentions". In some instances however, the relationship is clearly delineated; *"the bad guys land, the good guys have a battle and the bad guys are dead (Charlie)...she dances and she sings and she has parties with all her friends" (Emily)...two aliens come from an alien planet and they come in their helicopter and they rescue little skeleton (Joshua)...Tessa played with her and made her happy and kissed and cuddled her (Tessa)...his mate goes higher and higher (and) everyone plays on the trampoline forever (James)"*.

Team-work and mutual help (Level 3) operate at a simple level in Poppy's story when *"The octopus flies and kisses the whale and they all get on each others backs in the waves. They go back to baby octopus and kiss and cuddle each other" (Story 19)*, and also in Charlie's when *"The others come and jump over the monster and they all kick him and run away and the monster dies" (Story 19)*. Tessa's stories contain no examples of Level 3 relationships, and Poppy's only contain the one quoted above. The other children however, have all started to tell stories based around "conflicts that are based on explicit motives" rather than being just arbitrary. *"Giant broke the door....he wants to kill them...and the dad wizard come home and said "Where is my baby and my mum?" ...Dad killed the giant with a gun and beat him up and they all lived happily ever after (Lauren: Story 17)... The king gets the*

magic off the unicorn and then the unicorn dies, but the zebra doesn't because he's too fast. Then the zebra tripped the king up and got the powers back and then the unicorn was fixed and the king dies (James: Story 12)". This establishment of motives is not consistent throughout the stories however, and it is only Emily who has started to demonstrate in her stories an awareness that conflict may be troublesome or wrong; *"Come back I'm going to hit you!"...They both laughed..."Brother please can we both stop fighting" Brother said "Yes" (Story 19)".*

The over-riding emphasis on actions as definitive of relationships is perhaps indicative of the children's levels of social and emotional development. Selman (1980) suggests five levels of friendship (0 to 4), and it would appear that the children in this study were in Stage 1 where "A friend is primarily viewed as someone who gives them help or plays how they want to – but they do not perceive the responsibility of reciprocity" (Selman, 1980 in Roth (ed), 1995: 56). In every sense of the cliché "actions speak louder than words".

Inner World

In each of the previous sections, there were many examples of character development at Level 2 and a few at Level 3. In this section however, any references to the characters' inner words are minimal, mostly at Level 1 and with no children developing a character with an inner world assessed as reaching Level 3 of Fox's (1990) framework.

There are a few references to the perceptions of characters, although this is limited to sight; *"Charlie saw a man with muscles...teddy saw a cat (Poppy)".* The children only refer to other senses in the guided story-telling setting of Story 11 when they are asked to say what they can see, hear and feel at given moments. Minimal references are also made to the motivations of any characters. All of the children mention one or two motivating states, but it is Charlie and Tessa who develop this the most (although not fully) in their stories. *"The lion is getting ready to eat them ... the unicorn walks away from the land and never comes back because he doesn't like the polar bear....cheetah comes to save the rhino (Charlie)...the crab dropped Tessa because it liked her...the bird flew to knock on doors for money...animals come to play in the park...frog wants to go on the slide...the fox came to blow the house down ...cat comed to the mud and says "Can I play?" (Tessa)".*

Similarly, there are few references to the feelings of the characters, except in Story 15 where there had been several sessions prior to the story-telling based around the feelings of the characters who were being created. The feelings of the characters in those stories were all clearly linked to the events in the story and revealed a certain level of emotional literacy in all of the children. Apart from a reference to people being *“happy and singing”* in her last story, Lauren does not describe the emotions of her characters in any of her other stories. However, this is her story of *“Tiny elephant in too big a world”*, where the emotions of the character reflect the situation it is in:

“Tiny elephant meets a monster. He’s got spiky hair and a black beard. His ears have earrings that are poisonous. Tiny elephant is frightened. Then a big smiley friendly monster comes. He gives elephant a ride. They go to the land of the monsters. They are small with spiky hair. Elephant is happy. He likes the monsters”

The overall lack of motivating states and emotions in the characters of the other stories links also to the under-developed relationships within them. In the frequent conflicts that arise it is only possible to know who is on whose *“side”* by the characters’ actions in the stories. This seemed reminiscent of playground squabbles, where on one day it is possible to be on one *“side”* due to your choice of playmates and actions, and on the other side the next. There is still arbitrariness about loyalties rather than clearly delineated friendship groups. Similarly, in the stories it is not possible to guess a character’s actions by knowledge of their inner world, so the characters in the stories do not know who is going to be hostile or friendly until they act (unless warning is given by their appearance). There is randomness about these story worlds, where nothing is yet fixed and where it is difficult to predict the actions of others, possibly a reflection of the children’s perceptions of their own social worlds.

During the categorization of the children’s character descriptions, interesting questions sometimes arose from the comparisons between each of the children in each section. Some of these have already been discussed and in this section I was particularly struck by the entries for Joshua and Poppy. Joshua, whose stories are so full of action makes only three references to the inner worlds of his characters (except in Stories 15 and 18 where it was part of the guided format); *“Frog was sad...shark is hungry...(and) nasty wasp was sitting on a flower looking for food”*. I then created a story of my own around Poppy’s collation of inner world descriptions; *“teddy saw a cat...saw tree, saw sunshine, saw a feather...Emily came and looked after me...”“Do you want to play?” “Yes please”...the turtle wanted to play*

with my old friend...the man wants the roundabout...wants to go to the park...to swim .."I love you mummy!"...he was scared...kiss and cuddled each other". In this condensed form it could be interpreted that Poppy's own inner world was revealed; her love of her mother, her friendship with Emily, the importance of friends, and liking for certain activities. Poppy's list of items that teddy saw on the planet was also reminiscent of the way she often repeated things or talked about what she could see in her immediate surroundings when she was trying to make sense of an activity she had been asked to do and had not understood. They are just a list of items between which no connections have been made.

There are only two connections made across all the stories between the affective and motivational states of characters. One of these is actually in Joshua's character of little skeleton in Story 15 when *"little skeleton goes back to the house because he's scared of the fight"*. A more developed understanding of how characters' actions can be motivated by feelings is in Emily's Story 12 where:

"The kind king had a party for his friends. He invited the unicorn and the horses and the guards and all the animals. But he did not invite the snake. The snake pretended to be dead to make the king sad. The king got the duck who went "Quack!" That made him laugh. The duck and the king danced at the party"

There is an implicit understanding in this story of how not being invited can make someone upset and that they might try to do something in return that will upset the person who has excluded them. This scenario has not been fully explained by Emily, but the implications of the words "kind king" is that the snake is a "baddie", hence the reason for its exclusion. However, my response to the story as a listener was that the saddest thing of all is that the king does not even seem to notice that snake has pretended to die. Emily however, is concerned that the kind king should not be made sad, so introduces the character of the duck who can make him laugh. This story exemplifies Emily's developing empathy and understanding of how others may behave in certain situations.

PART 2: SETTING

In the majority of all the stories told by the children, the setting is either at Level 1 ("not elaborated beyond mentions of location and key objects") or even less. The general conclusion that can be reached is that even when children have created fantastic characters

the activities of these often take place in their familiar everyday world. Perhaps not surprisingly, the park and its favourite equipment feature regularly throughout the stories, although Joshua explains to his listeners that *“the swings and slide are big enough for dinosaurs”*. More surprising was the relative lack of key objects and weapons in the stories. These are mentioned, but not as prolifically as I would have expected. There are still some interesting comparisons to be made however between the different objects that become the focus of interest across each individual child’s stories. Emily for example, makes frequent references to food and home and parties. Lauren is similar in her emphasis on homes and parties, (even in Rainbow Land under the waterfall the unicorn and king *“live in a house”*) but food is replaced by Bouncy Castles as worthy of regular mention. Joshua regularly introduces different modes of transport into his stories *“... helicopter...parachute...rocket...tank... (and) taxi”*, and money is mentioned in three of Tessa’s stories, demonstrating her dawning awareness of its importance in life.

All of the children evoke more detailed setting in Stories 15 and 21, where the story-telling contexts involved drawing and describing a map of the Land of the Wild Things and creating a world out of clay. The most developed landscapes however are those created by Charlie and James. Charlie’s “Land of the Wild Things” has got *“cliffs and a cave. There is a castle made of diamonds and a king who was a bit bad and a bit good. There is a city of the army and a gun shop. There is ASDA and a cafeteria. There is a big house for a big family. A massive family like mine”*. This is a fascinating mix of fantasy and reality, where all of Charlie’s current interests and concerns are on display. He has always been interested in the army and had recently received the news that his mother was expecting another set of twin boys, which will make his a family of seven children – hence the need for a “big house”. Importantly of course even kings who live in diamond castles and the army need to go to ASDA and the cafeteria, which Charlie visits most Saturday mornings. Charlie’s last story suddenly reaches level 3 in its creation of setting, and most importantly the environment in which the story takes place is integral to the action. Times are mentioned, in that the dragon flies over his world *“every day”*, and features of the landscape play an important part in shaping the story. The volcano has *“boiling hot fire”* and it *“burns the dragon when he flies near....there is a big lake. It’s deep. The dragon will drown if he falls in.”* The gangsters *“live in caves”* and *“climb into the volcano”*. Action is all-important to Charlie’s stories so he will only spontaneously include environmental detail if it is important to this. There is a sense that the worlds he creates are worlds where he would like to be, and at the ending of the

Wild Things story his character chooses to return to the *“land of the army”*, to the world of his own creation, rather than to remain in the *“land of the real”*.

James also creates some detailed settings, but these are reliant upon the drawings and paintings he creates of these, which are carefully produced and of which he is rightly proud. James had painted an aboriginal picture of the desert before retelling the story of Dunbi the Owl (Story 2), and his recall of this is far more vivid for him than the words of the story. *“The trees burnt and it was thunder...it was cloudy. Black in the sky, white dots on the moon and the hills had white and yellow dots”*. Later in Story 10, his drawing of a boat with spikes that he had coloured in becomes the *“speedboat with multi-coloured spikes that shoot you and turn you multi-coloured”*. Moreover, because the boat belongs to the *“baddies”*, becoming multi-coloured also means turning *“bad”*. James’ reliance upon the visual image he has created can sometimes overrule his sense of the story he is telling, as for example in his description of the map of the Wild Things, where he tries to describe exactly what he can see. *“There was a sandcastle where the king lives and a bear hand and steps to the door to the bear. Red is the fire which is burning the island. There is a person jumping onto a bike and a dog kennel flying up into the sky”*. In Story 21 James speaks again with great enthusiasm about the world he has created, but this time interweaves the setting more meaningfully with the sequence of events. *“I made the world. There is a volcano with fire coming out of it...this is all rain and this is all snow. The snow and the rain are all on the bricks. The gangster hides in them...a big cloud falls from the sky and the volcano blows up the cloud and puts it back in the sky”*.

PART 3: STRUCTURE OF THE NARRATIVE.

The third *“world of narrative”* (Fox, 1990) was *“predicament”* and the Level 1 criteria was of stories where *“a single character pursues wishes and wants...resolutions and outcomes are either incoherent, or wishes are fulfilled or chronicles are concluded”* (Fox, 1990:105). The Level 2 criteria were of stories where there are *“adventures with emphasis on actions and reactions and on material safety, rewards and punishments. There is generally a single disruption of normality or ordinariness. Resolution is in terms of power endings, bedtime endings or waking from dreams”* (ibid). To help me ascertain the level of each story I used the analysis grid to record the openings, climax and endings of all the stories. These are obviously the three essential elements to a *“story”*, but what became apparent when reading

the stories that what often distinguished the stories in terms of the meaning that they conveyed to the listener were the “links” that the children made between each of the events. I therefore analyzed the stories also according to Applebee’s (1978) analysis of the six basic types of narrative structure:

Heaps: *Only described as stories out of courtesy to their authors...unrelated ideas (2 years)*

Simple Sequence: *Better organized lists with some new awareness of passage of time (2-3 years)*

Sequence: *Eventually children begin to talk about events that are organized around a central situation*

Unfocused Chains: *Each element of the story connects with the next, but the connections between the beginning and the end is tenuous and endings might be arbitrary*

Focused Chains: *Some kind of central thread, usually a consistent character (5 years)*

True Narratives: *Where there is a situation around which a story is developed, where there is also a climax of some kind and where the ending is clearly connected with the starting point.” (5-7 years) (adapted from Baldock: 2006:27).*

Below I am going to give an example of a story, or stories, that I have assessed to be examples of each type of Applebee’s structure, and also discuss the categories in which most of the children’s stories can be placed.

Heaps: There was only one example I could find that fitted into this category, and that is Poppy’s second story. *“Lizard in the sun. Spiky. The sun comes out. Eyes and eyebrows. The sunshine. Nasty pushed over”*. Clearly the statements do not link with each other in any way although they do relate to the context in which the story is being told. The point of most interest here is that whilst Poppy’s level of skill may be determined as equivalent to a child of 2 years of age, clearly this is not a story that would have been told by a child of that age. This highlights the general difficulty of comparing the skills of older children with learning difficulties with their so called younger age equivalents.

Simple Sequence: There were not many stories in this category either. The example I have given is Lauren’s first story, where the events are tenuously linked but clearly intended to be sequential. *“Car driving on the sand. Then bat come too and he bite him and the girl was driving. The snake come and it killed it”*.

Sequence: There were more examples of stories to choose from in this category, as several stories were organized around a central situation but the links were arbitrary. I have chosen two very different stories as examples:

“One day there was a Billy Goat Gruff and along came a spider. “Go away!” And then he fell down. Ouch! And they all lived happily ever after” (Emily: Story 1)

“He knocked him over. And then the by knocked him over. And then the dragon flew and hit the person on the horse. And then the arrow person shot the dragon. And this snow thing got the arrow person. And then the bird got shot and the arrow person got knocked. And then the baby got knocked over. Horse person came and knocked this person over. Whee! And then this person got knocked over and this one didn’t” (Joshua: Story 1)

Both of these stories were the first to be told by their authors, and sequences of events clearly became less arbitrary in the children’s later stories.

Unfocused chains: This is one of the two most common categories in which the children’s stories could be placed. The children start to tell their stories and are able to connect one event to the next, but are unable to retain the meaning they established at the start of the story. This is very much “stream of consciousness” thinking and clearly exemplified in Story 3 by Tessa:

“There was a girl called Tessa and a beanstalk. Tessa climbed the beanstalk. The beanstalk grew a flower. Tessa jumped off the beanstalk and cracked her head open. A lady cuddled Tessa and made her better”.

Fox (1993) refers to the psycho-analyst Lacan who proposed that there is no secure bond between a word (a signifier) and its referent (the signified):

“He regards words as marks of “separation” or “differences”, because they take their meanings not from a relationship to reality but from their contrast to other words. This suggests that linguistic structure itself is constituted by just such movements from meaning to meaning as Freud’s methodology for dream analysis uncovered in the unconscious” (Fox, 1993: 48).

This is clearly intended to reflect all communications, even the most sophisticated, and provided a different perspective for viewing the links created between events in the children's stories. I am including as an example Story 14 told by Lauren. *"The fairy's in the park. She goes down the slide. Dinosaur there. Goodie dinosaur. They go on the roundabout. Big frog hops on. "Ribbit!" Lots of dinosaurs and the shark coming. They all want to play. Fairy says "take turns!" Dad comes and fairy goes home for tea".* Not only is it quite possible to imagine this as a dream, but the comparisons and meanings attached to the words reveal a different view of Lauren's thinking than analyzing the story in terms of its narrative structure. Whilst this is only my interpretation of course, I read the introduction of the "fairy" as signalling a move from the real and imaginary which then allowed for the entrance of anthropomorphized creatures to the play park. The size of the dinosaurs necessitated the "big" frog, and the desire of everyone to play immediately signals a warning to Lauren of the need to "take turns", and for control to prevent anarchy. The arrival of "dad" of course signals the end of play and fantasy and the return to the real world of home and tea. This transgression from discussing "unfocused chains" has been inserted here because I think viewing stories as a movement from meaning to meaning rather than from event to event can provide an interestingly alternative slant, although it will not be further developed here.

Focused chains: This was the second most common category into which the children's stories were placed, and these contained both a central thread and a central character. The meaning of the whole story is therefore meaningful to the listener, although there may be an absence of plot or predicament due to under-development of the character's motivation and goals. The example I have used here is Story 8, told by Emily:

At 5 o'clock a hungry ant was trying to get some food. He was eating some sandwiches. At 7 o'clock he meets a friendly grasshopper and his friend Poppy. "Do you want to have some lunch with me?" said the ant. "Yes please" they said. At 8 o'clock he met a happy ladybird. "Hello" said the hungry ant "have you got any food?" "Yes. I've got some sandwiches. Would you like to share them with me?" The hungry ant and the happy ladybird shared the ham sandwiches"

True narrative: There was only one story that I assessed as meeting the criteria for this category and this is Charlie's last story from which several extracts have already been quoted. It is included here in its entirety:

"There is a dragon with spikes all along his back and fire coming out of his mouth. He flies over the world every day. These are mountains and this is a volcano. It has boiling hot fire. It burns the dragon when he flies near. The dragon breathes fire back. There is a big lake. It's deep. The dragon will drown if he falls in. Dragons can't swim. These gangsters live in caves. They climb into the volcano and shoot arrows at the dragon. Then they get guns, but the dragon is too fierce. He burns them with fire and poison drips out of his mouth. The gangsters go back to the caves and make friends with dinosaurs. They all fight the dragon and he gets injured and crashes into the mountain and there is fire everywhere. But the dragon doesn't die. He flies away. He can see all his land"

This story is only at the early stages of meeting the criteria for this category. However, there is a clear situation around which the story is developed; the conflict between the dragon and the inhabitants of his world. The tale is circular as the end returns to the beginning where the dragon remains undefeated and the purveyor of all his land.

The general age at which this level of narrative competency is achieved, is stated as being between 5 and 7 years. The indications are that all of the children are working at between 2 and 3 years below their chronological age (consistent with findings elsewhere). In Fox's framework the ages given for each level are 4 to 6 years for Level 1 and 5 to 10 years for level 2 (Fox, 1990:105) The children would therefore be viewed as sometimes working within the expectations for their age group. However, Fox's framework was developed around written narratives which would inevitably increase the age at which different criteria are achieved.

There are two particular issues that relate to the children's language and learning difficulties. The first is the fact that the children in this study could not independently create a written text of more than a few words. This was the main reason why I had focused upon the oral skill of story-telling. However, the majority of people would find it more difficult to spontaneously create a coherent story by speaking rather than by writing. The written text leaves a record that the story-teller can refer back to and amend. This possibility was not

available for the children in this research, and when combined with their difficulties with short-term memory and sequencing, it is easy to see the reasons for some of the incoherence in their narratives, and the disconnection between the beginnings and endings. It may also account for the reliance of some of the children on the visual props provided by the story-telling context, for example their paintings or the sand-tray toys. Perhaps what is most surprising once these possibilities have been considered is the relative quality and length of the stories that actually were created. It is also an issue to consider when planning future learning contexts. The importance of providing visual aids to support learning is already well-known, but it is also crucial to consider ways of creating visual supports that the children can use flexibly to develop their own thinking and ideas rather than simply sequencing and recalling what is already known.

Poppy is an example of a child who has difficulties with both the sequencing and recall of known stories, as her muddled start to the retelling of "Snow White" in Story 17 reveals. *"Once upon a time Snow White polished the shoes. She cleaned the floor and Snow White went to sleep. They had a bubble-bath. And that wicked witch dranked. "Mirror Mirror on the Wall".* However, previously to this Poppy had shown herself capable of making coherent links between events of her own choosing. *"Little pink rabbit is playing by herself. She is playing ball. Playing mums and dads. Then a big rabbit bounces. They play with each other. They play on the swing, on the glider and on the climbing frame. Then Emily comes along. She is smiling. They played together. Rabbit is playing tennis"* (Story 15) . This story did have visual prompts in terms of Poppy's own pictures that could be (and indeed were) interpreted differently on different occasions. The story she eventually told however, can possibly be seen as one linked from meaning to meaning. If adult-provided visual prompts are not understood by the child and dis-connected from their meaning-making process, they could possibly cause disruption to the flow of thinking rather than supporting it. By using her own pictures Poppy is able to stay within a topic of her own experience and understanding. The challenge will be how this can best be extended and new concepts introduced into Poppy's repertoire. I am not suggesting that the use of child-created visual prompts is always the best aid to thinking, but only that the purpose and use of adult-generated visual prompts, not only needs to be maintained, but also constantly evaluated in terms of their efficacy.

The second issue that arose relating to the analysis of the children's stories in terms of their structure and narrative competency is the inextricable combination of cognitive and social and emotional skills that are required for the telling of "good" stories. Cognitive skills are required to develop structure and links between events (combined with a knowledge of language use at word, sentence and text level), but social and emotional understanding and empathy are required in the development of characters and their motivations. Fox noted in retrospect that his "five levels (of character development) corresponded extremely closely to Selman's levels of "interpersonal understanding" (Selman 1980)" (Fox, 1990:104). For children who have very little empathic understanding will not even see it necessary to convey many of the details needed for a listener to understand the story, they will assume that the listener knows what they know and feels what they feel.

Another view relating to the overall structure and narrative of a story is that of Barthes (1970) and his description of the "proairetic" and "hermeneutic" codes, Fox (1993) has described them thus:

"The proairetic code constitutes the story's actions from beginning to end. The meanings of the actions in a story take their significance from the story's closure, the way it ends, so this code drives back through the narrative rather than forward...it is the implications of what is said and done that the proairetic code is intended to reveal....the hermeneutic code is the code of "mysteries" and puzzles...it is a structural device which works on the reader's desire to know the truth...employing a range of techniques to impel the reader to want to hear the rest of the story" (Fox, 1993:171).

Barthes was analyzing the writing of classic novelists rather than children's stories, but Fox analyzes one of her children's stories using a Barthes-based analysis, and revealed that it contained all the same features. In relation to the hermeneutic code she states that:

"It is a particularly interesting code to identify in the narratives of young children, since it requires the story teller to appreciate the effect of the narrating on the listener, while simultaneously composing a story, a feat which one might expect to be difficult, especially if the child's thinking is regarded as egocentric. In spite of this, all five children show considerable skill in using this code, employing quite range of techniques to impel the listener to want to hear the end of the story" (ibid).

I had not intended to analyze the stories using either of these codes (nor Applebee's categories discussed above), but the analysis of the overall structure and quality of the stories clearly required a more complex analysis than merely recording their opening, climax

and ending, as I had proposed. I have not used Barthes method of analysis in detail (although would be interested in so doing at another time), but have read the children's stories again with a view to ascertaining if the endings of the narratives could indeed be said to drive the events preceding them, and if the stories contain moments that impel the reader to continue reading though the raising of "a problem or a threat which must be resolved" (ibid: 172).

The consonance of the endings with the events that preceded them was variable, and did not necessarily correlate with the complexity or maturity of the story that was told. So for example "Go home", is an ending fully connected to the only two events that precede it in Poppy's first story *Mummy got baby. On slide. Go home*". Problems and threats to be resolved did not appear in a few of the children's stories that were simply sequences of evenly evaluated events (for example "The teddy jumps over the field and sees the cows and the lady walking the dog. The teddy goes on the rocket all the way home" (Tessa: Story 5)), and they sometimes appeared and created sense of suspense for the reader, but are never resolved or referred to again; for example the appearance of the "frog who jumped on him and wrecked everything" (James: Story 9).

I have used Joshua's Story 14 however to explore how analysis using Barthes' two connotative codes could provide an interesting engagement with the text. The story is annotated according to Barthes' symbols for the two codes. The proairetic code is ACT and the hermeneutic code is HER.

"The mum and dad went into Wonderland (ACT: the arrival of the "real life" characters at the setting of the story). *There was the queen fairy* (HER: What magical spell is the fairy going to cast? She is a queen so the spell will be powerful). *She had made a park for the animals. Everything was big* (ACT: the spell has been cast and the setting transformed for the characters that are going to arrive). *The slide and swing were big enough for dinosaurs and the Incredible Hulk fell off. He crashed in the sand* (ACT/HER? This event signals that the idyllic setting is about to change and the size of all the characters will be important). *The giant snake was the biggest of all* (HER: What is this largest and most powerful of creatures going to do?) *He came and squeezed the polar bear until he was dead* (ACT: act of aggression and power) *and the dinosaurs were hitting the snake* (ACT: physical action taken in response to act of aggression. Teamwork of animals trying to save the polar bear).

But he's huge and can even squeeze the Incredible Hulk (HER: Now what is to be done? Physical aggression will not be able to overcome the snake). *They all drink a potion and get small and escape.* (ACT: action that resolves the problem. Magic prevails where physical strength fails. This return to normal size also signals a return to the real world of the beginning of the story with a "mum and dad"). *And the snake explodes because he's been greedy* (ACT: a further event that resolves the sense of danger in the story. Barthes would also have annotated the text here as revealing a cultural code, whereby greediness as seen as wrong and deserving of consequences).

Alongside the analyses of the stories at a whole-text level, there was however also some benefit in focusing on openings, predicaments and endings in their own right. The openings of the majority of the stories either introduce the main character (*"Unicorn with a golden mane. He makes magic"* (Poppy)) or they place the character in the setting of the story (*"Tim and Dominic going on a trip to Monkey Zoo"* (Tessa)). Emily is the only child who makes use of story-book language to open some of her stories (*"One day along came a Billy Goat Gruff"*) and also has this biblical opening to her creation story *"It was dark. Jesus made the world"* (Story 21). This last story did lead to more mythical story openings from some of the other children also, possibly because they recognized that it was supposed to be a story that took place in the past. *"A long time ago I made the world"* (James)... *A long long time ago I made fire* (Lauren)".

Predicaments in the stories were predominantly ones of conflict or the arrival of a "bad" character – with the exception of Poppy's stories. The majority of these consisted of a sequence of events involving playing with friends or other "happy" events. Even in Story 15, where the context explicitly encouraged the arrival of a conflict, the worst Poppy could include in her story was *"the big rabbit bounces"*. Tessa possibly included the widest variety of predicaments in her stories including *"cracked my head open....ladybird was angry and shouting at mummy ladybird... (Rooster was begin lured by a trap) "Come to me little bird"...we were knocking on doors for money...dragon flies down...monster is angry...fox came to blow the house down"*. The predicaments in the boys stories invariably consisted of some form of conflict, the results of these conflicts were not always predictable however.

The ending of the stories were not always the same as the resolution of the predicament. An example of this is Lauren's story where *"at 9 o'clock the monster comes to the party, but the*

police come to get him. The nice ant goes home up a hill. He has a cup of tea and goes to sleep. At 10 o'clock the dragonfly dies because he gets poisoned by the ant" (Story 8). It was noticeable that all the children, even at the beginning of the research, had an understanding about the importance of a story having a definite ending. Tessa underlines this by her use of "Amen" as a completion of events even if there has been no clear resolution. The story endings seemed designed to have one of four possible purposes. The first was the traditional happy ending, and this often involved either a return to the safety of home or playing together. *"They go and have tea at Poppy's house with her mummy (Emily)....they played "Ring-a-ring-a-roses" and "Farmer's in his Den" (Poppy).* The second was the happy resolution of conflict, the "goodies" overcoming the "baddies" scenario. *"Spiderman and the army come and shoot all the dinosaurs. They are dead and there is blood. Spiderman and the Army are goodies (Joshua)"* The third purpose is possibly to shock the listener, for the ending is similar to the previous one, but this time it is the "baddies" who prevail. *"The alien got back in his rocket and flew back to his planet to destroy Earth and the taxi. He used the special laser to destroy it all" (James).* The fourth purpose is an ending designed for deliberate effect on the listeners, an aside following the true resolution of the story *"Then he went back into his rocket and he flew off the planet and went back home. But the rocket ran out of fire and he fell off but he had a parachute (Joshua)."*

It was noticeable that "happy endings" in terms of either resolution or "good" overcoming "bad" were the most prevalent type of ending, even amongst the boys, who were more experimental with "twists in the tale", or with the "baddies" becoming the victors.

PART 4: CREATIVITY.

On the guidance to using the analysis grid, I have defined creativity as "being innovative, unusual or bringing something new into being". At a certain level of course, each of the stories that the children told was creative because something new had been brought into being. Even the stories that were re-tellings of known tales were subtly altered by the children. For example the insertion of dialogue in James' retelling of "Whatever Next?" *"Would you like a picnic?" "That's a great idea!" said owl"*, and Emily's own slant on what grandma may have said to the wolf, believing him to be her granddaughter *"Open the latch my darling!"*

Most noticeable about the majority of stories told by the children however, was the fact that they were not re-tellings. Even if the story-telling context had been developed around a particular story these were often not reflected in the children's own tales, possibly with the exception of the inclusion of a key character or event. This lack of retelling may have simply been due to the children's poor recall, but even Emily who was clearly skilled at this, only used re-telling of known stories three times. It may also have reflected the children's general difficulties with transferring learning from one situation to another. They may simply not have connected the story they had been working with, with the activity of story-telling. However, it may also have been that when given a choice the children chose to tell stories about things that were most relevant to them at the time.

Each of the stories was therefore unique, but the degree of innovativeness and impact upon listeners varied. Creativity at its most basic could be seen in unusual groupings of characters in one story, or stories that had unusual characters in everyday settings; for example gangsters playing football or dinosaurs and sharks in a play-park. The creation of unusual characters was one of the more common features of all the children; for example the disco-dancing spider, rainbow-man who smiles a lot, big jelly monster and the ghost with dirty teeth. The more detailed descriptions of characters mostly arose when the children had already created these as paintings or pictures, and interestingly some of the more unusual descriptions arose when the children looked at what they had painted and described this literally. For example, when Emily is looking at her painting of the Wild Things and notices that she has forgotten to draw any teeth, so says "*He is smiling with no teeth*". If this description was heard by someone unaware of the context, it could be interpreted as intending to convey either humour or fear. However, it is probably more of an indication that Emily, at that given moment, was unable to do anything other than literally describe what she could see. It is interesting to consider therefore whether this is actually an example of creativity or its opposite; which could possibly be defined as literality.

One story-context that made literal description of the picture produced difficult, was when the children were asked to take a "line for a walk" (Story Context 4) and then decide what characters they could see in the final combination of lines and colours. The images that were produced intrigued me as they seemed to come "from nowhere". For example, Charlie's rhino building a tree house for his friend the crocodile, and Lauren's strange image

of a bird who eats the sky. Why one person would make these particular interpretations of what they can see and another person something entirely different is a rich area for speculation, but not one that I will enter into here. Poppy was the only child in the group who could not make the imaginative leap to create a character from her pattern of lines and colours. When I prompted her by talking about the autumnal colours in her painting, she made a connection with trees, and was then able to identify a particular shape in the painting and say *“that’s different...its falling”*.

Some of the individual images created by the children were strikingly creative (or so they seemed to me when I heard them). One of these was Charlie’s image of *“the lion’s tummy...all wet with old people stuck inside”* (Story 10). He had clearly intended to shock me (and succeeded), and the image was much appreciated by his friends. It is a startling image, and again one for which I can not easily identify the source. It was also unsettling because of “old people” being used in this gruesome manner, but maybe this was simply my interpretation. This was one of the many occasions throughout this research when I wondered where the balance should lie between my role as an unquestioning listener to the stories and as a teacher who should intervene; a dilemma that will be discussed in more depth in a later chapter. It is a dilemma that is perhaps no different to the controversies that rage throughout the adult world of art with different views of what creations are in “bad taste” and which are morally acceptable. It is often implied in educational settings that “creativity” is a positive thing per se, but this one small incident raised the question for me of whether in fact we only celebrate creativity that concurs with our own sensibilities; and indeed if that is how it should be - or not. Other images did not cause such turmoil however; for example Emily’s poignant description of loneliness where *“tiny pig was very small. He was playing ring-a-ring-a-roses with nobody”* (Story 15), and Lauren’s fusion of fantasy and reality when the ant puts on his six pairs of shoes to go to a party.

Another aspect of creativity was when the children told stories that conveyed ideas that differed to the group-thinking at the time. One example of this was in Story 10, where most of the children had carried over in to their own stories different degrees of the “bad-tempered-ness” of the “Bad-Tempered Ladybird”. Emily however turns this story completely around so that it becomes an exemplary tale of manners and good behaviour *“Hello” said the hungry ant “Have you got any food?” “Yes, I’ve got some sandwiches. Would you like to share them with me?”* Charlie also creates a situation in his own fairy-story (Story 17) which

is not only different to the group's perceptions of how to deal with "baddies", but also different to the orthodoxy of fairy-tales with their clear delineations of good and evil. *"The rhino saved the man and the man turned good"*. Charlie's creativity points to an alternative way of behaving when faced with evil - extending goodness. The ability and confidence to express ideas that are different from those to the group are essential pre-requisites to all truly creative solutions, and it may be that such confidence is more easily developed in the metaphorical world of storytelling.

Some of the creativity in the stories does seem to be related to the children's difficulties with language, and one particular example of this is Poppy's *"wake-up hopper"* who meets her *"sleepy ladybird"*. Poppy is clearly making connections between waking up and sleeping and cannot remember the word for grasshopper. The result of this however is a much more interesting creation than a grass-hopper would have been. Poppy is later eager to display her developing understanding of the differences and similarities between unicorns and horses. *"Unicorn with a golden mane. He makes magic. He can ride. Gallop like a horse "Giddy-up!" (Story 11)*. This particular fusion of the real and the imaginary creates an interesting start to the story and moves away briefly from the usual themes in Poppy's stories. She is also able to sustain the theme of magic even when the characters play ball which the unicorn makes *"disappear like magic"*.

Tessa significantly alters the story of the "Three Little Pigs" in Story 17 and there is an interesting fusion between what I interpret as being deliberate creativity and features that are symptomatic of her particular language and learning difficulties.

"Once upon a time there was some fire-people. They lived with the pigs. The fox came to blow their house down. "Can you see the dark? The dark?" said the fox. He blowed. The fox ran into the house and the pig pushed him in the fire-people and they all lived happily ever after".

I think that Tessa deliberately turns the flames in the fire into the "fire-people", which is a creative image that may have been inspired by images of flames with faces that occur in some books and also at the time a particular television advertisement for gas (although I am only guessing). She always confused the words "fox" and "wolf" however and I do not think this was a deliberate change of character. The most interesting aspect is her insertion

of the phrase “Can you see the dark, the dark?” I think that Tessa could remember the usual refrain of “I’ll huff and I’ll puff”, but I can not be sure because of the inconsistency of her skills of memory and recall, and this may have been a “bad day”. If she could remember however, the alternative interpretation is that she was being deliberately creative, and with her keen sense of drama had created a phrase using other story language, designed to be scary. However, she was not able to make the narrative links to recognize that within the whole text this phrase did not make sense. It is only at this moment of writing that another explanation has occurred to me. Perhaps Tessa was making a link between the blowing and the fire-people and the fox’s threat is one of ensuing darkness when he blows the flames out.

It was sometimes possible to infer the meanings behind the words that the children used. Lauren’s description of the creature in the box in the dark, dark house (Story 11) was clearly intended to be scary (by the tone of her voice) but she lacked the vocabulary to describe this clearly. It becomes “*a green thing with ten legs*”. The number of legs is all she can think of to contribute to this intention to scare. I was not always able to infer the meaning behind the children’s communications however, and the image with which I shall finish this section is Lauren’s evocation of the peaceful world under the Space-bat-angel-dragon’s singing. It may be viewed as surreal, but is essentially a reflection of Lauren’s struggles with expression:

“It’s sunny. A lady walks the wrong way. She is on the grass. She blows a candle out on the sun. It is her birthday” (Story 18).

PART 5: THE RHETORIC OF STORY-TELLING – THE USE OF LANGUAGE FOR EFFECT.

In telling their stories, particularly (although not exclusively) to a group of their peers, all of the children demonstrated levels of awareness about the effect their words could have. The child with the least awareness appeared to be Poppy, who seemed more concerned about conveying her central theme to the group (usually friendship and playing) than in the actual words used. However, even in her stories there are some examples of words used clearly because of their perceived impact on the listener; for example the sound effect “Aaaaaagh!” and the phrase “*whizzes really, really fast*”.

The ways in which the children used their language for effect could be seen in various ways. In some instances certain nouns were clearly believed to be powerful in their own right because of the object they named. In all of the boys' stories for example, the single words "*shark...gangster...rattlesnake... Tyrannosaurus Rex...hammerhead*" signified a whole concept of glamorous danger, and including them in your story was to transfer such a quality to the story also.

The children all had less vocabulary at their command than many other children of the same age, but this did not prevent them from trying to use the words they did know in order to achieve the desired effect. Emily for example, in trying to convey a sense of aggression from the monster thinks of the most powerful verbs she knows "*he whacks the pig...and then he smacks him*". Tessa in trying to create the coming of a storm states that "*there grewed a wind*" and Charlie uses his growing knowledge of verbs to create tension when "*the man is dangling over the cliff*". James uses a simple vocabulary to convey his intended effect by using the words he knows with graphic preciseness. "*The knife was in her mouth and she pushed it back. She pushed it right back. Then the knife was stuck in her throat and blood came and then she was dead.*" It was clearly important to him that the exact details of the death were conveyed, possibly because the characters in his stories had the disconcerting habit of coming back to life. This death however was too "real" and final to be overcome. The children were all starting to use some adjectives to add effect to their language. Many of these were related either to size ("*big... massive... giant... huge... ginormous*") or the frightening characteristics of creatures ("*nasty ... horrid... disgusting ...poisonous*"). They clearly enjoyed using these however, and if one particular adjective had been used to good effect in one child's story, it would recur in the stories of the other children. For example the word "massive" can be found in the stories told by most of the children and Lauren uses Joshua's image of "poisonous earrings" in her own tale. If a member of the audience re-uses your images, then your language can surely be deemed as having an "effect". If the children could think of no other adjectives to emphasize their point then they would use superlatives and repetition to do this instead. "*A giant snake, biggest of all, he's huge.....they're much, much more massive than our polar bears (Joshua)*".

Whilst the language of stories is not widely used in the children's own stories (completely unlike the stories told by the children in Fox's (1993) research), it is sometimes used to

effect when the children borrow dialogue from the stories they have heard. *“The Queen shouted “Off with her head!” (Emily)...“What have you done?” (Tessa).* An interesting way in which a known story can influence the children’s own stories is revealed in a short tale told by Lauren after our work on “The Iron Man”.

“The man has no arms. They dropped off. He has no hair. It dropped off. He only has one eye. It dropped off. A good man comes and gives it all back and Poppy puts him all back together again.”

For the first time, Lauren is using a rhythmic story-type structure, clearly borrowed from the opening of “The Iron Man” and the last words have echoes of the “Humpty Dumpty” refrain “All the King’s Horses and all the King’s men couldn’t put Humpty together again”. Poppy however, is far more capable.

The final three ways in which language is used for effect, are devices reminiscent of oral storytelling that may well not have appeared so regularly if the children were producing their stories in written form, and certainly not if they were not presenting them to an audience. The first of these was the children’s emerging awareness of the satisfaction of making your listeners laugh. Charlie was the first to deliberately manipulate this when he had the orangutan try to eat his pencil-case in Story 5, and later when he has a tank run over him in Wonderland, he stood up and said “Ow!”, rubbing his head in true comic fashion. Tessa has a giant frog jump on her head with a loud “Ribbit!”, and Emily has her duck quacking at the King. When Poppy mentions bubble-gum in the Land of the Wild Things, she immediately warns her audience “Don’t swallow it!” She was extremely pleased by the resulting laughter, although I am not convinced whether this was meant to be funny or a serious warning, forever associated with the words bubble-gum.

Sound effects were also important in the group story-telling. They were used by all the children, but Tessa was particularly adept at this technique using a variety of familiar and created words to convey the sound she wanted. *“Ow! Purr!...Boo Hoo!...eeeeaaah!.....crrrrm.....great big CRASH!”*. Similarly all of the children used repetition of both words and ideas in many of their stories. Sometimes this may have been the only means they had at their disposal, for example the repetitious use of “and then” to connect events or James’ repetition of the words *“really, really, really fast”* because he could

think of no other way to describe the sense of great speed he wanted to convey. At other times it may have been used more deliberately for both emphasis and urgency. Indeed repetition of both ideas and events is an area that will be returned to in the next story in this chapter, as an evaluative device often used to convey feeling.

None of the children used figurative language spontaneously in their stories. When completing similes at the start of the story of the Iron Man however they were all able to recognize how similes worked and make appropriate suggestions of differing effectiveness. Three examples are:

“Taller than a massive tower....Head as big as a sea....Eyes like purple diamonds (Charlie)”.

“Taller than a bedroom... Head as big as window...Eyes like blue shiny stars (Tessa)”.

“Taller than a King Kong....Head as big as a playground... Eyes like red lights (Poppy).”

PART 6: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON THE EVALUATION OF “ENCHANTMENTS”.

The starting point for this evaluation was the use of Fox’s (1990) “Three Worlds of Narrative”. The criteria given for each level were too wide to give a clear picture of progression through “levels”, and each stage was in any case expected to take place over two to three years. The different aspects of character development were particularly valuable however in identifying the strengths and weaknesses in the character descriptions of the children. The emphasis upon the inner worlds of the characters and their social interactions also highlighted the dual importance of both cognitive and social and emotional development in children to enable them to become skilled story-tellers. The framework used here could be a valuable conferencing tool when working alongside children to develop the depth and impact of their stories.

The “world” of “predicament” was supported in the analysis grid by recording the opening, climax and endings of each story. In the final analysis however, I found it useful to support this with the categorization of the children’s stories using Applebee’s six stages of story-telling. This categorization revealed differences in the narrative competence of the children which affected the meanings they were able to convey coherently to their listeners. I was then interested to analyze the stories in terms of the way they could move from meaning to

meaning for the child, sometimes with a central thread and sometimes without. This in turn affected the consonance of the end with the beginning. I then trialed a form of analysis developed by Bathes (1970) and used by Fox (1993) with two of his connotative codes – the proairetic and the hermeneutic. On the story analyzed, different meanings could be revealed by looking at the story from this perspective, including the way in which the storyteller developed suspense intended to keep the listener listening. I recognized that this would be a form of analysis I would incorporate more fully in the development of a new multi-perspective analysis grid.

Finally I evaluated the creativity and rhetorical skills displayed by the children in the telling of their stories, and it was apparent that each of the children was aware of the power of language to have an effect on their listeners. This analysis also revealed the ways in which the stories revealed both the growing competencies and the difficulties the children were experiencing with the development of cognition and language.

The analyses in this story are more open to interpretation than those used in the previous “Story of Progression”, but this open-ness itself provides the opportunity for dialogues to be developed with the children; dialogues of meaning as well as of competency.

A STORY OF INFORMED HEARTS.

“One must know the word of reason and reason must be guided by an informed heart. Who better to inform our hearts than our storytellers” (Bettelheim, 1960: viii).

“Emotion and cognition are interdependent. Feeling without understanding is blind and understanding without feeling is empty” (Che Kan Leong in Benton and Fox, 1985:13.)

If the stories we hear enable us to recognize our own emotions and explore our inner concerns, then it may be inferred that the stories we tell will reflect these also. However, this “story” will be entering a field of evaluation that is open to ever-widening interpretation, and it will be important to be cautious in any conclusions made. Indeed, just as some aspects of the creativity discussed in the previous story may actually have been a result of the children’s learning and language difficulties, so too might some of the story material that could otherwise be interpreted as reflective of their emotional circumstances. It is

nevertheless always important to remember “metaphorical capacity of language to represent double, disguised meanings” (Fox, 1993:32).

However skilled the use of language, stories are unlikely to appeal to us unless they also resonate at a deeper emotional level and it was Labov (1972) who first focused on the appeal of stories to our emotions. “Fear, danger, excitement and pleasure are at the heart of what makes a story worth listening to” (ibid: 27). Part of the rhetoric of story telling, of using language for effect, is in the quality of the emotions conveyed. “Skilled narrators make the story powerful by their evaluative techniques” (ibid: 74).

The first part of this story will look at the emotional aspects of the children’s storytelling in this research. This will be done through the collation and analysis of both the range of emotions expressed and the evaluative devices used by the children. The use of evaluative devices will also be compared to those of earlier studies. The second part will interpret what could be the main themes of the stories, both collectively and individually, and what such interpretations may teach us about the social and emotional concerns of the children.

PART 1: THE EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF STORYTELLING.

THE RANGE OF EMOTIONS (See Appendix 7)

The range of emotions expressed by the children in their stories was deduced by interpreting different parts of speech. The first, and most straightforward of these, was if the children used adjectives or adverbs that labelled one type of emotion; for example when Poppy describes the “*happy ladybird*” (Story 8) or when Joshua says that “little skeleton is sad” (Story 15). However, there were few direct references to emotions and these were more often expressed through the actions or dialogue of the characters. In some instances they were easy to interpret – for example when Emily “*banged the table really hard*” (Story 20) conveying anger, or when Tessa says “I’m sorry mummy, I love you” at the end of her visit to the Land of the Wild Things (Story 16) expressing both love and guilt.

The actions and dialogue of the characters however were more open to multiple interpretations, linked as they were to the “inner world” and motivations of the characters. It was often not possible to determine for example, if a character’s actions were motivated by fear, anger, dislike or even hatred. One example of this is Joshua’s story of the pink bug

where “*The baddie eated the pink bug then the spider came and pushed the baddie dinosaur and scratched him*” (Story 19). Does the “baddie” eat his enemies out of fear, hatred or just dislike, and does he feel any anger towards them? It is likely of course that Joshua would not have been clear about this himself, but if I had questioned this he would probably have been able to make an on-the-spot decision. It would have been interesting to know if this would have then affected the way in which he told the rest of the story.

There are few direct references to happiness, but this emotion seems to be almost synonymous with friendship or family love in the stories told. It is for this reason that I have included friendship as an emotional category because the tales of friendship had a different emotional resonance to the tales of conflict. Since the children made so few direct references to emotions it was also important to link their actual words spoken with the intensity of feeling expressed in their telling and dramatizations (See Row 24 in the analysis grid).

The emotions that I looked for when analyzing the stories were: happiness, sadness, anger/dislike, fear, love, friendship, hate, physical discomfort, physical comfort, courage, anxiety and guilt. I had not originally included dislike, but many of the actions of conflict did not seem to fit into the categories of anger or hatred because they were not accompanied by the necessary intensity, either in the language used or the telling of the tale. Lauren’s description of the giant and actions of the father seemed to warrant the interpretation of a story conveying both anger and hatred. “*The giant slammed the door and broke the door. He want to kill them Dad killed the giant with a gun and beat him up...a giant never came ever again*” (Story 17). In comparison however the list of violent actions in Joshua’s sand-tray story lack a similar emotional intensity and have been interpreted as motivated by nothing stronger than dislike and justified by membership of “goodie” and “baddie” groups. “*The dinosaurs are fighting the lions, and the tigers. The dinosaurs are winning. Spiderman and the army come and shoot all the dinosaurs. They are dead and there is blood. Spiderman and the army are goodies*” (Story 9).

The tables below summarize the analysis tables in Appendix 7:

Table 4.9: Summary of emotional range scores and number of emotions conveyed by each child

Name	Highest range score for a single story	Total range score across all stories	Number of different emotions conveyed across all stories
James	3	25	8
Joshua	5	33	8
Lauren	5	29	7
Tessa	5	43	9
Poppy	4	25	8
Emily	5	39	8
Charlie	3	27	6

Table 4.10: Number of references to each emotion across all stories by individual children

Name	Happiness	Sadness	Anger/ Dislike	Friendship	Love	Hate	Guilt	Fear	Courage	Physical discomfort
James	3	2	8	6	0	1	0	2	1	2
Joshua	3	3	14	2	0	1	0	9	0	1
Lauren	5	1	9	8	1	1	0	4	0	0
Tessa	10	5	6	8	6	1	2	4	0	1
Poppy	4	1	2	7	4	1	0	3	0	3
Emily	10	3	7	8	3	0	1	4	0	3
Charlie	4	0	10	5	0	0	1	5	0	2

There were no references in any of the stories to the emotions of anxiety or physical comfort.

Table 4.11: Comparison of the total of “positive” and “negative” emotions conveyed in all stories told by individual children

Name	Positive scores: Friendship/ happiness/ love/ physical comfort	Negative scores: sadness/ anger/ physical discomfort/ hate
James	9	15
Joshua	11	28
Lauren	14	15
Tessa	24	17
Poppy	15	10
Emily	21	17
Charlie	9	17

There are some scores that stand out as warranting discussion from these summary tables. The first is the perhaps unsurprising finding that the stories do not convey many of the more complex emotions such as guilt, courage or anxiety. The most prevalent emotions expressed are friendship (44 times) and anger/ dislike (56 times) with happiness also conveyed 39 times. The other interesting findings were the comparisons between individual children and between the girls and the boys. Tessa and Emily are notable for their many references to happiness and friendship, whilst Joshua and Charlie (the twins) are notable for their equally high number of references to anger or dislike. In the final table it is clear that the boys all have a higher score of negative emotions to positive ones and the girls (with the exception of Lauren) have a higher score of positive to negative emotions. Lauren's scores are almost equal, and it is interesting that in this area she is the child half-way between the groups, just I had also noted that she was the child who was the most easily able to slip between the two friendship groups based on gender.

If I had not included interpretations of the emotions conveyed in the action and dialogue of the stories there would have been few direct references to emotions (just as the references to characters' inner worlds was minimal). The way in which the stories were told however and the effect they often had on their listeners belied any evaluation of them as lacking in emotion. The analysis of the evaluative devices used was therefore a useful way of interpreting the emotional resonance of the stories told.

THE USE OF EVALUATIVE DEVICES.

“Labov related emotions to a fundamental category of narrative structure...he terms evaluations as the aspect of storytelling which reveals the narrators attitudes and feelings about the events narrated. For Labov, stories which lack the evaluative elements are purely referential lists of happenings” (Fox, 1993:27).

Labov (1972) identified four categories of evaluative device; intensifiers, comparators, correlatives and explicatives. As outlined in Chapter 3 and in Appendix 4 however, I have used the evaluative devices outlined in the study by Peterson and McCabe (2001), with the additional inclusion of all Labov's comparators as well as negation. The studies of Fox and Peterson and McCabe revealed some interesting findings about the use of evaluative devices in the stories that the children in their studies told, and I wanted to compare these with the stories told by the children in this research.

A brief summary of the findings of Peterson and McCabe that were of most interest to this research was that the frequency of use of evaluative devices was found to increase “substantially” with age, and younger children were more likely to use repetition. References to speech, hedges and references to cognitive states were particularly found to relate to increased maturity. “All three of these devices require some degree of cognitive sophistication, because one needs to encode processes of thinking per se to represent uncertainty and cognition” (Peterson and McCabe, 2001:809). The use of intensifiers and qualifiers was related to increased knowledge of adjectives and adverbs. The main focus for this research was actually to look at gender differences in the use of evaluative devices and it concluded that “this study for the most part documented gender similarity, not gender difference... (although) girls may acquire earlier competence at using evaluative forms than boys” (ibid).

Fox’s young children however were found to tell highly evaluated stories which she explains by their literary background and the mode of discourse:

“My children’s stories usually have a few straightforward declarative sentences saying what happened and a great deal of elaboration which is either orientation or evaluation. I think there is a two-fold explanation for this. One is that the model for the children’s story-telling was very obviously literary; the authors for children usually make them interesting and colourful by a large range of rhetorical devices. Secondly, the children here are using the genre of fantasy stories rather than narratives of personal experience” (Fox, 1993:97).

Fox’s findings cannot be directly compared to the findings in this research because of the different categories of evaluative device she uses for analysis. However, the similarities or differences will still be interesting to compare. Over 24 stories the children in her research used the following total number of evaluative device: Sundari 188, Josh 116, Justine 83, Jimmy 36 and Robert 101.

“For Sundari, Josh and Justine comparators are more frequently used than intensifiers, for Jimmy they are equally used and for Robert there are only slightly fewer comparators than intensifiers” (ibid: 98).

I categorized the evaluative devices used by the children under Peterson and McCabe’s categories (Appendix 7), and the results for the numbers of stories (from a possible total of 145) using each type of evaluative device are summarized below:

Table 4.12: Total number of each evaluative device used in the 145 stories.

Emotional states or frames of mind/ emotion-signalling actions (1)	34
Cognitive and perceptual states (2)	4
Speech of participants (3)	28
Hedges (4)	0
Intensifiers, gratuitous terms or qualifiers (5)	20
Onomatopoeia or sound effects (6)	16
Negation and other comparators (7)	33 (25 negation)
Repetition of words (8)	13
Idea repetition (9)	21

Table 4.13: Total number of each type of evaluative device used by the individual children in their stories.

Evaluative Device	Emotion-signalling actions/ frames of mind	Cognitive and perceptual states	Speech of participants	Hedges	Intensifiers, gratuitous terms or qualifiers	Onomatopoeia or sound effects	Negotiation and other comparators	Repetition of words	Idea repetition	Total
Charlie	3	2	0	0	4	1	5	3	5	23
Emily	8	1	8	0	6	2	6	1	4	36
Poppy	5	0	3	0	2	1	5	0	5	21
Joshua	4	0	2	0	2	2	4	2	2	18
Tessa	7	0	8	0	5	5	3	2	1	31
Lauren	3	0	3	0	0	3	3	1	3	16
James	3	1	3	0	2	2	7	4	0	22

The most immediate comparison with Fox's findings is that the children in this research used far fewer evaluative devices in their stories and this is despite the age differential that may have mitigated the differences in their language and cognitive abilities. Emily however does use the same number as Jimmy, who is not the youngest child at 4:9, so just 2 years younger than Emily. The difference between the two research findings can be explained by two possibilities. The first is that the children in my research do not have either the linguistic, or more importantly, the social cognition skills to use evaluative devices effectively. The second is that they do not have the rich literary background of the children in Fox's study. This in itself could have a two-fold effect. Firstly, when the children in this research used dialogue, it was frequently refrains from known stories. Similarly Lauren's use of repetition came from her experience of that device in "The Iron Man". If the children had a richer source of story material from which to draw (and which they could remember), this would possibly have increased their use of evaluative devices. It is interesting to note that Emily used the highest number and was well-versed in fairy stories and traditional tales. Secondly, it has already been suggested that listening to stories is a powerful way of "informing hearts", and the children in this study did not all share regular sharing of stories at home.

Peterson and Biggs had found that hedges and cognitive states of mind were the least used devices in the stories of younger children and this is clearly replicated here. They also put speech in that category, but because their children were telling personal narratives they would not have been able to import dialogue from other stories, as the children in this research did. They also found that repetition was the most frequently used device in younger children, and if the entries under word and idea repetition are combined then this is the largest category here also. However, emotion-signalling actions and negations and other comparators are also close in number.

I found it useful to combine both types of repetition because I was not always sure which category a particular phrase belonged to. I tended to categorize a phrase as repetition of words if this repetition occurred in close proximity; "*I struggled and struggled...Snip! Snip! Snip!...angry spider with very angry eyes*", and as idea repetition if similar words occurred throughout a story. For example, the seven references to play or playing in Poppy's Story 9 or the references to "*he's gonna hit me now...he's gonna get hit*" (Charlie: Story 2). From this small number of examples, a few interesting issues already arise. The first is the difficulty that always occurs when we try to categorize anything that is open to alternative

interpretations. I could for example have placed “angry spider with very angry eyes” into the category of “intensifier”. The second is the issue of whether the use of some of these evaluative devices was representative of emotional intensity in the children, of their rhetorical skills or of the limited language skills they had at their disposal. If I use some of the phrases above as examples, then it is possible to interpret that Tessa’s use of “Snip! Snip! Snip!” was essentially rhetorical, designed to create both delicious fear and laughter in her listeners. Poppy’s repeated references to play however are not particularly interesting to the listener (an adult anyway), but are barely disguised references to her own social and emotional pre-occupations. Whilst Charlie was interested in hitting and displays of dominance, I would tend to interpret his repetitions in Story 2, as more reflective of his difficulties with using a more varied expressive language. Different interpretations could be made for each phrase however and indeed for every phrase that the children uttered in the telling of their stories.

The relatively high number of emotion signalling actions as evaluative devices may have been because many of the stories in this research did move from action to action with little distraction or evaluation. It is interesting to note that of the 34 actions recorded, 22 of these appeared to signal anger (or conflict which may not necessarily be the same). For example; *“He was swearing...smacking and punching...stabbed the witch hard...I struggled and kicked”*. Four of the actions could be interpreted as signalling fear; *“little skeleton goes back to his house because he’s scared...Emily ran away”*, four to signal love or liking; *“They danced together (and) falled in love...hippo saved giraffe...kissed and cuddled”* and four happiness; *“Emily is smiling...Tessa is happy....everyone laughs”*.

The use of negations and other comparators was the third most used of the evaluative devices. I included all comparators because of Fox’s persuasive elucidation of their evaluative import:

“(Comparators) are dealing with a level of expected and unrealized events which go beyond basic narrative sequence” (Labov, 1972:383). Comparators include not only direct comparisons... but also modals, questions, negatives, futures and imperatives. Comparators take us beyond the actual story events, and point towards what is implied, possible but as yet unrealized. For me this is an important insight, for it suggests that the generating centre of narrative (Labov’s term) is about far more than “what happened” and is linked to the multi-layered metaphorical meanings of stories” (Fox, 1993:98).

In the event however, 25 of the 33 comparators used were negations. However, there would actually have been 8 more questions if I had not categorized them as speech. The use of a question of course always carries an emotional risk, since there is always the possibility of refusal to such questions as *“Can I play?...Can I go to the moon?...Have you any food?”* and the need to admit wrong-doing in the questions *“What are you doing?...What are you doing biting me for?”*. The other most common comparator other than negation was the use of the modal verb “might”. *“He might watch telly...he might eat you...he might jump on your head”*. The consideration of alternative possibilities, and indeed comprehension of events that might happen in the future is challenging for children who have difficulties with social cognition, which may be why references to possible futures are rarely mentioned. The stories reflect the definiteness of the present similar to the lives and play of the children.

The use of negations can be interpreted as the children’s attempt at definitions and explanations by stating what is not rather than what is. There seemed to be four main purposes for the use of negation. The first of these was to establish differentials between characters and events. *This person got knocked over. This one doesn’t.... the animals don’t bite (but others do)...he don’t fight (but others do)...the unicorn dies but the zebra doesn’t because he’s too fast”*. A second purpose seemed concerned with establishing the reality of a fantasy world that is different to our own, and where different rules might apply. Worlds where *“snow not melt...dragons can’t swim....alien live on the fire lake but don’t get burnt”* and against all conventions adults play in the park. *“The man went on it and it’s not his age”*. A third purpose gives emotional emphasis to situations where issues of friendship and acceptance are at stake. *“He did not invite the snake....Cinderella didn’t have an invitation...bat fell and couldn’t fly anymore...lizard doesn’t like the monster”*. The final purpose seems to give emphasis to the finality of a situation, a theme in the children’s stories that will be returned to later, as they explore when death or separation or safety are final or if they can be reversed. *“A giant never came ever again... and they don’t change back again...the knights never come back...walks away and never comes back”*.

Only three children referred to the cognitive states of their characters in four separate instances: *“Charlie thought he was safe (James)...snake pretended to be dead to make him sad (Emily)... the lion was getting ready to eat them (Charlie)...the unicorn never came back because he didn’t like the polar bear (Charlie)*. All four of these phrases reveal something about the children’s growing awareness about how others might think and feel,

and how actions can be motivated by thoughts and feelings. They all still found it difficult however to imagine how another person might feel in a given situation. One of the guided exercises as part of the interactive story-telling during “The Iron Man” was for the children to imagine they were Hogarth when he had trapped the Iron Man in the pit, and to state how he was feeling and why. The different responses are revealing:

“Hogarth felt happy. He thought that his sister would be pleased with him (Poppy)...Hogarth felt happy. He thought I’ve trapped the Iron Man (Tessa)...Hogarth felt happy. He thought “I’m clever” (Lauren)...Hogarth felt sad. He thought the robot made me sad by looking at me (James)... Hogarth felt sad. He thought it’s not nice to bury people (Joshua)...Hogarth felt sad. He thought “I’ve trapped the Iron Man and he’s upset” (Emily)...Hogarth felt happy. He thought “I’ve got him!” (Charlie)”.

It is of course not possible to draw any conclusions about the children’s individually developing sense of empathy from this one exercise, but the differences in the responses are interesting and not always what I expected. Emily is clearly able to recognize how the Iron Man might feel in this situation, and Joshua and James unexpectedly reveal a simple understanding of guilt. Joshua relates this to rules of behaviour rather than to feelings. James’ response makes it too tempting not to draw parallels with his behaviour in school. He clearly demonstrates that he does feel sad when he has hurt someone, but cannot attribute this sadness directly to his own actions. It is because the Iron Man looked at him however, so blame is partly removed. This is also true of his actions in school; incidents are always someone else’s fault. Poppy’s evaluation of the morality of her actions may be seen to be determined by the approval of her significant others, in this instance her sister. Tessa, Lauren and Charlie have related more to the initial pride Hogarth felt at achieving what others could not, than his consideration for the Iron Man. Perhaps this is more important to them than the others- succeeding in front of the group. All of this is speculation, but indicates how the metaphorical world of story does enable children to reveal aspects of their thoughts and feelings that they might not do under the spotlight of reality. I am fairly sure that in different circumstances Tessa would give the response she thought was expected, and James would never admit to feeling sad; an admission of weakness.

Alongside recording the evaluative devices used in the stories, I also observed the intensity and appropriateness of the emotions the children themselves conveyed during the telling of

their stories, although due to the incomplete nature of the field notes these entries on the grid were only partial.

For all of the children I regularly recorded a full involvement with the story-telling and obvious enjoyment at dramatizing the emotions conveyed. This was often in an exaggerated pantomime-like form, and there was no true sense of conflict or fear. I have actually noted in both Tessa and Charlie's field-notes that at different times they were beaming as they told their stories of conflict and terror.

At other times however, the emotions shown in the story-telling and dramatizations appeared to be a closer reflection of feelings described. I remember being shocked by the relish with which Emily acted out her struggle with and subsequent kicking of the "ghost" having never before witnessed even the slightest inclination for aggression in Emily (although I knew it existed). In her first story Emily's exhortation to the spider to "Go away!" also seems to reflect her own fear of the large rubber spider she has chosen to handle, despite being somewhat nervous of it. Bravery and overcoming fears is the theme of both her tale and her sand-tray play.

Anger is also expressed without the safety and acceptability of exaggeration and humour in the two minibeast stories told by Charlie and James. I was aware that there had been an argument amongst the boys, and Charlie's creation of the "angry" wasp seemed more reflective of his own voice and actions than those of the wasp itself who proceeds to "eat honey that has dropped to the ground". On the same morning, James (whose usual storytelling expression was deadpan), tells this vicious little tale with vehemence: "*The nasty ant met a nasty grasshopper and kicked him. Then he stung him...met a nasty ant that he didn't like...so he stung him with his stinger...poison went into the ant's body and killed him*" (Story 8). Happiness and friendship were also conveyed in the telling of the stories especially when they involved playing games and kissing and cuddling. The girls partook in these with genuine happiness and friendship whilst the boys usually looked on with some disdain and embarrassment.

I did notice during the study that when the children were finding some aspect of the storytelling difficult (for example, if I had given them a format or a subject they were not sure of), their emotional expression decreased. This also sometimes happened if they were

concentrating on giving an accurate description of an artefact they had created; for example the painting of a character or the clayscape. Conversely, the children were occasionally enabled to display their emotional understanding of a situation, even when they found linguistic representation difficult. The most powerful of these instances was Poppy's second story which was to be a retelling of the story of "Dunbi the Owl" after she had acted as Dunbi in assembly. Poppy had found understanding some of the story difficult, and was completely unable to attempt a re-telling. However her final contribution of "Nasty pushed over" contained the full emotional resonance of Dunbi's cruel treatment that had so enraged the sky-god.

PART 2: THEMES ACROSS THE STORIES.

Row 27 on the analysis grid allows for an interpretation of the main theme(s) of the stories to be entered. Fox (1993) found that themes in her children's stories matched with findings of other studies (Pitcher and Prelinger, 1963 and Ames, 1966):

"Violence is a strong theme...so are birth and death, eating, fights, threatening adults (particularly witches and mothers) and animals/monsters...(the children) deal in metaphorical form with major fears such as abandonment, punishment, pain and death, the anger of parents, the jealousy of siblings, loneliness and helplessness" (Fox, 1993: 22).

This was similar to Edmiston's (2008) findings when analyzing Michael's mythic play. He defined narrative as being mythic in two inter-related ways:

"The form of a story is mythic when its landscape and population are not naturalistic and clearly separated from everyday reality. The content of a story is mythic when it inquires into questions about the realities of being human, rather than less momentous concerns" (Edmiston, 2008: 27).

I was interested to see if any of the stories told by the children in my research could be interpreted as mythic according to these criteria. One clear example was Charlie's Story 10:

"Rooster goes up to the moon. He's in a space-ship. The lion is in the jungle on the moon getting ready to eat them. The rooster calls Superman. The lion eats him. The lion's tummy is all wet with old people stuck inside. Batman comes and kicks the lion and then the lion is dead. Superman is behind there using his powers and then rooster was safe and went back

home. Then the bad guys land. The good guys come and fight the bad guys and the bad guys are dead.”

However, I found it difficult to find stories where everyday reality did not intrude into the fictional landscape at some point. The separation between the two worlds seems flimsy and easily transgressed. For example the dramatic ending to Tessa’s story of the ladybird who is struggling with the conflicting emotions of anger and love towards the “mummy ladybird”, takes place against the backdrop of a counting game:

“The ladybirds played a counting game and looked out of a window and it was snowing. At five o’clock the ladybird goes out in the snow and meets some real ants who crawl up her legs and bite her. There grewed a wind and ladybird splashed in the water and swimmmed and swimmmed but died” (Tessa: Story 8).

One of the realities of being human for all children is the conflicting emotions they feel towards other family members (including foster carers or other guardians). This conflict continues into adulthood when close family members may no longer be parents and siblings but partners and children. Such a theme may be regarded as mythical but can be explored through stories in different ways. Joshua may therefore conceive a dragon surrounding his brother in flames, whereas Emily’s exploration of a similar theme is purely domestic and outlines a clearly recognizable real-life event. *“The sister said “Come back I’m going to hit you”. He didn’t come back...”Brother can we please stop fighting?”... I love you brother” (Emily: Story 20).* Two interesting points to note in this story is that it has a full resolution, which may mean that the emotions of conflict can more easily be openly displayed. The notion of loving and hating the same person is revealed for all to see. The story is slightly removed from personal narrative however by use of the terms “brother...sister”, there are no names and thereby becomes a general as opposed to personal tale. It may be interpreted that Emily’s is a story that is mythic in its concerns but not in its form. Joshua’s brother-killing dragon however makes no reparation; perhaps this is an amoral creature that can only exist in a mythic world because he would truly be a “monster” in the everyday world. In Edmiston’s son’s Michael’s terms, this would be to create a “people scary” world rather than a “monster scary” one (Edmiston, 2008, 56).

The analysis of story themes is what Barthes (1970) refers to as the “symbolic code”:

“The symbolic code structures the larger ...ideas organized over the whole narrative. Often these themes are not relayed to the reader by the direct authorial voice, but are reflected in the myriad of happenings, descriptions, characters and so on. The reader must make the connections...central ideas emerge as antitheses, the opposition of pairs of terms. In stories told by very young children, one might expect very basic and simple oppositions – goodies and baddies for example” (Fox, 1993: 172).

When interpreting the themes that were recurring across the stories in this study, they could often be grouped according to the oppositions that occurred within them. I will therefore discuss them below under the following headings: Good versus Evil (the most prevalent theme), Life versus Death (including explorations concerning the permanence or otherwise of death), Separation (independence) versus Togetherness (being at home) and Exclusion (no friends) versus Inclusion (friendship and playing). There were some stories where a central theme could not be identified, and these were mostly at the narrative level of being a “simple sequence”; merely a list of events. In some stories also only one aspect of the oppositions is present. The meaning of these stories however, is still derived from the absence of the oppositional idea. For example in many of Poppy’s stories inclusion and playing with friends is the dominant theme, but there is no predicament of exclusion or conflict to overcome. Poppy may be using her story-telling for wish-fulfilment at the most obvious level. It may also be interpreted that as yet she is not able to explore issues of conflict and exclusion because both her emotional resilience and levels of social skills are low. The possibility of exclusion is too terrible to contemplate even in metaphorical form.

Good versus Evil

Some of the stories contained a clear conflict between identified good and evil characters and where good triumphed over evil. Examples include: *“all the baddies were dead and all the goodies were alive and they lived happily ever after (James: Story 17)...a ghost caught me and I struggled and the ghost let go (Emily: Story 6)...Spiderman and the army come and shoot all the dinosaurs. They are dead and there is blood. Spiderman and the army are goodies (Joshua: Story 9)...bad skeleton has a sword...good one chop the evil one in half and they have a disco (Joshua: Story 17)...then the bad guys land and the good guys have a battle and the bad guys are dead (Charlie: Story 10.)...the bad king wants to get the unicorn. The shark helps the unicorn get away” (Lauren: Story 12)...Dad killed the giant with a gun and beat him up (Lauren: Story 17)...Emily came and she looked after me and she chased the witch away (Poppy: Story 5)”*.

The most obvious feature of these stories is that unless the story-tellers identify them as such, there is no way of knowing who is “good” and who is “bad”, because this is not made clear by differences in the characters’ actions. So, for example, either of the skeletons in Joshua’s story could have chopped the other in half, but it is a “happy” ending because it is the “good” skeleton who has done the deed. This is further exemplified in Lauren’s story where the “dad wizard” does have a motive for his actions since the giant was threatening his family, but his actions are nevertheless overly aggressive. The phrase “beat him up” is interesting; because of course this is never used as a description of behaviour done by “good people”. Lauren may not have had the language to describe retribution, or she may believe that beating a person up is justified if a “good” person does it.

Some other stories are full of conflict, but it is not made clear who the “goodies” and who the “baddies” are, for example in Charlie’s story where a variety of characters fight for dominance with their different powers. “*Snake is the biggest...cheetah is the fastest...but the frog is magic and is very big and there’s a giant lizard dinosaur...queen takes her wand and the snake is dead*”. It may be that whoever wins will become the “good” character. James even has one of his characters express this confusion in Story 17. “*Then the woodcutter came and met the fox and then he didn’t know which one was the bad one. Then he says “I’m the good one” and he says “I’m the bad one”*”. It may be interpreted that these stories actually reflect reality. On conflicts at all levels from playgrounds to the battlefields, all people engaged in conflict behave in similar ways, with a belief that “goodness” is on their side.

Some of the stories have a “good” and “bad” theme, but in these instances it is the “bad” characters who are victorious. For example, Joshua’s story where the “*nasty wasp...stung the happy ladybird and it fell into the water dead*” (Story: 8), and the interesting story by James where “*two baddie dinosaurs...come to my world...see a goodie grasshopper. A good lion jumps...the dinosaurs jump on the lion and he gets an electric shock and dies forever. Then everyone plays on the trampoline forever*” (Story: 19). James clearly wants to emphasize the point that it is the “baddies” who have won, yet it is incongruous that their actions after victory are to “*play on the trampoline forever*”. The conflict in this story may actually be one between adult authority and a child’s desire to continue playing “forever”. Another factor in the dominance in some stories of the evil characters is the same as that

discussed in the previous section on characterization; it is simply easier to describe evil characters than good ones (especially, it may be suggested for boys). This is exemplified in Charlie's Story 15, where he gives an evocative description of *"the dragon with poisonous spikes"*, but despite his best efforts can only create a "good" character that is *"a monster (that) is orange with ice-cream in his hair"*.

Life versus Death

Death is a casual and frequent event in the stories of conflict told by the children. It even occurs as an ending in stories where there has been no previous conflict. For example, in Lauren's Story 8 the dragonfly goes to a party and comes home for a cup of tea, but then *"dies because he gets poisoned by the ant"*. Playing in the park is also finished when the *"lizards on the see-saw...land on the floor and dead"* (Lauren: Story 14). There is perhaps a developing understanding that there is finality and "ending" connected with death. In other stories however, it can be reversed as easily as it occurs. *"The bad guys shoot the starfish and he dies but the big fish saves him (James: Story 10)...then the unicorn dies but the zebra doesn't because he's too fast. Then the zebra tripped the king up and got the powers back (James: Story 12)"*. There is also a recurrence of the Red Riding Hood theme where characters can be rescued alive after being eaten by the wolf (or the lion in Charlie's Story 10). *"He chopped his tummy all up and then Little Red Riding Hood and the granny popped out (Emily: Story 9)... A wolf eating nanny for dinner...Lauren, granny and a baby being pulled out of the wolf (Lauren: Story 5)*. Lauren is also clearly making the connections here between birth and delivery from inside.

Death is not seen as an event warranting any displays of sadness, but obviously its full import is not understood. Some of the stories touch on concepts of immortality, and James says that *"if you eat the apple it makes you dead and then it makes you live in Heaven (Story: 17)*. Death may not be so final after all; the central theme of many great religious stories. Charlie however explores immortality from a different viewpoint, by creating a character who can never be killed. *"They all fight the dragon and he gets injured and crashes into the mountain...but the dragon doesn't die (Story: 21)*.

Separation (independence) versus Togetherness (at home)

One of the more common endings in the children's stories is when the main characters "go home". They go away to have adventures, but there is always home to return to. James

comes back down the beanstalk to *“live with his mum alone”* (Story 3). *“Rooster is on a motorbike. He goes under the sea...he goes to have tea at Poppy’s house with her mummy (Emily: Story 10)...Rooster stays on (local place name) and sees mummy. He cuddles mummy and kisses her (Lauren: Story 10)...Baby Lizard is sad. He doesn’t like the monster...Baby Lizard is happy with his mummy and daddy (Tessa: Story 15)...They jump on each other’s backs in the waves...they go back to baby octopus and kiss and cuddle each other (Poppy: Story 19).* It is perhaps significant that there are more examples of this theme in the stories of the girls than of the boys.

Exclusion (no friends) versus Inclusion (friends and playing).

Playing occupies as many of the girls stories as fighting does in the boys, although in fact they may be reflections of similar concerns. Play-fighting of one type or another is actually the “play” of many boys, whilst for the girls different games occupy their time. However, the fighting itself, and being on the “right” side may be the way in which boys become included. Charlie explores this in some of his stories including Stories 9 and 19: *“Knights are fighting. They were biting...these two and giraffe and horse were all comed and were friends...the others come (to help the goodie dinosaur) and jump over the monster and they all kick him and run away”*. Friendship is also developed by being on a team, and in the case of the boys in this study, a football team. *“The first gangster’s team won and they all played football again”* (Charlie: Story 20).

Emily is the first to explore the possibility of exclusion from the friendship group when the king *“invited the unicorn and the horses and the guards...but he did not invite the snake”* (Story 12). Being invited and “chosen” is so important that it is better to be taken by a “baddie” than to be left behind. *“He picks all the skeletons up except for little skeleton. Little skeleton is sad...Two aliens come...and they rescue little skeleton and put him in their planet”* (Charlie: Story 15).

Exploring issues of friendship and ways to behave towards one another are one area where the children could be viewed as exploring and developing ethical identities. This concept was posited by Edmiston when he said that “myths have an ethical function when they suggest how in future we ought to react to people like Jekyll and Hyde” (Edmiston, 2008: 56). This is in contrast to the findings of Wardetsky’s (1990) study of fairy stories told by children:

“The fairy tales told demonstrate the power of the genre and its ability to survive among child story-tellers in the twentieth century.... (also) that they reveal not the slightest glimmering of an effort to elaborate questions of social justice, morality, the relationship between good and evil, or power as a social category...the children’s tales seemed to serve their need for their own imagined heroism so that they may rid themselves of feelings of inferiority” (Wardetsky, 1990: 172).

The stories told by the children in this study seem to offer examples of both conclusions. Some of them are clearly tales of imagined heroism; for example being in the winning football team, fighting off monsters and being the leader of games and playing. There are however also some examples of ways in which the children are exploring ways of behaving in certain situations. Accepting others into play is seen as important way to behave. *“The giant cat comed to the mud and says “Can I play?” and the penguins say “Yes!” (Tessa: Story 21).* In an earlier story Tessa’s story involves a group of friends being unkind to another who is “different”, but they then say sorry and include the spider into their group. *“Spider is scary and big...big whale (and friends) goes to the spider’s house. He messes up everything...spider is sad and cross...they all say sorry to the spider...I’ll cuddle you then”...and they all lived happily every after*. Another ethical decision made by some of the characters in the stories is to go and help their friends when they are in trouble. *“Hippo came and saved giraffe by pulling him out (of the monster’s mouth) ... giraffe, hippo and zebra stayed in the woods. They were all friends” (Story: 19).*

Another ethical issue that was explored was the way in which “good” characters might behave when confronted by “bad” characters. In many cases, this was indeed to behave in exactly the same way and fight. However, there were a few examples of different and more complex thinking. In Story 8 when James has rooster captured by the “bad guys” he refuses to join them and fight. *“The bad guys turned rooster into one of the bad guys and then he don’t fight so they make him do it. There is a button on his hand and he presses it and goes back to being good”*. Rooster has magical help to avoid having to choose between behaving like the baddies or feeling their wrath. In real-life this would not be so easy, but there are indications that James is exploring ways to behave in such a situation. In Story 12, Charlie also has his character turn his back on the polar bear who has randomly killed the penguin. *“The unicorn walks away from the land and never comes back because he doesn’t like the polar bear”*. In a later story, Charlie introduced an important theme into the class discussions about how to treat people who are unkind to us. *“The (bad) man was dangling*

from the rocks. The rhino saved him and the man turned good and then the man and the cheetah and the rhino lived happily ever after". Demonstrating kindness and goodness can make someone become "good", and stop them hurting you; it may not always be necessary to fight. Emily had indeed implicitly gentled the wolf in one of her early stories. "*At the top of the beanstalk Emily met a wolf. Emily played with the wolf*" (Story: 3). Playing and fighting, inclusion and exclusion are all-important themes for the children and will be explored further in the following "story", which looks at their story-telling as a social activity taking place amongst a group of peers.

A STORY OF SOCIAL AND ETHICAL IDENTITY.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION.

This story looks at the way in which the children develop their sense of a social identity through the telling of their stories, and in particular by being part of a story-telling community. Oral story-telling remains an important element of community membership in some cultures today, and whilst this practice has declined amongst the white British group represented by the children in this study, language still remains a child's "passport into culture" (Engel, 1995:47).

"We all know the feelings of being a newcomer to a particular group....learning what is considered funny, what people want to hear and talk about, what level of detail to include and privacy to respect in your stories is part of becoming a member of the group. And what richer source of information about a group is there than the stories the people around you tell about their experiences" (ibid).

The development of identity is two-fold; the children learn about the culture in which they are living and explore their role within it, but at the same time interact with that culture so that it changes over time. Edmiston, 2008 sees this as an essential characteristic not only of story-telling but of its close companion play. It is when we view play and story-telling in this light that both their importance and the possible threat they can pose to the established "order" are revealed:

"Over time, our social and cultural realities have been and continue to be, "netted out of play". What we regard as socio-cultural reality is in fact less stable than we may assume. What is viewed as socially acceptable behaviour changes both across time and cultures. What we consider to be appropriate practice in one situation can change across time as people play with rules, question assumptions and try out

alternatives. Some new ways of interacting are over-looked whilst others are gradually accepted” (Edmiston, 2008: 61).

The children both assimilate parts of an inherited culture and makes new meanings for their own identities within this. The importance of story-telling in this process is passionately advocated by Rosen:

“We should militantly assert that the students in this book are meaning makers ...they rework the stories to make new meanings, to shift their view of the world or amplify it. At the same time they are constructing their own social selves, as Wayne Booth suggests: “Who I am now is best shown by the stories I can tell and who I am to become is best determined by the stories I can learn to tell”” (Rosen, 1992: 167).

The story-telling and dramatization curriculum in Gussin-Paley’s classrooms was centrally concerned with the meanings that the children were exploring and the social relationships developed within her story-telling communities. The children in my classroom did not always tell their stories in such a social setting, some were told in relative privacy to an adult with no further audience. It is interesting that when I came to analyze the stories, it was easier to see the impact of the stories on the social dynamics of the classroom when the learning context was one of either interactive story-telling or dramatization of a scribed story. The children would often deliberately compose or alter their story to develop a particular social relationship within the group or to position themselves in a particular role. Such explorations could not be specifically planned for and often took unpredictable turns; sometimes in ways with which I was not altogether comfortable, although for which I should have been prepared following my reading of Gussin-Paley:

“The out-of-step child, I discovered none too soon is out-of-step according to my rhythm. In the child’s view Sylvia was acting out one of the many roles available in a family drama...she did not spoil the play. If Sylvia had not been “bad baby”, someone else would have had to take that role. “Bad baby”, and for that matter “angry mother” or “mean sister” are basic themes in the spontaneous theatre of the young” (Gussin-Paley, 1984:19).

This “story” will firstly look at the ways in which the children’s story-telling and dramatizations reflect the social dynamics of the group, including particular roles that may have been adopted by the children throughout the course of this study, including any particular differences of roles related to gender. The second section will analyze how the wider social context in which the children live is reflected in their stories and will also

consider my role as a teacher when faced with cultural scripts with which I may either approve or disapprove.

PART 2: SOCIAL DYNAMICS IN THE GROUP

Story-telling in the group and the dramatizations in particular, provided opportunities for the children to both cement existing friendships and try and develop new ones. In my role as “teacher” I was often disappointed by the apparent lack of impact the stimulus story had on the story-telling that followed. The themes that occurred in the children’s stories were far more reflective of the images that were the currency of their social play, whether these were of football, gangsters and dinosaurs or parties, babies and going to the park. This highlighted two issues. The first relates to teaching and the challenge of simultaneously working with, whilst also extending, the topics that are of primary importance to children, before the challenge becomes one of fighting a losing battle for their attention and motivation. The second issue was the unexpected revelation of how skilled the children quickly became in writing “scripts” for a particular cast and to explore a pressing social issue.

In some of the stories and dramatizations there was a clear statement of friendship that the stories sought to further develop. Perhaps the most enduring friendship throughout the stories is the one between Emily and Poppy. Emily for example is Poppy’s heroine in Story 6 when she chases the witch away before they *“go on holiday together in a caravan”*, and in Story 15 the happy ending is when they play tennis together. Emily is more constant in her friendship and Poppy occurs in eight of her stories; even in the fantasy world of the mini-beasts in Story 8 the *“hungry ladybird meets a friendly grasshopper and my friend Poppy”*

Other friendships are more fluid and the children clearly understand the power of choosing and the importance of being chosen. The field-notes describing Poppy’s behaviour when she chooses the actors for her first story (Story 3), record that she stood with arms folded, surveying the expectant faces of all the girls. In her play she would frequently change allegiance between Emily and Lauren, and in this instance Lauren was the chosen one. This decision appeared to be one made on the spur of the moment. Charlie however exemplifies how the story can be written from the outset with the purpose of establishing a friendship. As he drew the storyboard to Story 10, he referred regularly to the characters he was

creating, and let James know that he was going to be Superman; clearly hoping that the favour would be reciprocated:

“Unlike Proust’s solitary thinker, the children’s ideas take wing in the company of their peers. When one is young, the need to be discovered is greater than the need for privacy” (Gussin-Paley, 1999:100).

Other friendships cemented through the story-telling were those that were inclusive either of a particular friendship group (usually either the girls or the boys) or of the whole class. James (Story 19) creates dinosaur characters for the other two boys and they become involved in some favourite activities of fighting and trampolining. Charlie also bonds them together in a football story (Story 19) where they are all on the winning side and scoring goals. Poppy becomes noticeably more inclusive as the year progresses, and her first move towards this is in Story 8 when she includes everyone in the statement of the ladybird *“Hey you do you want to play basket ball and dance all around to the music and drum all the way home?”*

Friendships and happy endings however, were only part of the social dynamics revealed in the story-telling; conflict and exclusion were also major themes. Throughout the year there was an on-going competition between the boy twins over their friendship with James. At times they co-existed peacefully as a “gang of three”, but often there was a partnership of two with one of the twins (most often Charlie) excluded. In Charlie’s Story 20 for example, he sets up a gangster’s football match where James is on his (winning) side and Joshua is on the losing side. This is not reflected in James’s story told at the same time however where Charlie is chosen to be the lion and *“the dinosaurs jump on the lion and he gets an electric shock and dies”*. Joshua and James are then left to *“rule the world”* together. Such blatant exclusion was also expressed in one of Poppy’s earlier stories, which may not have been so noticeable if I had not known that Poppy was at the time refusing to let Lauren join in with her at playtimes. In Story 6, Poppy chooses to favour Emily who has the role of chasing the witch (Lauren) away. This was the first instance where I had to make a decision about intervention, even though I had made a commitment to myself at the start of the research not to interfere in any of the stories. Such overt exclusion (and in front of a group of peers) however, was not something I could allow to happen without intervention. The way I chose to act in this instance was to let the story be acted out as Poppy directed, but then to have all three girls stand with their arms around each other to take a bow for their “acting”. I

then praised Lauren for her facial expression as the witch and played a game where the group reversed roles and each made as scary an expression as possible and were chased away by the other two. I am not convinced however, that this fooled anybody about the true meaning of Poppy's tale.

Sometimes friendship and conflict were not so easily differentiated. In Story 6 for example there is a fascinating comparison between the stories told by each of the three boys. Charlie chooses his brother to act as him, and he becomes the orang-utan who jumps on Joshua and gives "*Charlie...a bad head*"; thereby asserting his dominance. In Joshua's story however he establishes himself as the dominant member within the group of boys. A dragon not only covers Charlie in flames but then "*hid in his house and waited for James*". James's story is more complex. He chooses Charlie rather than Joshua to be in his story and thereby establishes a friendship, but the story is then concerned only to establish his dominance in that relationship "*The ghost jumped on Charlie's head.... (Charlie) thought he was safe but the ghost followed him*".

The only indication of a similar sibling rivalry between the girl twins was in Story 16 when Tessa says of Max, "*He was punching and kicking people. His sister*". The two girls exchanged a smile when she said this and it was obvious that their relationship was not always as harmonious at home as it appeared in school. There was however, not the intense competition for particular friendship amongst the girls either. Poppy was interestingly the most "chosen" of the girls, but as the year continued all of the girls played freely in different combinations and also with children from other classes. Not only was Poppy the most chosen of the girls, she also revealed herself capable of quite sophisticated story-telling in order to establish connections and friendships. By the end of the research she is able to tell a story that includes all the class in roles they enjoy – the girls going to meet the boys on a train, whilst they arrive by "*spider car*" (Story 20). Without this close analysis of the stories told by the children I would have assessed Poppy as the least socially competent of the group, yet now I have a much altered view.

One of the most shocking revelations from the analysis of the stories was the marked difference between the stories told by the boys and those told by the girls. Again, this should not have surprised me, but usually in my classroom such clear gender stereo-types may not

have been allowed such free expression. For this research I chose not to intervene and influence, but my future role will be considered later. Gussin-Paley discovered that:

“Kindergarten is a triumph of sexual self-stereotyping. No amount of adult subterfuge or propaganda deflects the five year-olds’ passion for segregation by sex....boys set the tone and girls follow on parallel paths. Both seek a new “social” definition for “boy” and “girl”” (Gussin-Paley, 1984: ix-xi).

From the stories told in this research however there are clearer indications of the boys’ perceptions of their ideal selves than the girls. There is a continual battling for dominance in the boys’ stories and interest in characters and creatures who are the fiercest, deadliest and scariest. The descriptions of the space-bat-angel dragon in Story 18 become like a competition as to who can create the most frightening character: *“He’s got black scales and blood drips from his fangs. He’s going to shoot and eat and stab people (Charlie)...He’s got black fingernails and blue earrings....he’s got a brown mouth and no teeth. It’s just a hole (James)...It was a blood-sucking monster that sucks blood out of bodies. He’s got green poisonous spikes on his body and blood fangs...he burns everything and he eats old grannies (Joshua)”*. There is little room in many of their stories for kindness and goodness to prevail (except in the sense that the goodies are the characters who are the most powerful), and indeed any sense of such characteristics may be seen as signs of weakness. James will go to a party in Wonderland but only if it is a *“bad boys’ party”* (Story 13) and Joshua’s alien cannot forgive the taxi for accidentally running him over when he lands on Earth, so exacts total revenge. *“The alien got back into his rocket and flew back to his planet to destroy Earth and the taxi. He used the special laser to destroy it all”* (Story 21). The seriousness with which the boys dramatized the stories revealed clearly that they did not view the stories as “make-believe” at all, but as a genuine way to establish their position in the social hierarchy. This was demonstrated early in the research when Charlie had created an ending intended to shock his first audience (me); *“The man lifted Charlie up and ate him”*(Story 3), but when he realized in the dramatization that James and Joshua would get to triumph over him he wanted to change the ending and started fighting back.

The girls are less easy to define, although they more often require a happy resolution to their tales and make frequent references to friendship, love and kissing and cuddling. They are equally able to tell macabre tales however (for example Lauren’s strange image of the bird who falls out of the sky and *“kills all the people”* (Story 4)), and whilst they may appear

to fit stereo-typed images, I learned the dangers of making any assumptions. Emily's detailed retellings and acting out of traditional tales with herself in character as Cinderella or Little Red Riding Hood, led me assume to that she would most enjoy such roles in other stories. Tessa however, had no regard for this when she chose Emily to be the "baddie" crab in Story 7. Emily acted this part with relish and indeed her choice of characters in other stories is more to make her audience laugh than to be a heroine. So for example she makes a whole assembly audience laugh at her portrayal of the duck in "*Nobody Rides the Unicorn*" (Story 12), and as the giant frog who "*might jump on you head*" (Story 4).

Some of the most interesting dramatizations were those where a child attempted to direct mixed gender stories or required one of their class-mates to portray a role that was different to their usual choice. One such moment was when Poppy had been chosen to act as Cinderella in Emily's story, and Joshua had become the prince. When the story reached the part where the prince tries on the glass slipper, Poppy took off her own shoe and insisted that Joshua knelt down and put it on her properly; and almost unbelievably he complied. They did both draw the line at kissing each other however, and instead chorused "Yuk!" In his version of a fairy story Charlie chose James to be the rhino who saves the man and helps him to turn good. Whilst James needed reminding that he had to save the man rather than fighting him, he did so with a dramatic flourish and then said "All right mate", which was unscripted. I have already discussed how Emily was provided with the opportunity to be both a "baddie" and a comedienne, and Charlie became Poppy's guide in some of the interactive story-telling sessions. In the acting-out of Alice-in-Wonderland for example he provides her with her first idea and demonstrates again falling through the tunnel so that she can follow. As Charlie's own story-telling skills increased he became willing to support others and also confident in directing his own stories. It was almost as if he was enjoying the experience of control he had in these "plays", when he did not have much in his own free play; relying on the favours of his brother and James.

Analyzing stories from this perspective gave a completely different meaning to the activity of story-telling. Whilst at times the social influences of the group may have militated against the literary quality of some stories, they were nevertheless powerful conveyers of meaning within the particular group for whom they were told. It is also interesting that in their directing of "play", the children understood each others needs more effectively than the adults could. They easily wrote parts for other children who needed to act as superheroes or aggressors,

or to be loved and kissed and cuddled. The medium of play and the role of child author and director also sometimes persuaded children to accept very different roles from their usual ones, which they may have refused to do at an adult's request. Such a phenomenon is also regularly recorded in Gussin-Paley's work:

“Soon I will have even more reason to feel glad, for with this simple mother-baby episode, Samantha launches a whole-hearted pursuit of Jason that more than any other event in the school year brings him out of the helicopter house and into the social life of the classroom. Samantha is determined to make Jason into her baby and, despite his protestations and rituals, in the end she succeeds. Which is not to say she has the last word in his affairs; a boy who would be a helicopter enters society in full control of his vehicles” (Gussin-Paley, 1990:64-65).

In this research social story-telling had a far less central role in the curriculum than in Gussin-Paley's classroom, and it would have been interesting to see if the children in my classroom might have developed further ways of influencing each other's preferred roles if more time and importance had been given to this. It was interesting however, that Tessa was the most chosen of the children across all the story dramatizations. This may well have been because of her flexibility and dramatic skills; she could be a baby or a fighting dinosaur with equal panache.

The children were clearly aware of each others preferred roles, and the question for teaching is the degree of intervention that should take place and in what form. Tutchell (1990) is concerned that:

“Left to their own devices children can be very inventive, but they can also fall into the rut of mimicking or rehearsing stereo-typical behaviour, picked up from those around them and from the media (Tutchell, 19 :28)... It is therefore important that what Langer (1953) terms the “virtual experience” they engage with through works of fiction helps foster a questioning and critical attitude to gender stereotypes” (ibid: 23).

I am thinking that in future practice, whilst I would be reluctant to intervene greatly in the story-telling and dramatizations of the children, I would simultaneously extend the children's capacities to experience alternative roles through adult-directed drama activities. There is also benefit however in waiting to see if the children experiment with alternative roles and story-lines themselves, as for example when Charlie explored a different way of dealing with

“baddies”; treating them with goodness. This was a far more powerful experience for both Charlie and the group as a whole than any contrived exercise I could have manufactured.

PART 3: CULTURAL SCRIPTS IN THE STORIES- REFLECTIONS OF THE WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT

The first cultural script to consider of course, is the script that tells us what constitutes a “good” story. This was highlighted by McCabe (1996) in her comparison of the types of stories valued in American and Japanese classroom:

“Although telling elaborated, decontextualized stories enables a smooth transition to reading similar stories in American classrooms, telling succinct, relatively short and unelaborated stories allows for a smooth transition to reading in Japan, where verbosity is frowned on and concise forms of stories are valued” (McCabe, 1996 in Bamberg, 1997: 161).

Such cultural differences in storytelling do not only exist between geographically distant social groups however, as was earlier demonstrated convincingly by Heath’s (1983) ethnographic study in the late 1960s and 1970s of two communities living only a few miles apart in Carolina.

Roadville was a white working-class community and Trackton a black working-class community, but Heath emphasized that “any reader who tries to explain the community contrasts in the book on the basis of race will miss the central point of the focus on culture as learned behaviour and on language habits as part of that shared learning” (Heath, 1983:11). Both communities had strong oral storytelling traditions but their fundamental differences were emphasized when the children were educated alongside each other for the first time:

“In Roadville, children come to know a story as either a retold account from a book or a factual account of a real event in which some type of marked behaviour occurred and there is a lesson to be learned..... Trackton prides itself on the “true story”, one in which the basis of the plot is a real event, but the details and even the outcome are exaggerated to such an extent that the story is ultimately anything but true to the facts....the purpose of stories is to entertain and to establish the storyteller’s intimate knowledge of truths about life larger than the factual details of real events (ibid:187)... In short for Roadville, Trackton stories would be lies; for Trackton, Roadville’s stories would not even count as stories” (ibid: 189).

This highlights the importance of recognizing the cultural relativity of this research and its analysis of what constitutes a “good” story. My analysis for example, would almost certainly interpret the stories of Trackton children as showing greater qualities of rhetoric, evaluation and imagination. In this research I have made the assumption that the children in the class share a common storytelling culture and one that will be linked more closely to written texts, children’s literature and visual media (both television programmes and computer games) than to oral story-telling. However, such assumptions and their cultural relativity should always be open to challenge and re-evaluation.

Other cultural scripts can also be interpreted by using another of Barthes’ connotative codes – the “cultural code”:

“The cultural code reaches out from the text to the social world, which it is implied by the narrative discourse, the reader will accept and recognize as real...Barthes calls these allusions “superlative effects of the real” (1970:102)....The children in my study do not refer to toys and possessions very often, but they do nevertheless like to put their knowledge about other things in the stories. They like to show what they know about the world, and they attempt to make their stories more real and less magical by using their references. The cultural code is surprisingly strong, and is particularly useful in this context for revealing intertextualities lying below the surface of the children’s storytelling” (Fox, 1993:172).

It is through allusions to the social world of the storytellers that it is possible to interpret the cultures in which stories are created, and the background assumptions of universality, that this is “how things are”. One example of this in the stories of the children are their many references to “home” and returning to “home” at the end of an adventure. For nomadic peoples, and for the homeless in other societies, such references would be absent or imbued with very different meanings.

There are certainly many references to shared social worlds in the stories of all the children. Play-parks and different forms of transport are central features in many stories and parties also play a prominent part. It is interesting that Joshua chooses to reference a “disco” rather than a party, as this would be understood by his group to be far more “grown-up” than a party with games and balloons. Lauren finishes her last story with the phrase “*And there were happy people all singing and dancing*” and this led me to wonder if in fact this was a trans-cultural and trans-historical expression of joy and celebration, however different the songs and dances that might take place.

The listeners to all the children's stories would need to understand the references to the different games that are referred to; without knowledge of "Ring-a-ring-roses" for example the poignancy of Emily's image of "*Tiny pig is playing ring-a-ring-a-roses by himself*" (Story 15) would be lost. The listener would also need to be aware not only of the format of a football game but also the great prominence it plays in the lives of a sector of society, in order to understand the full import of scoring goals, being on the winning side and relegating someone to the losing side.

The influence of stories heard was apparent in the stories told by the children in Fox's (1993) study. However, there were far fewer obvious references in the stories told by the children in this research, with the possible exception of Emily. Even she however, tended to either retell a known tale or tell her own story with few literary references; an either all or nothing scenario. There were some literary allusions in the stories however and the meaning of these could only be understood by a listener familiar with the traditional tales of this culture; the ever-present possibility that an old woman might in fact be a witch, and also that if someone is eaten by a wolf it is quite possible that they will remain alive ready to be released later when the wolf is cut open. There were more references to the world of films and television, and these included the appearance of superheroes in the stories (Incredible Hulk, Superman, Batman and Spiderman) and also the gangster theme in the boys' stories that came from films. Interestingly this was more so in the case of the boys' stories; a trend also referred to by Gussin-Paley:

"The impact of television on boys can be seen by anyone who watches them play...certainly there is a wider variety of violence pictured today in stories and play, but not more actual fighting" (Gussin-Paley, 1984:108).

It is beyond the remit of this research to ponder for long on the relative merits or otherwise of film and television viewing. Fox in 1993 stated that:

"We need to know more about the similarities and differences between narrative in television and film and narrative in books; and I believe between shared and solitary viewing. Teachers sometimes reject the stories pupils bring to school from television and films, but as Meek argues, television actually helps children to "keep the story going"...if this is the major shared story culture for many children – possibly for all of them, even the readers – then we ought to find ways to legitimize that culture and let children retell, act out and write down those stories too – however "unsuitable" or predictable some of us might think they are" (Fox, 1993:193).

Since Fox's research there has indeed been some legitimization of that culture, with visual literacy and film-making becoming central components in some literacy lessons concerned with both developing powerful narratives through different mediums and engaging a wider number of children (particularly boys). Even in the time that has elapsed between the completion of my research and my current practice I make more use of the film-making technologies available in the classroom, most often as either a celebration of a completed story-telling and dramatization or as a medium of reflection and a reminder to the children of what we have done so far.

There were similarities between the children in this research and those in Fox's in that they both liked to demonstrate their knowledge of the world, and this knowledge also served to encourage belief in the story being told, however fantastical the setting. There are references therefore to the fact that Tyrannosaurus Rex is the fiercest dinosaur of all, that the cheetah is the fastest animal in the world, that penalties are awarded when there has been a foul, that ambulances are called when you are injured and that a "Ball" is another term for a party where you dance (Emily).

The two most dominant cultural scripts, and those in which I question my role as a teacher, are related to the rules of play and the justifications for fighting. It is clear from the children's stories that they implicitly understand the necessity of asking permission to play; not everyone can join in. Playing together is also regarded as a clear demonstration of friendship (even if allegiances may change on another day). Gussin-Paley explored this issue not only in her book "You Can't Say You Can't Play" (1994) but only in her later book "The Kindness of Children" (1999), where her earlier hopeful conclusions are severely tested by a friend's granddaughter Carrie:

"I'll tell you the riddle" she says. "Every day you look for someone who likes you and sometimes you think you've found a friend, but the next day you have to start again.....the kids hate me. Here's why they hate me so much. The way I talk. And my laugh is stupid. And I never get a joke so I have this dumb look on my face they can't stand. Stuff like that they were saying and because I cry" (Gussin-Paley, 1999:121).

The final part of Gussin-Paley's response is to say:

“I’m glad your parents are going to school, Carrie. Everyone needs to become involved. This is a very serious matter....Here’s what I think is so serious; that ordinary schoolchildren come as far as third grade thinking they have the right to gang up and hurt a classmate as they have hurt you. And the grown-ups don’t know what to do about it. That is the most serious part of all” (ibid: 122).

It remains a serious issue in the life of every school, and still I believe we do not know how to adequately respond to the daily issues of exclusion within our classrooms. In my earlier research referred to in the introductory chapter (“Can the excluded become included?”), I recorded how daily discussions and adult vigilance could result in less overtly exclusive behaviour but did not actually affect the children’s opinions of each other or preferred friendship groups. The development of close friendships is a natural part of human existence, so is exclusion therefore an inevitable part of life? If myths refer to the existential issues of existence then surely all stories that refer to the very serious matter of inclusion and exclusion are mythic. Which also leads me to wonder if the patterns of inclusion and exclusion are the same or different across time and cultures. Is this a cultural script or a universal one? All religious texts contain references to love and compassion towards all (for example the exhortation to “love thy neighbour as thyself”), yet despite this we have spectacularly failed as a species to enact this great principle. On the level of daily life in the classroom, it is clear that teachers do not have the option to do nothing. What we must aim for is to simultaneously provide opportunities that develop children’s sense of community and inclusivity whilst at the same time recognizing and respecting the need for close friendship and the joy that this can bring. I would suggest that a culture of communal story-telling is one possible forum for the explorations of this issue which is central to the lives not only of children but to all of us; a forum where children may become “witnesses to acts of kindness” (ibid: 129).

“The unkind voices that surround us are loud and shrill, demanding our thoughtful and truthful attention. All the more reason then to listen for the soft breath of friendship and carry our reassuring stories above the din. They are the beacons that help illuminate the moral universe” (ibid).

The second dominant cultural (or possibly universal) script revealed in the stories was the justification for fighting – and killing - people or creatures that were perceived as “baddies”. To return once more to Gussin-Paley, she states that:

“The fantasies of young boys are little tolerated in schools these days. The perception of increased violence in the country has created an inhospitable setting for the pretend stuff that has led most teachers to ban pretend weapons and pretend fighting” (Gussin-Paley, 2001:ix).

Edmiston (2008) in his account of mythic play with his son Michael records that:

“I accepted that his actions as we played were really external manifestations of particular inner fears...and explorations with me of how the world might be...teachers like Gussin-Paley, who see value in mythic play have controlled play so that children do not physically or emotionally hurt themselves or one another” (Edmiston, 2008:65).

I will include one further view on this subject, particularly because of its reference to the role of the teacher:

“Socialization and sex stereotyping influence and determine children’s characters and attitudes from birth...it is essential that teachers are aware of this so that in their teaching they can educate children to examine and discuss stereotypes” (Tutchell, 1990:80).

This combination of quotations raises particular issues for me and mostly in the form of questions rather than answers. Anyone who has spent time in the classrooms of young children will know that play fighting (and sometimes real fighting) will always require a response. The question is the form that such a response should take. Should we engage with the play and in so doing try to subtly encourage the players to look for alternatives to settling their conflicts (even when they are unaware what those conflicts even are)? Should we try and ensure that it is not always the same children who are being “killed”? Should we simply accept that this indeed is “how the world is” and allow the play to unfold uninterrupted? I still have no answers, and am aware of how crucial it is that as teachers we are aware of our own prejudices. I am aware for example of my inconsistency in response to choice of play weapon; swords and lasers are tolerable but guns are not. I am also unsure where I sit in the debate on levels of tolerance towards aggressive play. Are we now describing behaviour as mythic simply because we have been unable to stop its occurrence, and thereby accepting that war and conflict are inevitable aspects of existence? Or is there no relationship at all between play fighting in childhood and the fatal combats of adulthood?

Despite my uncertainties however, I have to make decisions about the beliefs underlying my daily practice however provisional they might be. I believe it is important that children should be given the opportunity to express and explore all emotional issues, and to recognize that anger, hate, and fear are emotions experienced by us all. The joy and pride that may be felt by winning or by being a member of a particular group are also important emotions that should not be denied; even though they may be attained at the expense of others. It is not the emotions themselves that are of our choosing or “right” or “wrong”; they are common to humanity. What is important is the way we choose to act and the understanding we can develop of how our actions might make others feel. I will borrow a quote here from that recent phenomenon of children’s literature – Harry Potter. Dumbledore the headmaster tells Harry that “It is our choices that show who we truly are, far more than our abilities” (Rowling, 1998: 245).

How will these beliefs then be manifested in the classroom? I will discuss this more in the evaluation of pedagogy later in this report, but there are inter-related aspects; opportunities for complete freedom of expression in individual therapeutic activities such as clay work or sand-tray play and in one-to-one storytelling to an adult; explorations of issues of ways of choosing to act in different situations (for example in dramatic interplay with the story of “The Iron Man”); regular daily discussions about social and emotional issues in the class at a level most appropriate to the children and opportunities to experience through drama and other mediums alternative ways of being. And one alternative way of being is that envisaged by Ted Hughes in his ending of “The Iron Man”:

“And the space-bat-angel’s singing had the most unexpected effect. Suddenly the world became wonderfully peaceful. The singing got inside everybody and made them as peaceful as starry space and blissfully above all their earlier little squabbles. The strange soft eerie space-music began to alter all the people of the world. They stopped making weapons. The countries began to think how they could live pleasantly alongside each other, rather than how to get rid of each other. All they wanted to do was to have peace to enjoy this strange, wild, blissful music from the giant singer in space” (Hughes, 1968:53).

EVALUATION OF THE ANALYSIS GRID.

The analysis grid used to develop a multi-perspective analysis of the children's stories (Appendix 4) was designed specifically for this piece of research and trialled for the first time during it. It allows for entries under thirty different headings and these vary greatly in both the length of entry they allow and also the degree of alternative interpretations possible. I was initially concerned that the rigid categories were in opposition to my aim of developing holistic interpretations of the children's stories. However, they ensured that I considered an entry for each row, and therefore helped to reduce any possible bias where I may have favoured certain modes of interpretation to the exclusion of others. On a practical level I also found it much quicker to complete a ready-formulated grid rather than being faced with a blank sheet of paper.

There are sections of the grid however that I will alter for subsequent use. The first of these are Rows 14-16 (predicament, climax and resolution) that I will condense into one category called "narrative structure". This will still include references to the beginning, climax and ending of the stories but will additionally include the narrative links between these; an area that was highlighted as challenging for the children in this research and where an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses could prove informative for future teaching. In the stories told by these children I had no entries under the category of "Figurative Language" (Row 19), except in Story 18 where I had created a simile outline as part of the story-frame. However, I will continue to include this category as it will be interesting if other children in other contexts do start to use some figurative language.

The way in which I completed Rows 23-25 showing the emotional aspects of the children's story-telling was reviewed and partly revised at the end of the research because the original entries made often seemed inadequate to record the levels of emotion that had actually been conveyed. I therefore expanded Row 23 (which was previously only completed if an emotion was named in a story) in an attempt to reveal how the stories conveyed emotions through the use of adjectives and adverbs and in the actions and speech of the characters. The stories were then given a range score for the number of emotions thus conveyed. Rows 24 and 25 (intensity and appropriateness of emotion), did provide opportunities for coding the emotional intensity of each storytelling occasion, but the methodology of this research made it difficult to recall the non-verbal communication of emotions and the paralinguistic

features of the storytelling such as intonation and stress. This was one section in the analysis where I most clearly realized the sacrifices my methodology had made to pragmatism, since the scribed words of the stories were often inadequate to aid interpretation in this area, especially when they were not supported by adequate field-notes. It will be interesting to use the grid in the future to analyze storytelling that has been video-recorded, and then complete these two rows in greater detail.

Rows 21 and 22 aimed to interpret the aesthetic aspects of the children's story-telling and were taken from Grove's evaluation of the aesthetic quality of student's responses to literature (Grove, 2005:97). This framework included three aspects – congruence, creativity and impact. Whilst I immediately saw how creativity and impact could be pertinent to an analysis of the creation of stories as well as to a response to literature, I did not initially think that congruence would be relevant in this different context. In hindsight however, it would have been a useful section to include for the recording of particular instances when a story was notably either congruent or incongruent with the stimulus story or context of the storytelling. For example Emily's simple "myth" (Story 21) is clearly congruent with the creation myth that introduced her own creation of a clay world, and it is this congruence that is the story's defining strength and feature. In contrast to this are Lauren's brief, but surprisingly intense utterances in Story 6 ("On the Way Home") where a wolf eats and then "gives birth" to Lauren, granny and a baby. Neither the structure or the emotional resonance of the story is congruent with the stimulus story and this very incongruence gives rise to speculative interpretations about the meaning of this story for Lauren.

I am going to conclude this chapter with a complete cross-sectional analysis of one story, and have chosen Story 10 by James to demonstrate this.

The Battle of Thunder.

"The god guys are trying to crash the bad guys. They are in speed boats. Rooster flies over them. He flies into the roof and knocks. One of the good guys opens it and rooster helps them. The starfish and his friend are swimming under the water. They see the good guys and go in. The bad guys are in a spiky boat. They are multi-coloured spikes. When you are shot by the spikes you turn multi-coloured. The bad guys shoot the starfish and he dies, but the big fish saves him. The bad guys turned rooster into one of the bad guys and then he

don't fight so they make him do it. There is a button on his hand and he presses it and goes back to being good".

Context.			
1. Name and C.A	James (7:5)		
2. Story Title	The Battle of Thunder		
3. Initial Stimulus	Story: "Rooster's off to see the World"		
4. Story-telling Context	Independent story-telling: Role-play was the supporting activity: 2 sessions given to the story: Dramatized in front of the class		
5. Number of Words	131		
6. DLS "Best Fit" Level	4WL (E)		
7. DLS- Example "highest level" sentence	4WL (H+) "The good guys are trying to crash the bad guys" (Actions intransitive)		
8. T-Units	Total T-Units	Mean T-Unit length	Longest T-Unit
	20	6.5	10
9. NC/P Level AT1: Speaking	P7/8: Uses growing vocabulary. Good individual sentence structure but still not fully connecting ideas not conveying feelings		
Structural aspects of story-telling (Three Worlds of Narrative).			
10. Character: Description	L2: Characters described by stereotyped labels " good guys...bad guys" and others identified – "rooster...starfish...big fish"		
11. Character: Social Interaction	L2: Interaction via physical action "good guys trying to cash the bad guys...flies into the roof and knocks...starfish and his friend are swimming under the water"		
12. Character: Inner World	L1 (or below): No references		
13. Character: Relationships	L2: Co-action and arbitrary conflict predominate. "Starfish and his friend are swimming under the water...big fish saves him..good guys trying to crash the bad guys"		

14: Predicament	L1/2 (b)
15: Climax/ High Point	No clear high point, but possibly when “The bad guys turned rooster into one of the bad guys” as this is the predicament that has to be overcome.
16. Resolution	“There is a button on his head and he presses it and he goes back to being good”
17. Story-setting/ environment	(i) Sea/ Speedboats (ii) L1: Some environmental details – speedboats, swimming under water and the spiky boat.
Rhetorical aspects.	
18. Use of language for effect	None
19. Figurative Language	None
20. “Story” Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects.	
21. Creativity	Lovely image of the multi-coloured spikes “When you are shot by the spikes you turn multi-coloured”
22. Impact	James was very involved in the writing a “play” with a dramatic opening scene. He had cast Charlie, Lauren and Tessa as the “bad guys” but then in the acting out he and Joshua were reluctant to let them be the only ones doing the shooting and joined in! They were having difficulties with their role as “good guys”
Emotional Aspects.	
23. Range	Range score: 2 (dislike/anger, friendship)
	Adjectives/adverbs: 0
	Action/dialogue: “trying to crash...shoot” (dislike/anger) “helps...saves him” (friendship)
24: Intensity	Story told with intensity as James moved swiftly from action to action and gesticulated with his hands for added emphasis
25. Appropriateness	Appropriate to subject matter and enjoyment of activity

26. Evaluative devices used	None
27. Story "theme"	"Good guys versus bad guys" Exploring death as a permanent or reversible state "starfish...dies ...but big fish saves him"
Social Aspects.	
28. Source of Story material	Story – "Rooster's off to see the World" James's interest in speed boats
29. Cultural Code	Knowledge of speedboats
Reflections.	
30. Comments by teacher/researcher on any other aspect	Original idea of rooster having "a button on his hand and he presses it and goes back to being good" James could have perhaps done with one of these buttons at playtimes (and maybe wishes himself that he had one?)

This analysis portrays several levels of assessment, evaluation and interpretation of one story, and also different aspects of how our understanding of James can be developed. We can analyze his particular academic strengths and difficulties, his interests and his social and emotional concerns; and this knowledge becomes richer and more reliable when a collection of these analyses are gathered over time. In hindsight I wish I had also included a section on the grid where I could have recorded my thoughts on ways to respond to the findings in the analysis, and possible reflections on the effect of any interventions made since the last story analysis. This would have made the process of interpretation and analysis more integral to the whole process of developing the social and learning contexts of the classroom.

There is always of course the danger of mis-interpretation or over-interpretation, and anyone using this form of analysis would need to be aware of this, especially if they intend to intervene as a result of their interpretations. Explorations in metaphorical form however, are one way of testing out interpretations and in this instance we developed a class story that involved a "magic button". The children all enjoyed acting in character as themselves but doing "bad" things, and then "pressing the button" and becoming "good" again. James enjoyed his story being used in this way and could easily transform in play from a fighting, gun-shooting "baddie" to a rescuing "goodie". I wish I could also say that an imaginary

“button” on the playground transformed his playtime behaviour but unfortunately it was not that simple. However, I still have optimism that he did wish to change and that we just had to look for a different way.

The danger of over-interpretation is always there however (as much in research as in the analysis of stories), and Czarniawska (2004) uses an amusing example of this by quoting Umberto Eco’s “Foucault’s Pendulum” (1989):

“In his story the Rosicrucians ...-Casaubon, Belbo and Diotavelli...were presented with an old (partially destroyed) parchment.....They reconstructed it as a great PLAN of the Templar Knights, seeking revenge against their enemies in the centuries to come....Casaubon’s girlfriend Lia...reads it very differently, and with much better support for her sources. According to her, it is a simple shopping (or rather, selling) list containing a merchant’s order....But this sober reading comes too late: the three males have already launched themselves into mortal danger because of their belief in the plan. Eco’s point concerns the dangers of over-interpretation. But he also shows how dedicated they are to their story: Lia’s prosaic list cannot compete with the allure of a narrative” (Czarniawska, 2004:34-35).

I believe that even with this danger in mind however, our interpretation and response to the deeper meanings of the stories children tell, should have at least equal prominence with our assessment of the academic skills they convey. There should be a balance between deconstruction and holistic response and resistance to placing the National Curriculum lenses over our eyes when reading children’s explorations and expressions of the world.

CHAPTER 5: THE INDIVIDUAL “STORIES” OF EACH CHILD.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter looked at how a multi-perspective analysis could help to answer the question: “What can teachers learn from the stories children tell?” I learned many things not only about pedagogy and assessment practices, but also about the children themselves. Every child’s experience is unique and of equal importance, and even if some children tell us stories and teach us lessons we do not want to hear, to do so is a moral imperative we should not ignore:

“What happens to Jason in school is the mirror of its moral landscape. There are labels that might be attached to Jason, but we’ll neither define nor categorize him. None of us are to be found in sets of tasks or lists of attributes; we can only be known by the unfolding of our unique stories within the context of everyday events...here is where the fair study of children begins and where teaching becomes a moral act” (Gussin-Paley, 1990: xi-xii).

The children’s stories have been referred to regularly in the previous chapter, and already their individual personalities may have permeated the pages. It is important however to also give each child an individual focus so that the reader may gain a sense of the journeys they made throughout the period of this research.

PART 2: CHARLIE (Charlie’s complete set of 21 stories can be read in Appendix 5).

Charlie’s individual “story of progression” was the most significant amongst this group of children. In NC/P level terms he progressed from an attainment of P7 in his first story to L2C in his final story, and by this stage he was consistently telling stories at between L1B and L1A. Story-telling was a particularly motivating and enabling context for Charlie to demonstrate his speaking skills. In other situations he remained less confident and competent; especially in group work where he struggled to wait his turn or listen to the ideas of others. I noted during the story-telling sessions that Charlie (in particular) seemed to require the devoted attention of an audience (albeit just one person) in order to “perform” at his best. He then became immersed in the telling and often talked rapidly with accompanying hand gestures to clarify and emphasize the meaning of his words.

The stories Charlie told not only reflected progress in his speaking skills, but also indicated development in other areas of this thinking. The “fairy story” (Story 17) is pivotal, for

example, when he begins to consider the motivations and morality of his characters' behaviour; whereas previously he had accepted that whoever "won" was "right", regardless of the means of that victory. In his final storytelling, Charlie is able to remain true to the dragon world he has created throughout the telling, thereby demonstrating an emerging ability to "hold an image in his head whilst he thinks about it" (Hughes, 1988 in Egan and Nadomer, 1998: 35), a quality that Hughes sees as essential to the development of imaginative thinking. However, Charlie had also provided me earlier with a reminder of both the limits of his imagination and the degree to which the imaginative world takes on a "reality" with its own rules. When he was about to tell Story 5, with teddy flying on his rocket to the planet he had created, Charlie could not start because his teddy kept falling off the rocket. We had to spend (precious) time ensuring that Charlie could fly the rocket around the room with the teddy secured. Although I fretted about the "waste of time", it was apparent that whilst Charlie could imagine a world of heat and hot water, he could not pretend that his bear was secured to a cardboard rocket when clearly it was not.

Charlie became noticeably more confident whilst story-telling than in any other area of the curriculum, and this confidence was boosted when his story-telling skills made him the centre of attention for a considerable period of time. His first experience of this was when he created the unusual image of the lion's tummy being "*all wet with old people stuck inside*". The response to this image by both adults and children alike was dramatic; either one of shock (adults) or admiration (children). The second occasion was the aforementioned exploration in Story 17 of being kind to the "baddie" by rescuing and turning him "good". This became the central focus of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) sessions for some time, and Charlie was proud to have been the instigator of this; possibly for the first time in his life Charlie was able to feel he was at least equal to his brother.

Despite enjoying his status as a story-teller however, there was little doubt that it was the dramatization sessions that were the most important to Charlie. He was far more interested in creating a good "play" for others (in both senses of the word) than a well-crafted story. In Story 6 for example, where Charlie meets the orang-utan, I noted that whilst there was nothing remarkable about the story in terms of structure or language use; the social context was all and hugely enjoyed by a particular group of people. In the interactive dramatization of Alice-in-Wonderland, I observed that Charlie was integrating his playground "army" games into the story and supporting and directing others within this shared world. Charlie

could direct this “play”, even if he was not able to be the director of his free-play. Charlie’s stories exemplify how important story-telling can be for children when they create worlds in which they have control; and which can sometimes act as antidotes for their realities. Story 19 for example, when the dinosaurs come to fight the monster, is an important representation for Charlie of the “gang of three”, where they all fight and have a joke together before he becomes the hero – a dream come true.

Charlie’s stories also revealed his emerging image of who he would like to become. In Story 3, he was excited by his image of “*men with muscles*”, and was keen to explain both that his dad has big muscles because of lifting heavy ladders as a window-cleaner and that whilst men get big muscles, girls do not. Strength, fighting and speed were all central themes to Charlie’s stories, and in direct contrast to his actual physical build. He had difficulties with fine co-ordination skills and poorly developed muscle tone which made even routine tasks such as removing a bottle-top difficult. Whilst he could transform his self-image in stories, Charlie was still too fragile to expose what he viewed as weaknesses to others; he thereby avoided with guile the very activities that would have developed his strength and co-ordination.

He was also keen to assert his state of “growing up”, and when asked to recall a time when he had felt scared said “When I was very little and in Class 1 and I was lost on the road. I cross the road on my own now”. In the story that follows (Story 15), he is prepared to allow his character to be temporarily scared of the dragon that threatens, but quickly overcomes this fear by killing him with an axe. He is not able to admit to others that he can be anything but temporarily frightened.

My most enduring memory of the stories told by Charlie are those created by his repeated images of dragons; magnificent and powerful creatures that I interpreted as encapsulating everything that Charlie wished to be. “*He’s got loads of fire. He won’t run out....He has purple sparkles and red wings so that the other dragons can see him in the night-time....the dragon is too fierce...they all fight the dragon but he doesn’t die...He flies away...he can see all the land*”

PART 3: EMILY

Emily entered this research already well-versed in traditional tales. She never tired of listening to these and was the only child in the class whom I observed using story language in her spontaneous play. She also had the most clearly articulated speech in the group, and could consistently talk in complete sentences. She spoke carefully and deliberately and there was often a delay in her responses because of word processing difficulties. Emily is similar to Charlie in that she makes significant progress in terms of NC/P levels over the year (from P6 to L1C and with one story attaining L1A), and this could partly be explained by the development in her self-confidence. The underlying language skills may have already been present but lying dormant and unused in previous learning contexts.

Emily also demonstrated an emerging ability to generalize her learning across different contexts. This was seen throughout the study when her knowledge of traditional tales was transferred to her own storytelling. In Story 5 she remembered the language related to texture we had learned in science when referring to the *"bumpy planet"*, and in Story 9 she fused her knowledge of real frogs with the literary device of exaggeration to create *"a big green frog (who) might jump on your head"*. In Story 21 Emily told a final story that conveyed a subliminal understanding of the religious significance of creation myths, even though she would have been unable to articulate this. She combined her own clayscape creation with her knowledge of the Bible: *"It was dark. Jesus made the world. There was a possum....There's a snake. He's nice...There's a garden with some water and rocks...There will always be just possums and snakes. Amen"*. It is worth noting here that not even stories from the Bible escaped Emily's mission to create a wholly "good" world; the "snake" had its great powers of temptation transformed into "niceness".

Emily's ability to recall and retell stories (and increasingly other information also) did distinguish her from the other children in the group. Although she did not seem to crave the recognition of the group as avidly as other members, I came to realize that this was, of course, as important to her as it is to most children. This came across most clearly during the interactive story-telling of "Alice-in-Wonderland" where Emily was the only child who knew the story. The other children clearly enjoyed her contributions (not realizing that they were a retelling) and were particularly impressed when she "created" the character of the Queen of Hearts and shouted "Off with her head!". The confidence and joy in Emily's demeanour was something I had not witnessed before and highlighted the importance of

providing genuine opportunities for every child to “shine”, and in a way that is important to them.

The other way in which Emily surprised me over the year was in her developing role as a comedienne. She was mostly a serious and sometimes anxious girl, but in Story 3 she seemed to start the creation of a new image for herself. I do not think that Emily created the ending to this early story; *“Emily played with the wolf”* with the intention of being amusing, but when it was acted out with herself and Poppy dancing around, the audience received it in this way and started laughing - as then did the two actresses. Her other humorous tales are more clearly deliberate. For example the ending to her retelling of Little Red Riding Hood which tries a similar format to Story 3 (*“That was the end of the wolf. And then they all sing a song. “Who’s afraid of the big bad wolf?” La la la la la”*), the duck who goes “Quack!” to cheer the King up in Story 12, and the Wild Things with “no teeth” in Story 16.

Throughout the research period, Emily’s exploration of identity is revealed in two ways. The first of these is the attempt at bravery and stepping into the unfamiliar, and can be seen in the very first story that she tells. Emily wanted the sand-tray spider to be in her story and whilst clearly nervous of handling the large rubber toy, persevered with this to tell her tale. Emily was confident when retelling known stories or stories related to familiar social situations, but tried something different for the first time in Story 8. In this story Rooster goes *“under the sea on his motorbike and meets a fish called Nosy”*. I interpreted that Emily was making a conscious decision to attract the boys into acting out her story by the inclusion of the motor-bike, and that she has created a potentially interesting character in “Nosy”. However, this is the limit of Emily’s adventurousness at this stage, and rooster quickly *“jumps out of the sea”* and back to the familiar world of having tea with Poppy. Throughout the year however, she relied on retellings less often and created different scenarios alongside familiar settings. It was also noticeable that Emily frequently included parties in her stories, and these were unequivocally “good” things. In real-life however, Emily was far more ambivalent about such events, being nervous of crowds and loud noises. We had eaten Christmas dinner together outside of the main hall because of Emily’s fear of the party poppers and general noise.

The second exploration of identity was revealed in Emily’s consistent creation of a “perfect” world without disharmony. So persistent was she in this desire that she replaced retelling with complete inversion when telling her own story in the style of “The Bad-Tempered

Ladybird". Her story of "The Hungry Ant" is nothing less than an exemplar of good behaviour and politeness. Emily herself was this perfect exemplar in school, but her behaviour at home was very different and conflicts with her younger brother could be particularly intense. It is as if she projected her wishes into stories of how the world "should be", and how she herself wished she could consistently be. This is revealed again in Emily's version of "Wonderland" where *"There is a magic queen...she is good...she dances and she sings...everyone is happy and they have best friends and baby brothers and sisters"*. When Emily told this story she had just heard the news that her mother was expecting another baby, and this story may well be told to re-assure herself that this was indeed a happy event.

It was completely unexpected therefore when in Story 20, Emily left her story-telling world of harmony and fantasy and suddenly laid bare her home-life with all its arguments and fears. She did distance herself slightly from events because she was at her "sister's friend's" house and it was her brother and his friend who were *"up to mischief"*. The end of the story however with the plea *"Brother please can we both stop fighting"* and the accompanying picture (See Appendix 5) are testament to Emily's sincere wish that all at home could be harmonious, even if she herself did not always help this cause. This sudden revelation of previously concealed concerns was immediately accepted and dramatized with relish by her peers for whom nothing extraordinary had happened. There was no sense either that Emily felt uncomfortable about this disclosure; she had come to it in her own time and through her own form of story-telling.

PART 4: POPPY

Poppy progressed from P4.5 to P7 in NC/P level terms, and whilst this progress was greater than that expected by the school target setting process, it was not as significant as that made by Charlie and Emily. I only mention this here, because in fact I perceived the progress made by Poppy to be more remarkable than any of the other children. This was not because of the levels of attainment she reached but because of the marked difference between the forced one or two word utterances she communicated at the start of the research and the meaningful phrases and simple sentences used at its end. This is conveyed by a comparison of the field-notes I made for Story 1 and Story 21.

For the first story I wrote "Poppy found it difficult to contribute to the group story-telling. She kept looking around the room and did not want to say anything when it was her turn. She did

point to the witch when asked to choose a character, and when I gave her a choice of the witch flying or casting a spell said “fly”. Poppy then laughed and put her hand over her mouth when I acted out the witch flying on her broomstick. During the sand play Poppy played mostly with the small playmobil figures and especially the very small baby in the pram. She did not vocalize during her play but moved the figures around and used the miniature play-park equipment. The short story she finally told was elicited in response to three questions “Who are you playing with?...Where is the baby?...What will happen at the end?”....Poppy is going to find the story-telling activities more difficult than the other children...I hope the activities planned will not be too uncomfortable for her”.

For the final story I wrote “Poppy relied more heavily on her actual creation for the telling of her story than the other children in the class. This story is clearly related to her clay world – and she explained that each of the colours used represents a different animal. She is adamant that this is a peaceful world and that *“the animals don’t eat each other”*. Poppy points to the bare clay at the end of her story and says with finality *“This is empty. It’s cold. Nothing else here”*.

Throughout the research, distinct aspects of Poppy’s learning and specific difficulties become apparent. As recorded above she remained heavily reliant upon either the concrete objects in her environment for story-telling or on familiar social routines of which she could retain an image in her head. In her final story however she was able to imaginatively transform her clayscape, albeit with practical limitations. She created a world of animals from coloured blobs of clay (although there could only be one animal for each colour), and alongside the literal statement that “there is nothing else here” she imbued the world with coldness. Familiarity with context and expectations were essential for Poppy if she was to achieve any task successfully, and she would try and make connections whenever she could with the familiar world. This is exemplified in her developing understanding of a “unicorn” as *“like a horse...Giddy-Up!”* If she was faced with an activity that was unfamiliar she found it very difficult to access and would quickly disengage. This was highlighted when I tried to use the “Bus Story” assessment with Poppy nearing the end of this research. Despite her familiarity with telling me stories in a one to one context she reverted to her earlier level of one-word communications and spoke only five words in the entire re-telling.

Poppy is also almost the complete opposite of Emily in that she finds retelling the stories of others the most difficult task of all. In Story 17 she obviously translated my request to tell her own fairy story as an expectation of a retelling. She therefore attempted the story of Snow White, but found both the sequencing of events difficult and also identifying the key events. She was more concerned with Snow White polishing the shoes and the dwarfs having a bath than the events that moved the story forward. Poppy was far more able to construct a coherent narrative when she was in control of the subject area. Her difficulties of retelling were also reflected in her learning in other subjects, when she seemed often to miss the main point of the learning and became distracted by a side-issue.

There was however a significant turning-point in Poppy's confidence with story-telling and this occurs in Story 8. In this story context there was a noticeable improvement both in Poppy's drawing skills where she attempted to put spots on the ladybird and eyelashes on the cat (Appendix 5), and in her storytelling skills. She spontaneously described her characters using a wide range of adjectives compared with her previous stories (*happy...sleepy...little*), and when she is not sure of the word for a grasshopper she is confident enough to substitute her own word – *“wake-up hopper”* – which is a perfect contrast with the sleepy ladybird. She finished this story with two favourite games of hers and Emily's and the ending was perfect for the acting-out; with everyone this time involved in the “play”. One of the most positive revelations in the analysis of this research was Poppy's movement away from behaviour that excluded certain peers and her ability to be more inclusive.

I have discussed in the previous chapter how I would have under-estimated Poppy's social skills without the analyses of the stories she told and their contexts. She displayed more distinct difficulties with theory of mind than the other children. It was not until I role-played the farmer in Story 18 that Poppy appeared to truly realize that I was pretending to be someone else and that she was supposed to react to me as that person rather than as a teacher. She became very excited at this realization and kept repeating “You're the farmer” “You're the farmer!” She also had difficulties with facial expressions and I viewed it as a positive move forward when in Story 15 she drew a big smile on the face of her Emily character to show friendship. Poppy would often lift her eyebrows up and down if she was uncertain how to react in a certain situation, and she also had the unfortunate trait of laughing and smiling when she was told off. Despite this however, she was more than

aware of the importance of choosing and being chosen to take part in particular activities. She herself was frequently one of the chosen ones, and playing and kissing and cuddling were important themes in many of her stories. What was absent from many of her stories however, was a predicament to be overcome, and this may have been because Poppy was not yet able to conceive of how she would deal with this; especially as she clearly rejected any of the fighting options explored by others. She could not even bring herself to imagine an encounter with an unpleasant character. In preparation for the telling of Story 15 she had carefully drawn a monster with "blood on his tail", but this was transformed in her final telling into a "big rabbit" who plays with the "little rabbit".

I also noted in relation to this story that comparative sizes were becoming a recurring theme for Poppy, possibly because of her own small stature. She also regularly returned to images of babyhood, and in many ways seemed to be finding it difficult to leave this period of her life behind. This was so even in a physical sense, and her parents reported that at weekends she still had an afternoon nap. This may account for the most common ending to her stories where the characters went home to sleep.

Poppy's ideal world is possibly portrayed in her sandtray play (Story 14) when she created a Wonderland where snakes and T-Rex's are rendered harmless by being "very small" and where she and her friends can play safely in the park; "whizzing on the roundabout really really fast". This reflected Poppy's sense of joy in play-parks and swinging until the swing looked as though it would tip over the bars.

PART 5: JOSHUA

Joshua made significant progress as measured by the P/NC levels and progressed from attaining P5 in his first story to L1B in his final story, although this was the first time he had achieved this level. Joshua may have benefited from the story-telling opportunities in a similar way to Charlie and Emily, where the motivation and confidence the context engendered best enabled him to demonstrate his developing language skills.

Joshua started his story-telling career in the same way as he continued it; as a creator of all-action tales. The development of his story-telling skills can nevertheless be clearly seen through the different conflicts he authored. In his first story Joshua made no distinction between a commentary on his play and the telling of a story, and his play consisted of

characters knocking each other down. I eventually stopped scribing the story, but Joshua continued with his play oblivious that any closure was required. Joshua's Story 3 is again dominated by action, and in the dramatization he extended his dictated ending into a long arrow-fight in which he had all the class dying dramatic deaths (apart from Poppy who refused to comply). Joshua had now realized that stories need an ending (however extended he makes this), but did not see the necessity of supplying the listener with details that linked the actions together. For Joshua, it was the individual actions that were important not the overall coherence of the story. This had changed significantly by Story 14 however, which was again created in the sand tray. Action was still all-pervasive but Joshua had created connections between all aspects of the story including the characters and the setting. His idea of a park with swings and slides big enough for dinosaurs was in keeping with the Wonderland theme, but with Joshua's own twist. He had created a battle-ground for giant creatures and this time the "baddie" was the snake who, unusually in Joshua's stories, got his come-uppance; *"The snake explodes because he's been greedy"*.

Joshua relished every opportunity to tell his stories to a group audience, and in my field notes I observed as early as Story 4 that he "told the story with a sense of audience and enjoyed creating an atmosphere of suspense. He used his picture of the "shark" to move it dramatically towards members of the group saying *"He's going to eat Emily now...and Mrs. McCaffrey....and James..."* I was drawn into the story atmosphere sufficiently to hum the "Jaws" tune at the end, for it felt as if Joshua's shark was still circling beneath the surface. The children all enjoyed this and spontaneously lifted their feet up off the carpet, much to Joshua's delight". Joshua's rhetorical skills continued through many of his stories. In Story 5 for example, he used dramatic pause after he had announced that Teddy was going to land on a planet, and then said *"an alien planet"*. He then paused again at the end of the story when Teddy's rocket ran out of fire before saying *"but he had a parachute"*.

Another feature of Joshua's story-telling was that he liked to include his knowledge of the world in his stories, and to practise his latest vocabulary acquisitions. Wildlife was an enduring interest of both Joshua and Charlie, and the cheetah had taken on an almost mythical status for them. In Story 10 however Joshua was keen to demonstrate that even the cheetah could be defeated by an *"armed man"*. He often referred to animals in his stories and in Story 11 referred to a *"rattlesnake"*, and in Story 19 to spiders living in webs. I have noted throughout Joshua's story-telling that he liked to use "extravagant" vocabulary;

“massive...ginormous...really disgusting” which he spoke with emphasis and used the intensifier “really” more frequently than any of the other children. He was capable also of producing some original images and working spontaneously with these, demonstrating good flexibility of thought. I was particularly impressed by his acting as a bank robber in the dramatization of “Alice-in-Wonderland”, who, when shrunk, becomes too small to pick up a coin and is squashed by it (dramatically enacted of course).

Joshua’s story-telling was always a social activity even if told in a one-to-one situation, and he was primarily concerned to assert his dominance in the group of boys, and especially over his brother Charlie. In Story 6 for example he was the dragon who burned Charlie in his flames and in Story 19 Charlie was the bug killed by the dinosaurs (Joshua and James). The exaggerated cruelty in these stories however, could easily be mis-interpreted. Charlie always responded in the dramatizations with gusto and this provided the boys with a platform for their favourite form of play. In reality also, Joshua was the dominant twin who was supportive of his brother in many aspects of life. In their first year at school for example it was reported that Joshua did all the speaking on behalf of his twin. Charlie certainly appeared anxious if separated from Joshua for any length of time, and the conflicts the twins metaphorically explored may well have been expressions of their conflicting emotions of reliance and love with resentment and longing for independence.

A final point related to Joshua’s stories was that his own social concerns and interests tended to take precedence over the story-telling context itself. Whilst he always appeared fully engaged in the stimulus stories and their accompanying activities, as soon as the opportunity presented itself he would return to his own world dominated by the current theme of the boys’ play. This is demonstrated by my observations related to Story 16 and the dramatizations around “Where the Wild Things Are” (Sendak, 1964). “Joshua is definitely more involved in the fantasy world of the “gang of three” than of this story, and whilst he enjoyed all activities, he wanted to return to the image of gangsters and guns at the earliest opportunity”.

PART 6: TESSA

Tessa made the least progress of the group in terms of NC/P levels, moving from an attainment of P5 to P7.5. It is noticeable also that her stories remained at the same level (P6) for a considerable period of time, from Story 3 to Story 8, and returned to this level at

various stages throughout the research, even as late as Story 14. In Story 18 however, Tessa attains P8 for the first and only time and it is interesting to consider the elements of the story context that may have supported this. Story 18 was the interactive dramatization of “The Iron Man”, where the children were asked to make contributions at different stages of the story. This supported context provided Tessa with some ideas for her contributions, but possibly more important was the fact that the contributions needed to be relatively short and did not require Tessa to sustain an image in her head for a long period of time. She also did not have to recall too many previous links in order to maintain a coherent narrative.

I was as surprised by the findings of the story-telling data as I was often also surprised by Tessa’s attainment in other areas of learning. Tessa was an engaging child with well developed social skills and well-honed strategies for disguising her difficulties. I cannot remember a time in class when she ever asked for help; she attempted everything she was asked to do with a disarming cheerfulness and confidence, and used whatever environmental clues she could find to try and do what was expected.

Tessa was not alone in making less progress than the four children previously discussed; this was also the case with Lauren and James. It may have been that because these children had more specific difficulties with receptive language, the motivation and confidence engendered by the story-telling contexts were not in themselves sufficient to overcome their underlying language difficulties. On reflection, I think that for these children, more specific input, and possibly greater support and guidance during the story-telling itself may have been of more benefit than the method I employed. They still made greater than “satisfactory” progress however, and the freedom to express their own ideas in the language they had at their disposal may have contributed to this. It is certainly an area of pedagogical enquiry that I intend to explore further.

Tessa’s language difficulties were highlighted in the first story she told, alongside her talent for using all the knowledge at her disposal. In the field notes I wrote that “Tessa had to think hard to find the words to name her characters, and when she had struggled enough finished the story quite definitely with a nod of the head and saying “Amen””. She was always willing to try new words however, and gave an interesting description of the eyes of the “Wild Things” as “fat” (from the illustrations of bulging eyes in the book) and incorporated a “fox” (instead of a wolf) in Story 17.

Tessa also found sequencing and the connections between events difficult. In Story 5 for example, she could not maintain the imaginative link between the collage planet she had created on a previous day and the “planet” she was flying her teddy to. She had taken great care in representing a cat on this collage, but transformed this into both a cow and a dog in her final storytelling. I observed that “Tessa seemed to have simply moved to a different day and a different set of ideas”. She did find it much easier to develop sequenced stories that referred to everyday events however, for example family trips to the park or going shopping; emphasizing again the importance of ensuring that children are not asked to experiment with too many new skills and concepts at one time.

I am aware that all the focus around Tessa has so far related to her difficulties, yet in the reality of the story-telling situation her compensating strengths left the most memorable impressions. The first of these was Tessa’s gift for dramatic representation, movement and music. In the second story she told (a recount of Dunbi the Owl), Tessa visibly relaxed when given an instrument to play. She could not remember the sequence of events but had a clear sense of the emotions conveyed in the story. The sky-god was “*warm and cross*” and she recalled his words and the emphasis with which he had spoken “*WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?*” In most of the stories she told, Tessa included a dramatic phrase or gesture that was well received by the group. For example her crab in Story 7 went “*Snip! Snip! Snip!*” and in Story 13 Tessa enacts being hit by an elephant “*Ow!*”, and then pretended to pick the elephant up by its trunk and swung it around.

Tessa’s other strengths were her social skills and developing empathic understanding. She named emotions more frequently in her stories than the other children, and in Story 19 displayed a mature understanding that someone could be both sad and cross. In this instance the spider whose house has been “*messed up*”. Tessa also tried to cross the boy/girl boundary, and was sometimes chosen by the boys to dramatize their stories. She recognized the need to include events of interest to them in her stories as exemplified in Story 8, where she had effectively concluded her main story but then added a further event where the ladybird is caught in the storm and drowns. Tessa not only displayed a relatively high level of emotional and social maturity, but there were also hints in her stories that she was also quite practically astute. She revealed a growing knowledge of the importance and value of money, of shopping and of family life and rules in general; “*mummy grounded him*

for staying out late". Domestic bliss was indeed her image of the perfect world, as represented in her ending to the story of "The Iron Man". *"A person's walking in the park. She's got shiny hair. She picks some grass and cooks it. Daddy eats it for tea and he likes it and he kisses mummy"*. After this I found myself pondering Tessa's future, and whether her skills in home-making or in performing arts would prevail, or indeed if new skills and interests would appear.

Tessa's final story demonstrated clear progress in terms of her ability to use language and to engage imaginatively with an image she has created. I observed however, that such skills were less important in Tessa's created world than the social rule that governed it. My field-notes record that "Whilst Tessa's world contained the elemental forces of snow and fire; much more important to her, and to the atmosphere of her creation was the fact that in that world, the answer to the question *"Can I play?"* is always *"Yes"*.

PART 7: LAUREN

Lauren made similar progress to her sister (P5 to P7.5) and probably for similar reasons. It was there however that similarity between the two ended. Unlike Joshua and Charlie, Lauren and Tessa were not identical twins in either looks or personality. Lauren for example, was one of the few "outsiders" whom the boys sometimes permitted to join in their play and enjoyed rough and tumble play. Her appearance was much more unkempt than Tessa's (even though they were dressed identically), and she did not so easily demonstrate the social graces of her sister. Lauren laughed and smiled less often, and could not disguise her lapses of attention and mis-understandings with such skill. It was often easy to assume therefore that she had less understanding, but this was not actually the case, and in both reading and number work she attained higher end of year levels than Tessa.

One talent she did share with her sister however was the ability to produce detailed pencil drawings, an activity she often chose to do in her free time. She found working in paint far more difficult however, and unless it was removed in time, she had the habit of obliterating her finished work with one colour of paint; usually black. This behaviour is not unusual amongst infant age children, and could be caused by a variety of reasons. I do not think it was deliberately self-destructive in Lauren's case because she did not destroy her work in any other situation. It may have been simply that she got "carried away" by the excitement

of the medium and could not exert the self-control to impose an ending to the activity herself.

Lauren was almost the “middle” child between the group of three boys and three other girls in the group. This meant that whilst she was more easily included by the boys, she was sometimes less easily included by the girls, and I have previously referred to her exclusion by Poppy early in the research. Lauren’s Story 8 however, revealed how successfully she could sometimes be in combining the interests of both groups. She was proud of the start of her story and the detail that the *“ant puts on his six shoes to go the party”*. The party was perfect for the girls to act out, and it was then invaded by a monster (gleefully portrayed by Joshua), before Charlie took the role of the policeman to evict him. Lauren tells a story towards the end of the research that serves in its dramatization to bond her with Poppy, with whom she was currently “best friends”. The story was clearly influenced by the breaking up of the Iron Man, but is a strange little tale, where Lauren is a man who has lost all his body parts and Poppy puts him (her) back together again.

The most enduring memories of Lauren in this research were related to the unexpected, unusual and sometimes uncomfortable images that she created. The first of these appeared in Story 3, when Lauren met a policeman at the top of the beanstalk and *“punched him”*. I was relieved when it came to the acting-out that Charlie asked if it was a giant policeman, which somehow returned the story safely to fantasy. In my field-notes I recorded that “I doubt if any of the other children would have broken such a social taboo as assaulting a policeman, even as part of a story. Dinosaurs might be seen as fair game, but policemen would not”. Then, in Story 4, Lauren created for me one of the most unforgettable images of the research; the *“bird (who) is eating the sky...he is fat...he falls out of the sky and kills the people”*. In any image that the children themselves created, the rest of the group seemed to accept and fully understand it far more easily than I often could. They were all highly satisfied with this image and also took Lauren’s Story 6 in their stride where *“granny, Lauren and the baby came out of the wolf”*, and Poppy was very pleased to play the part of the baby.

In Story 17, Lauren told one of her most coherent stories and interweaved fantasy with reality by the combination of wizards, witches and the giant with the real-life of guns and parents and children. I noted with interest that she is the child who made the most frequent

references to guns, and I do not know if this was because of her limited vocabulary to describe weapons or possibly the influence of television viewing. It is possible that the strangeness of some of her other images may have been partly caused by her difficulties with language. When asked to share a time when she had been scared however, Lauren said ...”when I had a dream and I was dead and I woke up screaming”.

When I review Lauren’s images de-contextualized from the atmosphere in which they were told, I am intrigued by the messages she may have been trying to convey and concerned that I may not have understood nor responded appropriately to them. Whilst I was surprised by the ferocity and explicitness in the original tellings this was tempered by Lauren’s apparently calm demeanour and the good humour with which they were received by the other children. I can only hope that if there were any issues they achieved a resolution as harmonious as the one in her final story; *“When it was a long, long time ago I made a fire, a lake and really big fat flowers...a person’s son said “Hello”. The people walk around in the sand. They are happy and singing”*.

PART 8: JAMES

James made a similar amount of NC/P Level progress as Tessa and Lauren, although was more consistently meeting the criteria in P8 towards the end of the research than they were. He differed from them however, in that he was the most prolific story-teller in the group with the highest mean word-count (90) for his stories. He also told the second longest story (225 words) out of all the 145 stories told. This in itself was a remarkable achievement for James. For a child who remained almost mute in certain situations, story-telling (on topics of his own choosing) was clearly an enabling context. This was apparent from the first story he told, as was his desire for an attentive audience. He was straightaway engaged in the story-telling activity in the sand-tray, and clearly differentiated from the play before I was an audience and the play that was part of the story. When he said *“The frog stood up – right”*, he was checking out that I was listening and fully understood the import of the frog being tall. James’s enthusiasm and the surprising amount of naming vocabulary he knew was an inspiring start to the research for me.

One of the features that influenced James’s story-telling throughout the study were the paintings and models that he created. He was a talented artist who included great detail in his drawings and painted with skill. He first used a description of one of his works of art in

Story 2. He found it difficult to recall many of the events in the story, but did remember the aboriginal painting he had created for the assembly. *“The girl and the man up the hill looking for the children. Black in the sky, white dots on the moon and the hill had white dots and yellow dots”*. The painting clearly had more of a lasting impression on James than the story and this may have been because of the amount of praise he received for it and also the time and attention he had given to its creation. James always described his paintings quite literally when they were part of the story; for example his paintings of the Wild Things and the space-bat-angel-dragon. In Story 21 however, he also demonstrated that he could interact imaginatively with his creations. He used each part of the clayscape he had created, but transformed the clay into volcanoes, caves, lakes and snow.

James, in the same way as all the children, valued highly the social aspect of the story-telling. He entered whole-heartedly into the jostling for dominance between the boys. He is the ghost who *“jumped on Charlie’s head”* in Story 3 and “killed” both Joshua and Charlie in his role of the “nasty wasp”. They “fought back” with vigour however before dying dramatic deaths. He later became the *“gangster (who) shot a mouse and the bullets went everywhere”*, but Charlie and Joshua are allowed to stay un-injured this time as the footballers who scared off a lion before being chased by a dog. This last story referred to (Story 20), demonstrated how convoluted some of James’s plots could become, and because of this it was often difficult to follow the connections within his stories. He always spoke quickly and had often moved onto a different idea before I had time to clarify the previous ones. The ability to develop causal links may well have developed James’s skills in both story-telling and other curriculum areas and I wish now I had made more effort to make him explain his thinking. I was very aware however that I did not want to apply pressure and “stem the flow” lest James should revert to defence of muteness. It is also important to note the influence of James’s stories on the images later used by the other children. This was particularly so in the case of Charlie and Joshua; and in my field notes I reflected that they had probably never seen a gangster film, but gained all their information about these from James, who clearly had more access to a variety of adult films than others children in the class. Lauren is influenced also however, and borrows an earlier image from James for her monster in Story 15 who has *“poisonous earrings”*.

James entered the “game” of story-telling in the same intense way in which he approached other games that were important to him, including playground games and football. James

was not only a talented artist but also a skilled football player and athlete. He became frustrated when others could not match his skill, and had little tolerance for children who were unable to follow the “rules”. In school our football lessons took place with a younger class, and James was unable to accept that any allowances should be made for them; regarding this as “cheating”. This did highlight the on-going debate about separate provision for children in “special schools” because although we could meet James’s special “needs” we could not cater for his special “strengths”. Eventually we did arrange for him to attend an after-school football club at a mainstream school.

James revealed a clear sense of his ideal identity through the stories. Unsurprisingly this was a character who was “*fast and big and strong*” (Story 13), and physical prowess is seen as even more powerful than magic. In Story 12 however, the magic of the unicorn cannot save him, but the speed of the zebra can. James found it even more difficult than the other two boys to admit to any weakness, and adamantly refused to share a time when he had felt scared. It was also a little disturbing that towards the end of the research he seemed to admire the “baddies” rather than the “goodies”.

James was certainly the most streetwise of the children in the class and spent much time with his older brother. His final story however is a reminder that however “grown-up” he liked to appear to be, he was still essentially a 6-year old child. I had had a previous glimmering of this when he had revealed his belief that he would get taller on his birthday, and in Story 21 even gangsters who can fight on a volcano still need the comfort of home and chocolate. “*The gangster gets up and falls down and all of the blood runs out of him but he’s still alive...the gangsters shot the cloud so it breaks smaller and then the gangsters go in their house and have gangster chocolate*”.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH.

This chapter will discuss each of the research questions posited at the end of Chapter 2. I will then explore any tentative conclusions made and the theoretical implications of these for the development of future practice.

PART 1: What can a multi-perspective analysis reveal about the children, their stories and the particular evaluation procedures used?

It was through the use of a multi-perspective analysis grid that I was enabled to start answering the overriding question of this research: “What can teachers learn from the stories children tell?” The list of possible learning experiences for teachers from listening to and interpreting the stories of children is long. It includes knowledge of the particular cognitive and linguistic strengths and weaknesses of the children, an understanding of their interests, dreams and emerging identities, their social and emotional concerns, their rhetorical skills and the existential questions of most relevance to them.

The analysis grid was formulated with the intention of ensuring that each story was analyzed and interpreted from as many different perspectives I could think of at the outset of the research. I have tended to use the words “analysis” and “interpretation” interchangeably, but realized through the writing up of this research that I most often describe the processes of deconstruction as “analysis” (for example when counting and categorizing the number of T-units used) and my own process of meaning-making as “interpretation” (for example when describing the social impact of a story on the group). Within the interpretivist framework of course, all of the entries on the analysis grid are interpretations.

The main theoretical decision to be made was how I would approach and record a multi-layered interpretation of the children’s stories, and I did have concerns that the use of the grid as formulated would deconstruct the stories rather than developing a holistic appreciation of them. The main advantage of the grid in its current form was that it ensured that each perspective was considered for all the stories, and I could not just focus upon the areas of interpretation of most interest to me. The disadvantage of the compartmentalized recording format however, was the difficulty of categorizing the many utterances that were

open to alternative interpretations. One instance of this is discussed in Chapter 4 when I attempt to analyze the particular evaluative devices used in the stories and I exemplified the difficulty with Tessa's introduction of a story character as "an angry spider with very angry eyes". Could this phrase be categorized as an example of repetition or of an intensifier, and was it a phrase deliberately created for effect or was the repetition indicative of a limited vocabulary to express the meaning the storyteller wished to convey?

From the use of the grid in this research, I have come to view this particular format and level of analysis as an invaluable tool for one aspect of a holistic interpretation of the children's stories. I now see it however as just one layer of interpretation. The first layer of interpretation occurs whilst the teacher listens to the stories that the children tell. In this research, I always attempted to listen wholly and fully to the stories told and to interact as a listener to a story-teller. The meaning and impact of the story were the areas of prime consideration, and I was aware of the inevitable "gap between what the speaker intends and what the listener understands" (Grove, 1998:6). The second process of interpretation was the use of the analysis grid, and it was only at this point that I deconstructed the stories told and widened the perspectives from which I engaged with them. The third and fourth processes of interpretation were those that could only take place over time. The third level of analysis is essentially the content of Chapter 4, where I was able to make interpretations about the developments and connections that took place across the stories, and how these were influenced by the changing context of the classroom. The final and essential level of interpretation however, was the synthesis of the compartmentalized analyses into the creation of a story about each individual child in Chapter 5. The third and fourth levels of analysis and interpretation only took place in such detail because of the requirements of the research process, but I now recognize their importance for enriching any attempt at multi-perspective interpretation in the classroom. The analysis grid will only be fully effective within the four-level framework outlined above.

What are the strengths and limitations of the individual assessment and evaluation methods on the grid?

This was one of the sub-questions that I posed in order to contribute to an overall evaluation of a multi-perspective analysis of children's stories. The particular analysis grid as formulated of course is only one of many alternative models that could have been created.

Its particular combination of perspectives has already been evaluated at the end of Chapter 4, and certain sections of the grid were identified for alteration. The most significant of these was the way in which I had chosen to represent the elements of narrative structure by recording the beginning, high point (climax) and resolution (or ending) of the stories. I concluded that I would have a more all-encompassing section entitled "narrative structure", and that this would include not only the isolated elements of the story as previously mentioned, but also the links between these that maintained narrative coherence. In the final analysis I categorized some of the stories according to the way in which they fitted Applebee's (1978) six basic (and progressive) types of narrative structure. There are a range of models that could be used to analyze structure including Stein and Policastro's (1984) model of the critical dimensions in goal-directed action sequences (in Bamberg, 1997: 8), high-point analysis (Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Peterson and McCabe, 1983; Norrick, 2000 in Grove, 2007:254), the proairetic and hermeneutic codes of Barthes (1970) or a different form of analysis altogether using Lacan's proposal (in Fox, 1993:48) that linguistic structure is constituted from meaning to meaning rather than from event to event. It would be interesting to analyze stories using a combination of these approaches as each demonstrates a range of different competencies. Many of these are in the cognitive domain, but any telling of a story requires understanding of the intentions of the protagonists, the needs of listeners for coherence and the import of highly evaluated events (social and emotional understanding).

The strengths of each section on the grid were the focus they allowed for all perspectives to be fully explored. The findings that arose from each section were all interesting in their own right - and surprisingly so in some instances; for example the discussion that arose about the inter-relationship between quality and quantity from something as simple as a word count. Other sections that had the potential for wide-ranging and multiple interpretations (the section on the cultural code for example) suffered at times from my own lack of experience in viewing stories from that perspective. This was not a limitation of the particular sections however, but of the interpreter; highlighting the obvious conclusion that any tool for analysis and interpretation is only as perceptive as the person using it.

Other sections where I could not always include enough detail for useful interpretation were those that relied on detailed field-notes. These included all elements of the story-telling that

relied on non-verbal communication; for example - the emotional meaning and intensity conveyed through “stress, pitch change, pause, gestures and facial expression” (Grove, 2007:254) and the impact of a story on the audience for whom it was intended. When I had made sufficient records of my observations these could transform my analysis. One simple example is Joshua’s basic story about a rocket flight to another planet. The consecutive phrases “Going to a planet...an alien planet” are bland without knowledge of the way in which the story was told – with a dramatic pause between each phrase and an intonation of the words “alien planet” that clearly intended to inspire feelings of wonder and fear in the listener.

The limitations of each section of the grid arose from the same quality as their strength – the delimitation of their particular focus. The overall strength of the interpretive process was in the complex view it proffered and the opportunities to make connections between sections.

What is revealed by the various analyses, and how can these findings be used when planning future provision and learning experiences for the children?

This was the second sub-question posed in Chapter 2, and it emphasizes the essentially practical use I envisaged for the analysis grid, as part of the assessment and evaluation procedures used in the classroom. As indicated in the section above, the various analyses revealed a wide-range of information with the possibility of many alternative interpretations. To give an example of the range of analyses it offered, it is possible to compare the DLS analysis where, (for example) Lauren’s low score against these criteria revealed that she frequently omitted the main subject from her sentences, with the analysis of the differences in story themes between boys and girls that concurs with the stories told by children in Gussin-Paley’s classrooms and the findings of Nicolopoulou that:

“Girls give their stories coherence and continuity by structuring their content around stable and harmonious social relationships...especially (though not exclusively) family relationships...Boys stories are marked by movement and disruption...a striving towards excitement, novelty and excess...a positive fascination with disorder” (Nicolopoulou in Bamberg, 1997: 205-206).

These two examples of analysis range from an interpretation relevant to one child about one specific language skill to an interpretation relevant to the whole class and possibly to the whole education system within Western cultures.

Clearly the way in which each of these findings can be used when planning future provision and learning experiences for the children will be very different. The first instance is the far more familiar situation where Lauren will need opportunities to develop her naming vocabulary and also to practise sentence structures containing the main subject. The second example perhaps highlights why as teachers it is often easier to confine ourselves to the small, de-contextualized concerns of education, because the challenge of how findings such as differences in gender can be used in planning future provision is scope for many more theses. As with almost every element of this research however, even Lauren's example is not as straightforward as it first appears. When the contexts in which her stories took place were analyzed alongside their DLS scores it became apparent that certain contexts increased the likelihood of Lauren including a main subject in her sentences, and these contexts were those where it was imperative to distinguish between characters in her stories; for example that it was hippo rather than zebra who saves giraffe from the giant spider. This knowledge of the contexts in which certain skills are more likely to be demonstrated is vital in planning future learning experiences. It also highlights the benefits of working from a model of strengths rather than deficits, since it is looking at the contexts in which children are most successful that provides the most clues as to how to plan future provision for them.

This discussion highlights one of the areas that needs to be included on the grid for future use; details of the adult and peer interaction that takes place before and during the storytelling process. Whilst some details have been included in the description of the story contexts for this research these are not in enough depth or related to individual children. This relates to a recognition of Vygotsky's view of the "zone of proximal development" where he posits almost uniquely that much more can be learned about children by analyzing what they can do with assistance rather than what they can do independently. "The actual developmental level characterizes mental development retrospectively, while the zone of proximal development characterizes mental development prospectively....allowing not only for what already has been achieved but also for what is in the course of maturing" (Vygotsky, 1978: 87).

One final point for discussion in this section is related to what the analyses reveal about the children's concept of a "story", and to relate this to two assertions made by different researchers about the relative benefits of fictional and personal narratives. Fox is clear that:

"Fairy-tales and other fantasy forms probably lend themselves to a greater degree of elaboration than narrating a real-life experience...until the non-narrative genres have been learned, children use story to sort out their own knowledge and ideas, for this is implicit in the effort to create story worlds which are credible if not "real" in the sense that we actually see them before us" (Fox, 1993: 194).

McCabe however asserts that:

"The factual stories of young children struck me as substantially more original than their fictional ones, as if the constraints of veridity to facts of their lives compelled them to narrate in a unique way...by contrast their attempts at fiction seemed to consist of recycled stories that they had heard from books or watched in movies or on television" (McCabe, in Bamberg, 1997: 138).

The findings in this research seemed to reveal two clear points. The first is that the children all knew what was expected of them when they were asked to "tell a story" and all of them chose to tell fictional stories in third-person narratives (even although I would have accepted a personal narrative if this was how the child chose to respond). This is possibly a reflection of the contexts in which the stories were elicited as most of these had a fictional tale as their stimulus. The fact that there was often no other clear link to the stimulus story however, seems to contradict McCabe's findings that fictional stories are often mere recalls. This may be that the children did not possess the cognitive skills to recall the stories they had heard, but I think that it was far more that they chose to tell stories about the issues and experiences that were important to them, and used symbolic language with which to interpret and convey these experiences. In many ways their stories are a melding of the two genres. Indeed, as Fox found "the subject matter of most of the stories is the children themselves...in terms of the way they felt about things...in this sense all stories must be profoundly autobiographical" (Fox, 1993: 20).

What do these findings indicate in terms of future provision for the children? The first is to continue to develop a learning environment rich with symbolic language and fictional storytelling, but also to establish an environment that allows for stories of personal exploration in whatever genre for the children to establish a sense of their own self-narrative.

Theoretical Implications.

The theoretical implications of these discussions link firstly with those theories that seek to undermine any widespread validity being given to narrow attempts to “measure” the process of education:

“Accuracy in assessment is related inversely to the complexity and the sophistication of what is being assessed...educational assessment can be regarded as measurement only in the broadest possible sense” (Kelly, 1992:4 in Carr, 2001:11).

Links can also be made with the work of Vygotsky and his emphasis on the primacy of the interaction that takes place between a child and the more experienced adult or peer (the learning context), and also with some recent moves in assessment practice that seek to evaluate the whole context within which learning takes place; the notion of “distributed cognition”, which is described as:

“The “person plus”... the surround – the immediate physical, social and symbolic resources outside the person – participates in cognition, not just as a source of input and receiver of output, but as a vehicle of thought...the learning process becomes a “transaction”. Individual learners engage in activities and their participation changes the activities whilst at the same time they are changed by the activities” (Carr, 2001:8).

Both Carr and Vygotsky see little value in a de-contextualized assessment and analysis process, and it is the interpretation of the contextualized learning that enables us to establish greater understanding of the meanings that are being explored by children. This links also with the importance of establishing a pedagogy that supports the emergence of different meanings rather than an approach interested only in homogenous prescribed outcomes:

“If educators wish to encourage the emergence of meaning in the classroom, then the meanings that develop in that classroom, cannot and should not be pre-determined before the “event” of their emergence” (Osberg and Biesta, 2008: 314).

Whilst the multi-perspective analysis in this research sought to incorporate the context in which the stories were told, the methodology of data collection limited this attempt and will be adjusted for future use. This links also with the underlying approaches that were incorporated into the interpretive procedures and those that were omitted. Whilst consideration could be given to cognitive, social constructivist and interpretive approaches, I was not able to incorporate the interactivist approach of Quasthoff. In light of the

implications outlined above, some analysis at least should be carried out of the interactions between story-tellers and their audience. This will be even more vital if I move to interact more with the children than I did during these tellings.

Quasthoff focused on parent-child interactions to create narrative and describes how:

“...achievements that can be ascribed to the child ... (are) the dyad’s joint accomplishment. In doing so, she successfully changes the focus from the child’s achievements to the adult’s activities that facilitate the child’s narrative activities and competencies” (Bamberg, 1997: 48).

Of particular interest also is her assertion that:

“Our finding (is) that adults vary their conversational behaviour in very subtle, but highly systematic and measurable ways according to the age of their child partners, and thus contribute to the establishment of age as a piece of social reality” (Quasthoff, in *ibid*: 53).

This is of interest for two reasons; the first is that in order to reflect upon our practice it is important as teachers to analyze and reflect upon the interactions with the children that are of such primacy when working within the zone of proximal development. The second is the suggestion of Quasthoff that our social interactions can actually bring into existence what we see as a pre-given piece of reality – the capabilities of children at particular ages. Her relevance to this research is clear when we reflect on how we interact with children with diagnosed learning and language difficulties. I am not suggesting that we determine these by our interactions with the children but that the process of interaction may have more influence than we ever consider. To return once more to Vygotsky for example, he recognized that an educational belief current at his time of writing (that children with learning difficulties could only operate at a concrete and representational level) led to limitations on the educational experiences they were offered.

“Precisely because (these) children when left to themselves, will never achieve well-elaborated forms of abstract thought, the school should be making an effort to push them in that direction and to develop in them what is intrinsically lacking in their own development...concreteness should be seen as necessary...only as a stepping stone for developing abstract thinking – as a means, not an end in itself...the notion of a zone of proximal development enables us to propound a new formula, namely that the only “good” learning is that which is in advance of development” (Vygotsky, 1978: 89).

Similar sentiments were also expressed by Lowe (2007) in relation to the expectations and educational provision for all children:

“This study has presented evidence against those who claim that children cannot cope with fantasy or with anything they have not encountered in the physical world or with complex ideas or even with unfamiliar vocabulary” (Lowe, 2007:163).

PART 2: Are the learning and language difficulties of the children apparent within the stories told – and can any development of their linguistic and story skills be identified within them?

When the stories told by the children in this research are compared to those told by children in other research studies (for example, Gussin-Paley and Fox), it is apparent that the language and learning levels of all the children in this research are at a developmental level much younger than that of their chronological age. Bamberg describes how:

“ Three-year olds depict story characters mainly in terms of motion and existential predicates...it is rare for three-year olds to elaborate on reasons for happenings...Five-year olds make more references to mental states and marked causal relationships between events more than others” (Bamberg, 1997: 109).

When reading the stories from the research in Appendix 5, it is easy to conclude that nearly all of these could be categorized into the descriptions given above for the stories told by children between three and five years of age (with very few at the five-year old level). This is also reflected in the fact that many of the stories were assessed as being within the P levels rather than the National Curriculum level descriptors as would be the expectation for children aged between 6-8 years old. Such conclusions are not surprising or particularly worthy of further discussion, apart from one important caveat when comparing the developmental and chronological ages of children. Even if a child is deemed to be displaying only the competencies of a much younger child, these competencies are not directly comparable with those of the younger child. An example of this can be seen when Poppy's second story (the re-telling of the aboriginal tale) is interpreted as an example of a “heap” in terms of Applebee's (1978) progressive model of narrative structure; a story equivalent to one told by a 2 –year old. The language and subject-matter however, are clearly not that of a 2-year old and this highlights the general difficulty of comparing the skills of older children with learning difficulties with their so-called younger –age equivalents. It also highlights the importance of respecting and receiving stories of as expressions of

meaning in their own right, not just “inchoate starting-points on the road to later competence” (Nicolopoulou in Bamberg, 1997: 189).

When the children in this research told their stories, they utilized all of the language skills at their disposal in order to convey their meanings. The stories therefore demonstrated a unique profile of each child in relation to their particular abilities and difficulties. This was exemplified initially in the length of the stories they told. Stein and Albro connected story complexity with length (in Bamberg 1997:22) and a comparison with the length of the stories told by the children in this research and in Fox’s shows a marked contrast. Sundari told 19 stories in Fox’s research and the total word count for these was 7195 (Fox, 1993: 54). This compares with 1422 words for the 19 stories told by Joshua in this research and he was one of the most prolific in the group.

However, comparing the length of the stories told by each of the children within this research group led to some interesting insights into their particular individual difficulties and the implications of these. Poppy, Tessa and Lauren had the lowest total mean word counts, and they were the children with the most specific language difficulties. Charlie and Joshua’s main area of difficulty was with phonology and this did not affect either their comprehension of language or their ability to construct sentences. James was the child who had been an elective mute, and the main issue for him was the provision of an environment that gave him both the motivation and confidence to communicate. This clearly shows the importance of a pedagogical approach that responds to “unique individual differences” (Lewis and Norwich, 2005:6).

Another example of differences between the children can be identified in their description of characters for their stories when they have produced a picture of these prior to the storytelling. Poppy, Tessa and James nearly always describe literally what they can see, although James is able to do so in far more detail. Emily, Charlie, Joshua and (to a lesser extent) Lauren are starting to engage more imaginatively with their creations and to develop abstract ideas that, although inspired by their concrete representations are not bound by them: For example, Charlie’s dragon who has “*purple sparkles and red wings so that other dragons can see him in the night-time*”.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications that arise from discussion of this question are closely related to the practical implications looked for in the sub-questions that I included with this research question in Chapter 2: How can story-telling complement other interventions to develop speech and language skills for children with MLD and how can the practice in this research be adapted and developed for future use?

A key implication is that story-telling is a rich form of discourse that encourages the children to speak at length. The importance of this was highlighted by Fox when she compared the mean and range of T-unit lengths in the stories told by her children with those in previous studies and found that:

“The comparison places each of my children several years ahead of development. It is also noticeable that the ranges of T-Unit length are much greater for my children. I tended to favour the context and discourse mode in my study as the explanation for my results” (Fox, 1993: 55).

Two particular findings in this research were (as previously mentioned), the much shorter length of the stories told by the children (thus affecting their mean T-unit lengths) but stories that nevertheless included a wide range of T-unit lengths (similar to Fox’s findings). I also noted that in at least one story over the year each child was able to formulate a T-Unit that was between 18 to 21 words long. The relevance of T-Unit length is its correlation to syntactic complexity (Fox, 1993:55), an area of identified difficulty for all of the children in this research.

The implications of these findings seem to support Fox’s view that storytelling is a rich form of discourse for children to develop their language skills. It has a close parallel with play, seen by Vygotsky (1978) as a zone of proximal development where a rule has become a desire and thereby:

“Children tell their stories earnestly, with effort, straining to utilize their knowledge to make their stories work...yet at the same time they are telling their stories for fun, because they want to...” (Fox, 1993: 28).

I was also aware that within the school setting, children are often not given opportunities or reasons to speak at length, and this could be a particular issue for children with MLD for

whom expressive language requires considerable effort as they deal simultaneously with the challenges of sequencing, word finding and sentence construction.

The use of storytelling is also a way of immersing children in the symbolic language they can use to metaphorically explore their developing identities and relationships; so often speech and language interventions focus only upon the functional aspects of communication – clarity of pronunciation, naming vocabulary and sentence construction. However the language of stories introduces them to the magic and power of language other than its functional qualities. This was conveyed evocatively by Wolf when she described her daughter's use of story language:

“Lindsey's... words reflected the musicality as well as the stylistic variances of story language... when Lindsey really wanted something she pleaded “I beg you!” And if she was unsuccessful in her quest she threatened punishment: “And you shall have no pie!” Such language transformed her character, even if only momentarily... to given her power and a role far beyond that of pre-schooler or just big sister” (Wolf and Heath, 1992: 89).

The efforts of the children in this research to use all the knowledge about language at their disposal created some evocative and creative descriptions – for example Poppy's “wake-up hopper” and Tessa's description of a storm – “there growed a wind”. However, the power of their stories was often limited by their specific language difficulties and I was aware that they were often frustrated in their desire to communicate meanings and impress their audiences. Lauren for example is clearly desperate to scare her audience during participation in the inter-active story telling session of “Come with Me”; all her body language and vocal expression create tension yet the scariest character she can create is “a green thing with ten legs”. One of the conclusions that I therefore drew from this research was that storytelling was indeed a rich form of discourse for children's language development but that this could be supported by specific, more outcome-driven language interventions that developed specific areas of language – in Lauren's case for example, above she could be taught specific nouns and adjectives to describe a scary creature. Children's engagement with such teaching situations however may well be much greater if the knowledge they are taught links clearly with the meanings they wished to convey.

PART 3: DO THE STORIES REVEAL THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONCERNS OF THE CHILDREN?

The social and emotional concerns of the children were at the heart of almost every story they told, and indeed it was these concerns that gave meaning to the spoken texts they created, just as they also gave meaning and motivation to their play. “ In play the child says I can “do” this well, I can “be” this effectively –in storytelling the child says “This is how I interpret and translate right now something that is on my mind” (Gussin-Paley, 1990: 10). When the recurring themes explored by the individual child were interpreted, different concerns could be identified for each of them. For example strength, fighting and speed were all central themes in Charlie’s stories (in direct contrast to his actual physical build) and I interpreted that one of his favourite images – a magnificent dragon– encapsulated everything he wished to be. Emily in contrast appears to be on a mission to create a wholly “good” world with her recurring images of friendship, family love and “having tea”. I have interpreted these as Emily’s projection into stories her desire for consistent harmony – both within her social world and within her own emotions and behaviour.

The development of the characters in the children’s stories could also be seen as reflective of their own levels of emotional development and social cognition. There were very few references to the inner worlds of the characters and there are only two connections made across all the stories between characters’ affective and motivational states. There was no lack of physical interaction between the characters in the stories however and indeed this level of social interaction was reflective of much of the children’s play with toys. Play for Charlie, Joshua, James (and to a lesser extend Lauren), largely consisted of action and conflict and the play of Poppy and Tessa was often pre-occupied with random kissing and cuddling and looking after babies.

In Chapter 4 I related this over-riding emphasis on actions as determiners of relationships with the children’s level of social and emotional development by reference to Selman’s 5 levels of friendship. Using this hierarchy, it seems that the children in this research were very much at level 1 where “ a friend is primarily viewed as someone who gives them help or plays how they want to – but they do not perceive the responsibility of reciprocity” (Selman, 1980 in Roth (ed), 1995: 56).

The social and emotional development of the children is conveyed also through the way in which their stories are evaluated, and this highlights again the inextricable link between these social and emotional aspects of development. An analysis of the range of emotions created in the stories shows not only that there are very few references to the more complex emotions of guilt, courage or anxiety, but also that there is a clear gender divide in the emotional climates of the stories. The stories of the girls are notable for their many references to, or enactments of happiness and friendship and the boys for equally high references to, or enactments of anger and dislike (with Lauren midway between the two).

Theoretical Implications

It was Labov, who first focused on the appeal of stories to our emotions and that “fear, danger, excitement and pleasure are at the heart of what makes a story worth listening to” (Labov, 1972 in Fox, 1993: 27). The use of evaluative techniques however is a skill that unites not only the social cognition and emotional literacy of children, but reflects also their cognitive development. Peterson and McCabe found that the frequency of use of evaluative devices increased “substantially” with age and that younger children were far more likely to use repetition. References to speech, hedges and references to cognitive states were particularly found to relate to increased maturity. “All three of these devices need some degree of cognitive sophistication, because one needs to encode the processes of thinking per se to represent uncertainty and cognition” (Peterson and McCabe, 2001:809).

The children in this research certainly replicated this finding, and it was noticeable also that they used far fewer evaluative techniques than the even younger children in Fox’s (1993) study. It is possible that this was due to a combination of factors – both that they were less versed in the traditional highly evaluated stories to use as models for their own storytelling and also that they had specific difficulties with social cognition. “Although the original research on theory of mind focused on people with autism, there is now a recognition that social cognition is problematic for a range of people with learning disabilities” (Park, 1995; Yirmaya et al. 1999 in Grove and Park, 2001:10). The practical implications of such findings is that the development of storytelling skills in children must be focused on far more than a development of cognitive and linguistic skills and is enhanced when it becomes a genuine social interaction whether with an adult or with peers.

Indeed, storytelling is quintessentially a social activity and Bamberg states how:

“The lexicosyntactic choices reveal the double-positioning process and show how the two levels of constructing a (textual) reality and enacting an interpersonal, social relationship developmentally emerge and have an impact on each other” (Bamberg, 1997:125).

This process was never clearer than in the dramatizations of the children’s stories that took place both in this research and in the classrooms of Gussin-Paley:

““ Creeped downstairs” comes from Ira. Every year certain phrases are planted and take root, the shoots continually coming up in stories and in play....the use of a communal symbol is as tangible a demonstration of socialization as the agreement to share blocks and dolls....we read at least two books a day to the entire class...yet the literary symbols and traditions taken up by a roomful of children are most likely to originate in their own stories” (Gussin-Paley, 1990:40-41).

From the children’s stories in this research we can identify also the ways in which their stories develop in a community of storytelling. Certain nouns for example transform into symbols of glamorous danger in the boys’ stories - shark, gangster, cheetah and dragon – and an adjective used to good effect in one story will be echoed in other stories at a later date. Telling stories that were to be enacted also revealed levels of social and emotional understanding that might never have surfaced in stories told only to an adult. When creating these “plays” the children often showed themselves to be remarkably astute in knowing what part another child would like to play in their story. Even Poppy, whose level of social understanding I had previously under-estimated, knew that in order to encourage the boys to act in her stories she had to make subtle changes. Thus the invitation is to play “basket ball” (whilst the girls dance) and to travel to the picnic in a “spider car”.

What do stories tell us about the social dynamics in the classroom and the wider social context in which the children live?

The stories revealed much about the social dynamics of the classroom, and indeed the themes of the stories often reflected in the images that were the currency of play for the children, whether these were of football, gangsters, dinosaurs, parties or parks. The seriousness with which the children dramatized their stories belied any notion that they were “make-believe”, but viewed rather as genuine ways to establish identity and position in the social fabric of the classroom. I will return to a discussion of particular story themes in the next research question concentrate in this section on one particular finding relating to the

wider social context in which the stories were created; the differences in the style and content of the stories told by the girls and by the boys.

The findings in this study clearly reflect those of Gussin-Paley that “no amount of adult subterfuge or propaganda deflects the five-year old’s passion for segregation by sex...boys set the tone and girls follow on parallel paths” (Gussin-Paley, 1984: ix), and the stories were also similar to those interpreted by Nicolopoulou that led her to the conclusion that:

“The stories are dominated by two highly distinctive gender-related “narrative-styles” ...two different ways of world-making...to summarize briefly and schematically, girls’ stories show a certain strain towards “order”, whereas boys’ stories show a “strain towards disorder (Nicolopoulou in Bamberg, 1997: 205).

The implication for practice seems overwhelmingly to be that we can only honour these differences, yet I still find this conclusion deeply unpalatable. I do not seem to have come so far in my journey as Gussin-Paley in trying to “love Darth Vader” (1984: xii) and share Tutchell’s view that:

“Left to their own devices children can be very inventive, but they can also fall into the rut of mimicking or rehearsing stereo-typical behaviour, picked up from those around them and from the media (Tutchell, 19 :28)... It is therefore important that what Langer (1953) terms the “virtual experience” they engage with through works of fiction helps foster a questioning and critical attitude to gender stereotypes” (ibid: 23).

However, I have no clear ideas as to how I will practically approach this in the classroom. My next research focus should possibly be to face my demons and explore ways of interacting with children in their imaginative play and story-telling to engage them in dialogue with alternative viewpoints and ways of thinking and acting, without becoming a coercive agent of enculturation with my own prejudices.

PART 4: WHAT THEMES CAN BE IDENTIFIED ACROSS THE RANGE OF STORIES – AND ARE THERE ANY PATTERNS AND CONNECTIONS OVER TIME?

This question could probably have been incorporated as part of the previous question, as the themes of the children’s stories would undoubtedly reveal the emotional and social issues of most concern to them. One of my interests at the start of the research had been to

see if the themes in the children's stories would reflect those identified in other studies (Pitcher and Prelinger, 1963; Ames, 1966 and Fox, 1993):

“Violence is a strong theme...so are birth and death, eating, fights, threatening adults ...animals /monsters...the children deal in metaphorical form with major fears such as abandonment, punishment, pain and death, the anger of parents, the jealousy of siblings, loneliness and helplessness” (Fox, 1993: 22).

These themes were indeed all explored by the children in this research with the most prevalent being good versus evil (and the ensuing conflict). Other common themes were life and death (including explorations concerning the permanence of death or otherwise), separation (independence) versus togetherness (being at home), and exclusion (no friends) with inclusion (playing). This last theme particularly occupied also many of the children in Gussin-Paley's classroom.

It was the oppositions and different viewpoints in the children's stories that allowed for the dialogic relations theorized by Bakhtin and described by Edmiston as creating the “value-laden images of life-events...that are contemplated for meaning...and represent a struggle between two different value systems” (Edmiston, 2008: 70). This relationship did not only occur within the individual stories (for example between the bad man dangling from the rock and the good rhino who saved him in Charlie's story), but also between the images and characters shared as part of the classroom community. There was, for example the unspoken dialogue between the images of conflict and violence (a giant with a gun or a dragon with poisonous spikes) and the images of friendship and harmony (rainbow man who always smiles a lot or a good witch who plays with her baby).

It may be making a huge and unfounded theoretical leap, but this process of community storytelling could possibly be seen as an exemplar of a curriculum that is a “space of emergence”:

“Because human subjectivity emerges only when one acts with others who are different (Arendt, 1958, Biesta 2006), this means that education only takes place where “otherness”-being with others who are different from us – creates such a space. In this sense it is the plurality of the “space of emergence” that educates” (Biesta, 2006: 13-22).

PART 5: WHAT ISSUES ARISE FROM THE REFLECTIONS ON THE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES EMPLOYED TO PROVIDE THE STORY-TELLING CONTEXTS IN THE CLASSROOM?

This question will be explored firstly through a reflection on the learning contexts that were created for this research in an attempt to translate these principles into practice.

Reflections on the learning contexts that were used to support the story-telling

An analysis of the learning contexts in relation to their connections with “progress” (however measured) in Chapter 4, did not reveal that one context was more or less “successful” than another across all of the children. The only conclusion that can be made is the somewhat unsatisfactory (but perhaps not unexpected) one, that different contexts sometimes suited certain children better on certain days. The interaction with each context was entirely individual to each child. I was still able however to learn some general lessons from the evaluations I made after each session.

The first of these was the indication that the children needed to become familiar with a particular context before they could “perform” to their best within this. This was probably so, even for those contexts that the children seemed to understand quite readily. The activity of “Taking a Line for a Walk” in Story Context 4 (Appendix 3) for example, was surprisingly well understood by most of the class and I noted with pleasure that “no child had difficulty with the creative aspect and only one struggled with using the finished product to tell a story. In all cases an “imaginative leap” was required to see the story within the painting, but not only were the children able to make this leap in their own paintings, but also to accept it in someone else’s. Interestingly no-one said “that doesn’t look like that”, when a character was presented to the group. The one child who found this activity difficult was Poppy, but I am sure that she would have found the task easier if I had repeated it again, and the other children may also have been able to create more elaborate tales when working within known expectations. However, I did not repeat this activity, and it is only now that I am wondering why not. It was probably because I had so many ideas that I wanted to try out over such a relatively short period of time that I simply did not return to it. I think that maybe this happens too often in my classroom because of my eagerness to create novel experiences for the children. They might benefit more however from a greater familiarity and consistency that could enable them to develop deeper understandings and more

established skills. It is a balance that I shall pay more careful attention to in the future, despite my agreement with Sherratt and Peter that “consistency (can be) the last refuge of the unimaginative” (Sherratt and Peter, 2002: x).

One example of a learning context that became familiar through regular use was the sand tray, and this did indeed allow the children to develop their story-telling skills within this context. The sand tray was the opening learning context of the research, and was introduced for the first time alongside the concept of story-telling. My field-notes on this occasion were that “whilst the sand-tray itself was highly motivating, in every instance when I asked the children to tell me a story I felt as if I was intruding on and interrupting their play. The story-telling did not just emerge naturally out of the play”. However, by Story 14, when the sand-tray had been available to children for much of the year, they all combined the two tasks fluidly.

The second lesson, that in truth highlighted a phenomenon of which I was already aware, was the lack of connection made between one part of the learning context and another. This was most starkly revealed in the way that the stories told by the children rarely reflected any of the features of the stimulus story, despite the fact that the children had given every appearance of being fully engaged with the story when it was told and enacted. A similar phenomenon also occurs during many other teaching sessions. A child may have given every indication of understanding the requirements of a task during the whole-class teaching session, but this seems to have evaporated by the time s/he has travelled across the room to work at a table; and it is even harder to return to the same task without further input once a period of time had elapsed.

This raises several issues. The first is the Vygotskian assertion already discussed, that what a child can do with assistance is entirely different from what they can achieve independently. This is true of all children, but may especially be so for children with language and difficulties where difficulties with short term memory and transferring information from one context to another, makes this task even more complex. It is therefore essential that the children are given opportunities for over-learning and for applying their skills across many contexts within an integrated curriculum. This phenomenon was exemplified in Story 15 when the children had created illustrations over a few days, depicting different characters to appear in their story, but these had often changed entirely

by the final telling; demonstrating also how the urgent current concerns and interests of the child can eclipse previous ideas and learning that have ephemerally passed through their minds.

The experience of this research deepened my resolve to work more consistently in a cross-curricular way, and to make explicit the connections between the activities that are taking place. These are the notes I made after working on the story of "Nobody Rides the Unicorn": "It was testimony to the strength of this story and the puppet performance that the children were still motivated by it several weeks after the first reading. Allowing children to choose their own parts is always interesting- and it makes me wonder what attracts them to these. The excitement was immense throughout the week, and emphasized yet again the benefits of holistic cross-curricular work and also the oral and performing aspect to stories. All the children this year loved presenting assemblies and seemed to crave an audience". The stories told at the end of this week however, were not significant in terms of the incorporation of the story they appeared to have so enjoyed, nor particularly for their complexity of language. They were interesting however because each child's story did echo at least one element of the story, and the individual choice of these, was as interesting as the individual choices of characters to enact. Examples are the "magical" element that is woven into Charlie's story, the enigmatic character of the "unicorn" being central to James and Poppy's stories and the "land under the waterfall" being remembered by Lauren.

The example of this one context, serves to further highlight the impossibility of evaluating "teaching" in any linear way. If the children were "assessed" at the beginning and end of this week of work, it is doubtful that any "progress" could have been "measured"; and indeed this was probably the case over most of the individual contexts. However "progress" was clearly achieved over the period of the research. It is not possible however, to identify which particular elements either of the research project (or from elsewhere), could have contributed to this. In a similar way, although I could not often relate any of the pre-story telling activities directly to the content of the stories told, I am convinced that they did in some way create the atmosphere that enabled the particular stories that were told to be given voice. This conclusion, and the fact that each of the children reacted in different ways to the different contexts, also emphasized the importance previously discussed of contextualized evaluation and assessment over a period of time as opposed to the lingering

emphasis in schools upon “objective” and de-contextualized assessments at one given point in time.

Another important aspect of the learning contexts was whether the stories were told to me in a one-to-one situation as the sole audience, or whether they were later to be dramatized with the class. The stories that were to be dramatized were told with far more concern to create characters for friends and to re-enact particular social issues. These were truly engaging contexts for the children, and the content of the stimulus story was at best a carrier for the social issues to be explored. The dynamics of the classroom could however also be deleterious to the learning that might otherwise have taken place for an individual. From observations of Charlie over a range of different story-telling situations for example, I concluded that: “Charlie closely associated story-telling as being a one-to-one activity with the teacher (his usual first audience). He was distracted if he had to work in a group setting where he had to wait his turn, and seemed to be under pressure if working within the peer group with whom he competed socially” These two simple observations raised important questions about common classroom practice and procedures of assessment. The first was that Charlie would often “clam up” when asked to tell his stories to any other adult (although he would talk to them quite freely in other situations). Clearly different adults might then legitimately assess Charlie quite differently. The second is that children are often grouped with peers with whom they have a close social relationship, and this can affect their work and behaviour in a variety of ways. In Charlie’s case he simultaneously wanted to impress and to be included. When he was sat at a group table to tell his story, he found it difficult to develop his own ideas because he was too concerned about trying to emulate those of his friends, and was particularly distracted if Joshua and James were excluding him that day. This was different for Poppy however, who benefited from the support of her friends and was more likely to remain on task if they were doing the same thing. This returns therefore to the initial statements in this section that interaction with the different contexts was unique to each child.

How did the pedagogical principles translate into practice?

The principle of a “pedagogy of listening”.

The first of the pedagogical principles I was concerned to explore was the concept of a “pedagogy of listening” (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005: 99) and I was interested in what could be learned about the children by attempting total attentiveness, and whether there were any additional challenges to this process when listening to children with learning and language difficulties.

One of the inspirations for attempting to develop this principle into practice was the statement from Winnicott that: “Inside each child there is a story that needs to be told – a story that no-one else has yet had time to listen to” (Winnicott (1984) in West, 1992:73). Indeed one of the best aspects of this research was undoubtedly the fact that time was given to enable the children’s stories to be told and I felt privileged to be accepted by the children as an audience for these. It was not that in my previous practice I had not spent individual time with each child, but this precious time allocation was usually used for “teaching”. I would then often become frustrated because the children would take every opportunity to go “off task” and try to talk to me about their lives. I had previously interpreted this as “task avoidance” but now I am wondering if it was simply the need to talk. The use of one to one time for the telling of stories however was a successful activity for both parties. The children were free to tell whatever stories they needed to tell and I was satisfied because they were “on task” for what they had been asked to do. There had also been a significant shift in my attitude towards the children where I found myself relating to them more closely as persons rather than “pupils”; a term I have deliberately tried to avoid using throughout the writing of this research.

The allocation of time to each child for individual storytelling sessions was one way of ensuring that in at least one aspect of classroom life my attention was equally shared between the children. I read with admiration Gussin-Paley’s descriptions of the stories that were told at her busy story table, but I did not feel confident about ensuring that all the children in my class were heard equally and fully in this situation. In all classrooms there are children who demand greater attention than others, and indeed children who may need more attention than others. These children may not be the ones with the most to “say” but the ones who find the communication of their needs most difficult to express and who

therefore resort to the language of behaviour. Challenging behaviour must indeed be one of the “hundred languages” (Wood, 2005:128) of children alongside their more creative expressions. For all children, and especially so for children with a range of language and learning difficulties, a whole attentiveness is required in any attempt to fully understand and respond to their many communications; and amidst all the noise and the creations, there are the silences and the whispers that are also worthy of our attention.

I was heartened by my reflections during the research process that a conscious effort at whole attentiveness during the storytelling sessions was starting to permeate my practice across all classroom contexts. An attempt to develop a “pedagogy of listening” echoes in many ways the Buddhist practice of “mindfulness”; of being fully present in each moment and each encounter. Such practice necessitates commitment from its practitioners to a responsive/ emergent approach to the curriculum, and by listening to the children in our classes we can start to better understand their needs, strengths and interests.

An important element of the practice of active listening is the capacity it develops in us to understand the whole communications of the child (not only their spoken language) and to develop our own empathic skills and abilities to formulate appropriate responses. I am still a long way from developing such skills, but the simple act of listening and trying to understand is at least a starting-point. In classes where there is a team of adults working together, practice and understanding are deepened when all are committed to whole attentiveness and there are opportunities for the team to share its reflections. “Confucius said “To know that you don’t know is the beginning of knowing”. I think this is the way to practice. We should be modest and open so we can learn together” (Thich Nhat Hanh (1993): 12).

The principle of “playful work”.

A second pedagogical principle to be explored in the research was the concept of “playful work”, and the implications for the balance this required between a responsive and directive curriculum. I knew that the first test regarding my own position on the continuum between responsiveness and directiveness in this research may well have been if a child refused to tell a story or to take part in any of the activities within the story-telling contexts. This dilemma did not occur however since the children were considerably enthusiastic across all contexts. There was an expectation of participation in all sessions, but I would not have insisted if a child was particularly recalcitrant to or upset by what was being asked of them.

The balance I created between being directive and responsive in this research, was one where I was highly directive in the creation of the contexts in which the story-telling took place and then fully responsive during the individual story-telling and other creative activities of the children. In the creation of the contexts I used my knowledge of the children in the class at the time and also my experience of how previous classes had responded to particular activities, in order to provide them with as an enriched and varied range of learning contexts as possible. I do believe that it is the teacher's responsibility to introduce children to and support them in exploring new experiences and concepts, whilst always being prepared to modify these according to the responses of the children. A common pattern was that in each story-telling context there was an initial teacher-led activity (that also encouraged interaction), and this was followed by an open-ended playful or creative activity that allowed the children to respond in the way most appropriate to them. In the introduction of the participants at the start of this research, I stated that unusually none of them had complex emotional or behavioural needs and perhaps this explained their easy compliance with everything they were asked to do, or maybe it was the unthreatening nature of all the tasks, whose very open-endedness meant that there was no "right or wrong" response.

This leads me to the way in which I responded to the children during their story-telling and other creative activities. In the story-telling, I was so concerned to listen to and accept whatever the children offered (influenced also by my now altered view that only "unaided" assessments of the children's spoken language would be valuable and "fair") that I now think that I did not respond sufficiently. A frequent entry in my retrospective field-notes was that I wished I had asked more questions to clarify meaning. Gussin-Paley stated that:

"In an environment where people listen carefully and ask relevant questions because they need more information, story-tellers may indeed be inspired to put surprises into their stories. Inevitably, the children learn the logical implications of an unexpected outcome. It is good training for the lifelong study of cause and effect" (Gussin-Paley, 1990: 23-24).

I did not ask those questions and thereby lost an opportunity to develop some of the links and connections that were so important to the learning of the children in the class.

Whilst in future practice I would always ask genuine questions related to the meaning of a story, I still face the dilemma as to whether I would intervene in any other way; an intervention to offer possibilities of different vocabulary use for example. It is useful here to consider the following extract from Hutchin (2003) and to relate it to the story-telling in this research:

“Laevers (2002) has highlighted two key aspects of learning: emotional well-being and involvement. Involvement is related to children’s innate exploratory drive, motivation and dispositions...when children are concentrated and focused, interested, fascinated, mentally active, fully experiencing sensations and meanings...and operating at the very limits of their capabilities, we know that deep-level learning is taking place” (Hutchin, 2003: 17).

The children exhibited all of these qualities when they were telling and dramatizing their stories, with the exception possibly of “operating at the very limits of their capabilities”. The storytelling interactions that took place during the research offered up opportunities for those relatively rare and wonderful “teachable moments”, where the focus of the interaction was the story being created rather than the needs of the learner or the intentions of the teacher, and on reflection I did not make the most of these.

Throughout the course of this research (and particularly during my reflections upon the completed process) I have altered my view of the tension between a directive and responsive curriculum. Whereas previously I had viewed it as a continuum along which I had to position myself at various times, I now view my underlying pedagogy as responsive (but not non-interactive) which was where my mis-conceptions had previously arisen. The underlying principle is rather one of skilled interaction that arises from the process of responsive attentiveness. At times this interaction may simply be to be present and listen wholly to the child and at others it may involve precise input to support the child in moving forward in some area of learning. Another aspect of its responsiveness will be the part that the teacher plays in creating the whole context in which learning is enabled to take place; both in terms of the curriculum offered and the physical and emotional environments created as integral to the notion of “distributed cognition” (Perkins, 1992 in Carr, 2201:8).

The classroom and its inhabitants create a complex environment in which learning can be both enhanced and inhibited by a multiplicity of factors. The only factor over which we as

teachers have immediate control however is our teaching (essentially synonymous with interaction), and we are thus duty-bound to reflect upon this as honestly and as intelligently as we are able.

This reflection was central to another question that arose from the concept of “playful work”: How can we best interact with children to engage them in a playful approach to learning and are there additional scaffolds and boundaries that need to be in place to support children with learning and language difficulties? The playful approach that I was seeking to encourage incorporated Meckley’s (2000) characteristics of play:

“Play is child-chosen...child-invented...pretend, but done as if it were real...focuses on the doing (process not product)...done by the players (children not adults)...and requires active involvement: Play is fun” (in Wood and Attfield, 2005: 4).

The learning contexts developed in this research were not themselves “child-chosen” but once activities had been introduced the children were allowed a considerable amount of freedom within them. If I use the activity of story-telling itself as an example, it is easy to tell from the stories told that it did meet all the other criteria of play. If we look at the other activities in the story-contexts they also meet most of these criteria. During the story-telling of course, I did not interact greatly with the children beyond being an accepting and interested listener. It is possible therefore, that one way in which adults can interact with children to encourage a playful approach is simply to provide an audience for their playful explorations and in this way give value to the activity and encourage the children to verbalize or demonstrate what they are thinking and feeling.

Another approach, and one that may be particularly pertinent for children with language and learning difficulties, is to demonstrate and participate in planned playful activities with the children. This way of working (and one exemplified in the interactive story-telling and dramatizations in this research) introduces children to new experiences and encourages them to explore different possibilities:

“When using drama, children willingly engage in contexts where the possibilities are infinitechildren become more willing to make contributions when they realize the malleable nature of the stories. They begin to understand that beyond their own ideas and desires many alternatives exist....more importantly they learn that they can be the decisive element in the situation” (Hendy and Toon, 2001: 23).

For children who do not find this easy, it is important that the adults become co-players, and honour the situations explored by the children within the play context. If the children are limited in the choices they are able to make or the possibilities they are willing to explore the adult can model this and provide a structure that will enable the children to “learn how to make creative decisions and choices within broadening boundaries” (Sherratt and Peter, 2002:xvii).

Through the process of this research I have come to regard the concept of “playful work” as useful when planning the learning contexts for the classroom, and I focus upon developing activities that share the qualities of play in that they create situations that are flexible, fun, encourage emotional involvement and allow children to explore possibilities and make choices that will be honoured.

This is still an emerging area of interest for me however, and I am particularly interested in learning more about planning for the development of “play” in children who may not spontaneously partake in playful activities. I am also exploring ways of developing both the skills that play requires (in particular with relation to social cognition and flexibility of thought), and in a creating a playful “curriculum of joy”. I am not an advocate of the outdated view that academic progress is un-important for children with SEN “as long as they are happy”; but a day without joy cannot be a meaningful one for either adult or child.

The principle of therapeutic play.

At the outset of this research I viewed “therapeutic play” as requiring separate consideration from the overall concept of play and playfulness as discussed in the section above, and was concerned to evaluate if the opportunities for therapeutic play that had been developed had been suitable and effective for the children. At the conclusion of this research however I am more inclined to view the therapeutic qualities of play as generic rather than confined to certain play activities. This concurs with Wood’s view that every play situation has the potential of becoming a “pedagogical and therapeutic encounter” (Wood, 2008). The way in which the therapeutic potential of play is realized in different contexts however will vary for individual children.

The pro-active teaching of play skills and supported involvement in play may have specific therapeutic value for those children discussed early in this research as having “special play needs”, including most obviously (but not exclusively) children with autism. “Learning to play with others draws the children into a social world – and fun, something such children do not get much of” (Cohen, 2006: 160). The “playful work” that involves children in creative activity can also have therapeutic value. Such activities (for example the creation of the clayscape in this research), can be therapeutic in themselves and whilst I could have explored the images produced more deeply with the children I did not do so because I was aware of the need for sensitivity and an awareness that :

“... the child’s image is the golden shield and it is important to stay within the world of the (creation)...and not to import meaning from the child’s everyday world. This would be like looking at Medusa” (Wroe and Holliday, 2003 : 35).

In addition to the possibilities for therapeutic play outlined above, I chose to also include a specific form of play “therapy” that the children could access individually whenever they chose. This was the sand-tray that was almost continually in use from the day it was introduced. This was perhaps the only play situation in the classroom where the children did not have to exercise their sometimes limited social skills, and when they were “safe” from the interactions of an adult. Such refuge can be important in settings where there are high pupil to staff ratios and scant opportunities for moments of anonymity. For these reasons I did not observe or report upon the play in sand-tray beyond the three times when it was used for story-telling. Apart from its popularity with all the children, I am not able to make any conclusions as to its therapeutic value, but in my future practice I will continue to provide this opportunity for individual and sensory play within the classroom.

The principle of an integrated and creative curriculum.

The earlier discussion of the learning contexts that were developed for this research, hopefully describes how some aspects of this principle were translated into practice, in particular the ways in which the storytelling contexts integrated aspects of learning from all curriculum areas. It is this integration that allows for the development of “whole” ideas that connect learning and experiences from all areas of life. However, I do feel that I did not develop this aspect of the research as fully as I could have done, taking it rather as a “given” of my classroom practice. The danger of this is now apparent because I did not actually explore in great detail the links that were developed, and my over-emphasis upon the

spoken words of the children negated my stated commitment to valuing all modes of communication (the “hundred languages”) equally. In future practice I will look to develop my skills in attending to, interpreting and responding to the multi-modal communications of the children.

A second way in which the provision of an integrated and creative curriculum could possibly be evaluated is looking at whether or not the children were enabled to demonstrate creativity. The two definitions of creativity that I used to make this evaluation were those of Duffy and Sherratt and Peter:

“Connecting the previously unconnected in ways that are meaningful for the learner” (Duffy, 1998:18).”

“A creative response does not have to result in something startlingly original. Rather the significant factor is the act of creating, coming up with new ideas or products, or re-combining existing ones in a way that is meaningful to the person concerned” (Sherratt and Peter, 2002: 10).

If the criteria for creativity are taken from the two quotations above, then clearly the children were all enabled to a greater or lesser extent to demonstrate this quality. Most importantly the stories they told and the artefacts they created did indeed have meaning for them (even if these meanings sometimes changed from day to day). The difference in the levels of the children’s willingness to talk about their creations and to share them with others was marked in comparison to the disinterest they sometimes showed towards discussing completed tasks that had been adult-directed and heavily adult-supported. I was also gratified by the confidence of the children in producing and sharing creations that were noticeably different to any adult exemplar that had been modelled. There was no attempt by the children to produce replicas of these (as has previously occurred with some children I have taught). However, the social dynamics and mores of the peer group in the classroom were more influential (and possibly constraining) upon the creations produced.

I have previously discussed the disappointment I sometimes felt because the stimulus stories and the learning contexts in which they were explored did not feature more regularly in the children’s own stories, and this is indicative of a tension that can exist for teaching that claims to value creativity and originality, but also likes to see work that reflects the context in which it is created.

Theoretical Implications.

This discussion of the issues that arose from the translation of pedagogical principles into the practice of what may be called a “storytelling curriculum” (designed to complement rather than replace the wider curriculum of the class), have so far been predominantly concerned with the translation of principles into practical action. This process of translating theory into action has been described by Rosen as an attempt to create an “amazing metamorphosis...(achieved only by) the imaginative weighing of students and their history, and yourself and your history. You must trust your own inventiveness” (Rosen, 1992:171).

In this process however, I have come to reflect also on the theoretical principles themselves. If I had been asked to visualize a framework of pedagogical principles at the start of the research, I may well have offered a picture of a patchwork quilt, with the pieces somewhat randomly stitched together and without a clear concept of the positioning of the pieces in relation to each other.

The visual image I now have of the pedagogical and theoretical principles that will inform my future practice is that of a star constellation in the shape of a tree – a tree constellation. This image of a constellation is influenced by Adorno’s concept of philosophical interpretation as the interpretation of riddle-figures in “ever-changing constellations”: “In practice the subject mediates phenomena, striving to arrange them in such a way, in “constellations” that they might reveal their idea” (O’Connor, 2000:4). Adorno himself describes it thus:

“Interpretation does not meet up with meaning which already lies behind the question, but lights it up suddenly and momentarily and consumes it at the same time...the change-causing gesture of the riddle-process, not its mere resolution as such – provides the image of resolutions to which materialist praxis alone has access” (Adorno, 1931 in *ibid*: 32/34).

Each “star” in the conceptual constellation is therefore open to movement and change, and an inherent part of Adorno’s theory is that each moment of illumination will lead to a change of interpretation. For Adorno (and for educational practice), these changes of interpretation must then have their effect in practice - for Adorno in societal change whilst for myself much smaller changes in classroom practice.

The arrangement of the pedagogical principles (the “stars”), for this particular storytelling curriculum have been arranged in the shape of a tree. The three theoretical principles that form the “roots” are those I believe to be of relevance to all educational practice; the epistemological positions of social constructionism and interpretivism alongside a pedagogy of listening imbued with the qualities of phenomenological sensitivity. The “trunk star” for this particular pedagogical approach is the symbolic world of storytelling and world-making, and the two branches are the provision of an integrated and creative curriculum and a spectrum of pedagogical and therapeutic play encounters within the zone of proximal development.

It is an essential aspect of this visualization that inextricable and invisible lines should be imagined that connect each star with all other stars so that changes in one will bring about changes in others in sometimes unpredictable and ultimately unknowable ways. The spaces between each star in the constellation are representative of those spaces where meaning is created out of dialogic interplay.

Tree Constellation of Pedagogical Principles for a Story Telling Curriculum



CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS.

PART 1: Critique of Methodology.

In Chapter 3 with its discussion of the methodology governing this research and the methods by which it would take place, I identified the two ways in which I would like this research to be evaluated. The first was as a piece of “exact fantasy” (Adorno, 1931 in O’Connor, 2000: 37); a story that requires imagination but with “exactness (invoked)...and with creativity in a precise interplay with “something”” (Crotty, 1998: 47). The second was as a case study that could “transcend the particularity of its plot and protagonists... (and become) subject to thematic analysis and criticism” (Van Manen, 1990:70). Now that I have reached the point of evaluation, these seem somewhat grand aspirations, and I share with the children in my class their difficulties with self-assessment.

I have endeavoured at each point in the research to make my interpretations as transparent as possible and to abide within Adorno’s requirement that any interpretation is kept “strictly within the material which is (presented) ... and reaches beyond it only in the smallest aspects of the arrangement” (Adorno, 1931 in O’Connor, 37). Any conclusions drawn or implications suggested for future practice have hopefully been closely supported with evidence from the children’s storytelling.

The aim of this small-scale and specific case-study to “transcend” its particular context has also hopefully been achieved. I certainly felt that there were emerging themes and areas for discussion that could be extrapolated from both the cross-sectional and individual case-study analyses in Chapters 4 and 5. My concerns that I should not make any exaggerated claims beyond my own classroom practice for the findings of this research, combined with my ingrained instincts as a teacher to think always at the level of practical application did sometimes mitigate against my role as a researcher and the requirement to illuminate the wider theoretical implications of the findings.

I am still committed to the importance of teachers as researchers in their own classrooms, but the role of participant researcher did impact on the quality of the research in other ways also (in particular the data that was collected). In the evaluation of the analysis grid it was apparent that the interpretation of the children’s storytelling would have been greatly enhanced if I had been able to collect more detailed field notes and observational data –

particularly in relation to the non-verbal elements of the children's communications. If it had been possible to film discretely in the classroom without altering its dynamics the resulting analyses of all the children's communications would undoubtedly have hugely enriched my understanding and interpretations. In future practice I am going to explore the relative implications of using recording equipment or written observations to collect information about the children's non-verbal communications that so greatly enhance the meanings that they wish to convey. The advantage of using recording equipment is the possibility it would provide for analysis of the effect of the adult interactions with the children (again both verbal and non-verbal).

The interpretive methodology suited this particular research well, although therein also lay one of its difficulties. Whilst I was not searching for "truth", I was continually aware of the subjectivity of my interpretations and this concern was deepened by the words of Lowe's daughter on reading her mother's interpretation of her reading behaviours as a child:

" If Virginia could have such a different take on what happened in this incident, there must be numerous situations right through where her assumptions did not actually match what was going on in her children's minds. Pondering on how different my child thought processes are to my adult ones, I firmly believe that an adult cannot hope to understand a child's mind; the differences are too fundamental" (Lowe, 2006:167).

I was very much a lone worker, and in future research I would endeavour to work alongside at least one other professional, and ideally to include the children's parents and indeed the children themselves.

PART 2: MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.

It is not easy to identify clear and easily summarized conclusions to this research, since the value of its findings lie very much "in the detail". One great personal lesson to arise from this research process however is that I have finally come, not only to accept that "knowledge is like living...things are always more complex" (Van Manen, 1990:156), but to value this complexity rather than always striving to simplify it.

There are clear links between some of the implications of this research and the relatively recent developments in "complexity theory" – often linked with computer science but widely

applicable to complex social systems also. An ironically succinct description of a complex system is one where there “are more possibilities than can be actualized” (Luhmann, 1985 in Cilliers, 1998: 2). Other features of complex systems include:

“...the elements have to interact and this interaction must be dynamic...the interaction is fairly rich, i.e: any element in the system influences and is influenced by, quite a few other ones...interactions are non-linear...complex systems are usually open systems, i.e. they interact with their environment...they have a history. Not only do they evolve through time, but their past is co-responsible for their present” (Cilliers, 1998: 3-4).

The applicability of this description to all educational settings (including the learning contexts and storytelling described in this research) is apparent and the application of complexity theory to pedagogy has been developed in the explorations of “emergentist” epistemologies related to curriculum development: “The epistemology of emergence calls for a switch in focus for curricular thinking, away from questions about presentation and representation and towards questions about engagement and response” (Osberg, Biesta and Cilliers, 2008). A pedagogy formulated from this thinking is one that permits us to conceive of “enlarging the space of the possible” (Osberg, 2009: v):

“ With complexity thinking...we understand the world in a more organic sense: in terms of dynamic interaction and emergence, or dynamically interacting “parts” and emergent “effects”, if you will. Since dynamically interacting “parts” may produce emergent “effects” which cannot be accounted for ...by even the most exhaustive knowledge of the prior “stages” from which such effects arose...it becomes logically possible to escape the domain of the already possible...and to explore the space of the impossible” (ibid: vii).

It is perhaps not stretching interpretation too far to suggest that the stories told by children are one such example of an “emergent event”, and elements of complexity theory influenced my “tree constellation” framework of pedagogical principles although I am aware that any attempt at representation of a complex system must necessarily be simpler than the thing modelled. “Complex systems are...by definition “incompressible”: they cannot be reduced without losing meaning” (Cilliers, 1998:7-10).

A second conclusion more closely related to the original central focus of this research concerns the value of a curriculum rich in story telling for children with language and learning difficulties. The analysis and interpretation of the stories told enabled me to

compare the stories told by these children with the stories told by children in other research studies. The overall finding was that the stories shared many similarities with the stories of the children in all of the other studies; for example the exploration of social identity through dramatization like the children in Gussin-Paley's classrooms, the themes of the stories explored by the children in Fox's research and the responses to the emotional resonance of a story explored by Grove. This bears witness to the principle behind inclusive education that the similarities between children are greater than the differences between them. The findings of this research also crucially supported Hemphill's statement that:

“What is essential is that given the appropriate “intervention”, it appears that both typically developing children and those that have learning difficulties can improve their ability to tell stories” (Hemphill, et. al., 1994 in Grove, 2005: 77).

Another central focus of the research was an open-ended enquiry into what could be learned through an analysis and interpretation of the stories told by the children using a multi-perspective analysis grid. Even though several limitations of the grid were identified, there was no doubting the value of a multi-perspective and multi-layered interpretation and the overwhelmingly richer information this provided in comparison to the standard assessment practices prevalent in schools today. Such multi-perspective approaches could provide contextualized and meaningful interpretations of children's learning in all areas of the curriculum and perhaps most particularly in those areas where problem-solving, expressions of meaning and social interaction play an integral part in the learning; for example in child-initiated play or science. Crucially for teachers it transforms the process of “assessment” into a worthwhile, meaningful and fascinating process which, I suggest, is the polar opposite of the assessment experience as it stands.

My final conclusion in this research has to return to Fox's doubt that “schools can ever provide such relaxed conditions, or if children can ever feel so confident in producing such meaningful, experimental and even excessive material for their teachers” (Fox, 1993: 4). It may be that she is right, but I can say, that for the children in this research I did at least try.

Questions for future research.

There were many questions that arose during the process of this research and many are still unanswered. There are five questions in particular however that I would like to explore further:

- Can the tree constellation framework of pedagogical principles inform the development of inclusive learning contexts for children with a wider range of difficulties and abilities than those of the children in this research? How would the learning contexts need to be adapted for children with; severe learning and language difficulties (including those with no verbal communication); autism; emotional and behavioural difficulties or with mainstream ability?
- How can a “pedagogy of listening” be further developed in the classroom to create opportunities for both regular one-to-one interactions and attentive observations of children across learning contexts by all adults working in a class? How would this change the balance of provision in the classroom and what processes would best support effective responses to the listening and observational opportunities?
- How will different levels of adult interaction affect the stories that the children tell- and how can these interactions best be analyzed to influence future practice?
- How could the principles of multi-perspective analysis and interpretation be developed to encourage more contextualized and holistic methods of assessment?
- How could I develop ways of interacting with children during their imaginative play and storytelling that encourage dialogue between different viewpoints and ways of thinking (particularly in relation to concepts of gender and conflict), without becoming a coercive agent of enculturation?

PART 4: Final Thoughts.

There are two memories that I would most like to share with the reader at the end of this research journey.

The first is a memory of the images given wing by the children in this research that returned me to its original poetic inspiration. By listening to the stories of the children I now perceive the world of the classroom differently. Whilst still aware of the children's difficulties, I no longer focus solely on mending the panes of glass, but watch in wonder as creatures fly alongside the levitating dinosaur; a dragon with purple shining scales, a big bird who eats the sky, a tiny pig playing with nobody, a sleepy ladybird and a wake-up hopper and gangsters throwing snowballs.

The second memory to take from this research is that tenet of emergentist pedagogy in which "“everyone” being educated is able to become an irreplaceable “someone”" (Osberg and Biesta, 2008: 324). A principle supremely understood by the children in Gussin-Paley's classroom who intuitively recognized stories as unique expressions of individuality.

“Just Frederick?” That was it. There would be no more. I asked the other children about Frederick's story. “Is anything different?”

“Because he's Frederick” Libby answered. She was four.

“The story only has one word you notice” I persisted.

“It's not one word” said John aged five, “It's one person”. (Gussin-Paley, 1994:50).

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APPENDIX 1

Further information on the ideas of key authors relevant to the research

Part 1: Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky (1896-1934)

Part 2: Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975)

Part 3: Theodor Adorno (1903-1969)

Vygotsky's theories on play and education are still frequently quoted in pedagogical texts. Perhaps he is most often most referred to in relation to his concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development", and also by the quotation used in Chapter 2 of this thesis (and in many other books on play), that "in play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself" (Vygotsky, 1935 in Cole et.al. (eds),1978: 102).

The translation of his work referred to in this appendix is edited by Cole, Steiner, Scribner and Souberman and entitled "Mind in Society" (1978). The editors use the rough translation of two of Vygotsky's works done by his student Alexander Luria and they state that:

"In putting separate essays together we have taken significant liberties. The reader will encounter here not a literal translation of Vygotsky but rather our edited translation of Vygotskywe have attempted to adhere ...as closely as possible to the principles and content of the work, we (hope we) have not distorted Vygotsky's meaning" (Cole, et.al (eds), 1978: x).

The work of Vygotsky links also to the social constructionist view of this thesis since he was "the first modern psychologist to suggest the mechanisms by which culture becomes a part of each person's nature" (ibid: 6). Vygotsky believed that:

"The internalization of culturally produced sign-systems brings about behavioural transformations and forms the bridge between early and later forms of individual development. Thus for Vygotsky, in the tradition of Marx and Engels the mechanism of individual developmental change is rooted in society and culture" (ibid: 7).

Tool and Symbol in Child Development: Vygotsky (1930).

In this essay Vygotsky asserts that "the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development...occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development converge" (Vygotsky, 1930 in ibid: 24). He stresses the central role that speech plays in the development of a child's practical and problem-solving intelligence, and how this "egocentric" (Piaget) speech increases concomitantly with the complexity of the task facing a child. It is also links to the development of both social (interpersonal) and then inner (intrapersonal) speech. "The history of the process of the internalization of social speech is also the history of the socialization of children's practical intellect" (ibid: 27).

Later in his essay on the internalization of higher psychological functions (1931), Vygotsky continues to emphasize internalization as the basic process in the development of the higher level psychological functions that characterize distinctively human thought and behaviour. The same transformational processes take place in the development of all these functions as in the development of the practical intellect described above:

“An operation that initially represents an external activity is reconstructed and begins to occur internally...the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one is the result of a long series of developmental events...the internalization of cultural forms of behaviour involves the re-construction of psychological activity on the basis of sign operations” (ibid: 57).

Interaction between Learning and Development (1935)

It was in this work that Vygotsky developed his theory of the Zone of Proximal Development and it arose from his rejection of the three major theoretical positions that had previously held sway. The first of these viewed stages of maturation (or development) as a pre-condition for certain types of learning (as in Piaget’s theories). The second position viewed learning as one and the same as development – with development equated with the accumulation of learned responses. The third theoretical position attempted to combine the first two positions. For “Koffka (for example) the process of maturation prepares and makes possible a specific process of learning. The learning process then stimulates and pushes forward the maturation process” (ibid: 79).

Vygotsky accepts as two basic premises to the development of his theory that “learning and development are interrelated from the child’s very first day of life” (ibid) and that “learning should be matched in some manner with the child’s developmental level” (ibid: 85). He then proceeds to outline how he arrived at his concept of the “zone of proximal development”.

“ We must determine at least two developmental levels. The first level can be called the “actual developmental level”, that is, the level of development of a child’s mental functions that has been established as a result of already completed developmental cycles....In studies of children’s mental development it is generally assumed that only those things that children can do on their own are indicative of their mental abilities.....On the other hand if we offer leading questions or show how the problem is to be solved and the child solves it....- in short, if the child barely misses an independent solution of the problem - the solution is not regarded as indicative of his mental development. Over a decade even the profoundest thinkers never questioned the assumption; they never entertained the notion that what children can

do with the assistance of others might be in some sense even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone” (ibid: 85).

On the next page in his essay Vygotsky then gives this crucial definition:

“When it was first shown that the capability of children with equal levels of mental development to learn under a teacher’s guidance varied to a high degree, it became apparent that those children were not mentally the same age and that the subsequent course of their learning would obviously be different. This difference ...is what we call the zone of proximal development. It is the distance between the actual developmental levels determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (ibid: 86).

The use of this concept and the practice of scaffolding learning are everyday language and practice in classrooms today. Vygotsky’s theory not only influenced the importance that is placed upon skilled adult interaction (and thus the use of talk) with children in teaching, but also supported developments that promoted collaborative group work amongst peers. Two aspects of the theory that have become less prominent however are firstly the fact that Vygotsky was essentially referring to learning in terms of problem-solving, and his theory is now more widely applied to all types of learning – even of closed skills. The second aspect is that Vygotsky was not just stating the now obvious fact that children can reach the next stage of their development more quickly when given carefully targeted support to do so, but that the capacity for this development differs between pupils. He explains it thus:

“(Two) children seem to be capable of handling problem’s up to an eight year-old’s level, but not beyond that. Suppose that I show them various ways of dealing with the problem ...under these circumstances it turns out that the first child can deal with problems up twelve year old’s level, the second up to a nine-year old’s. Now, are these two children mentally the same?...The two children...displayed the same mental age from the viewpoint of developmental cycles already completed, but the developmental dynamics of the two were entirely different. The stage of a child’s mental development can be determined only by clarifying its two levels: the actual development level and the zone of proximal development” (ibid: 87).

The Role of Play in Development: Vygotsky (1933)

Vygotsky immediately recognizes and describes a central tenet of children’s play; that it fulfils children’s needs. The incentive for the child to play and to play in different ways is motivated by the satisfaction of differing needs at different stages of development. “That which is of the greatest interest to the infant has almost ceased to interest the toddler” (ibid:

92). Whilst play will differ for children in different stages of development its two essential features will always be present in varying degrees– imagination and rules.

“The development from games with an overt imaginary situation and covert rules to overt rules and a covert imaginary situation outlines the evolution of children’s play” (ibid: 96).

Vygotsky could not over-emphasize the influence of play on a child’s development. “Play in an imaginary situation is essentially impossible for a child under the age of three in that it is a novel form of behaviour liberating the child from constraints” (ibid). It is in play that a child experiences for the first time “thought separated from actions....and actions (that) arise from ideas rather than from things” (ibid).

He describes how the child’s development through the different stages of play evolves over a considerable time as it is a process that transforms psychological development. It is through play that children develop their capacity to symbolize in ever more abstract ways and also their capacity for self-restraint. These difficult developments can take place because the process of play is highly-motivating and satisfying.

“The primary paradox of play is that the child operates with an alienated meaning in a real situation. The second paradox is that in play she adopts the line of least resistance – she does what she most feels like doing because play is connected with pleasure – and at the same time she learns to follow the line of greatest resistance by subordinating herself to rules and thereby renouncing what she wants, since subjection to rules and renunciation of impulsive action constitute the path to maximum pleasure in play” (ibid: 99).

Play was viewed by Vygotsky as always creating a zone of proximal development and it was in this context that his oft-quoted phrase occurs. “ In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself” (ibid: 102). His theories were influential in establishing play as an essential foundation to all future learning for children:

“Action in the imaginative sphere, in an imaginary situation, the creation of voluntary intentions, and the formation of real-life plans and volitional motives – all appear in play and make it the highest level of pre-school development. The child moves forward essentially through play activity. Only in this sense can play be considered and a leading activity that determines the child’s development” (ibid: 102-103).

PART 2: MIKHAIL MIKHAILOVICH BAKHTIN (1895-1975)

Bakhtin's relevance to this research first became apparent when he was referred to in Edmiston's (2008) recount of the mythic play of his son Michael. The quotation used in Chapter 2 of this thesis refers to Bakhtin's concept of "authoring" whereby ethical understanding is created through "the forming of value-laden images of life as events in an aesthetic space-time...the particular images...are "other" than the authoring self (and) are value-laden because they represent a struggle between...different value systems" (Edmiston, 2008:70). The second strand of relevance is in Bakhtin's emphasis upon the all-encompassing influence of the socio-historical context upon all forms of language in thought, verbal discourse and in literature. This links closely to the epistemological concept of social constructionism that underlies this research and to the plurality of meanings that must be brought to any interpretations of spoken or written language. As his translator Holquist states that Bakhtin's "extraordinary sensitivity to the immense plurality of experience more than anything else distinguishes (him) from other moderns obsessed with language" (Holquist, 1981: xviii).

I have used Michael Holquist's interpretation of four of Bakhtin's essays that he collectively entitles "The Dialogic Imagination" (1981), and referred to two of these essays – "Epic and the Novel" and "Discourse in the Novel" (1943-1935). Holquist's introduction and glossary are invaluable in explicating the major concepts of Bakhtin's work and the self-coined terms that he uses to develop his theories.

Heteroglossia

This concept is central to the development of all of Bakhtin's ideas. It is explained thus by Holquist in his glossary of terms:

"The base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance. It is that which insures the primacy of context over text. At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions – social, historical, meteorological, physiological – that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have had under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve" (ibid: 428).

Bakhtin's own words describes how:

"Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and dis-unification, intersect in the utterance –

the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language, as an individualized speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity. And this active participation of every utterance in living heteroglossia determines the linguistic profile and style of the utterance to no less a degree than its inclusion in any normative-centralizing system of a unitary language” (Bakhtin, 1935 in *ibid*: 272).

The centrifugal and centripetal forces mentioned here represent the sense of opposition and struggle at the heart of Bakhtin’s theories. The centripetal forces strive to make things cohere and are found in the “normative-centralizing system of a unitary language”, whilst the centrifugal, stratifying forces seek to keep things apart. “At any given moment a language is stratified not only into dialects in the strict sense of the word...but is stratified as well into languages that are socio-ideological: languages belonging (for example) to professions, to genres, to particular generations” (*ibid*: xix).

Importantly, Bakhtin views language as a living and ever-evolving process with each discourse influenced not only by all that is historical and contemporaneous, but also by the specific intention of the individual. The conceptualization of this process leads to Bakhtin’s formulation of another central concept – dialogism.

Dialogism

In Holquist’s glossary of terms this is explained as:

“...the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as part of the greater whole – there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others. Which will effect the other, how it will do so and in what degree is what is actually settled at the moment of utterance. This dialogic imperative, mandated by the pre-existence of the language world relative to any of its current inhabitants, insures that there can be no actual monologue” (Holquist, *ibid*: 426).

Bakhtin refines and applies this concept continually throughout both of the essays referred to in this appendix. Below is a description of dialogism in action in Bakhtin’s own words in his essay “Discourse on a Novel”.

“The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment, in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush-up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue, as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it – it does not approach the object from the side-lines....If we imagine

the intention of a word, that is, its “directionality toward the object” in the form of a ray of light, then the living and unrepeatable play of colours and light on the facets of the image that it constructs can be explained as the spectral dispersion of the ray-word, not within the object itself...but rather as its spectral dispersion in an atmosphere filled with alien words, value-judgments and accents through which the ray passes on its way towards the object; the atmosphere of the word, the atmosphere that surrounds the object, makes the facets of the image sparkle” (Bakhtin in *ibid*: 276-277).

It was this interplay of value-systems and meanings that was referred to by Edmiston, and the possibilities present within stories and fantasy play for the story-makers (the “authors”) to move between different positions. This process was indeed examined in depth by Bakhtin, but in the context of the development of the literary genre of the novel in the 18th and 19th Centuries and how this particular form of literature contrasts with the earlier prose form of the epic.

Discourse in the Novel (1935)

“The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized....The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions. Authorial speech, the speech of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and inter-relationships (always more or less dialogized)” (*ibid*: 262).

The representation of speaking characters in novels is what gives the genre its unique form and quintessential dialogic quality. The speech of characters in novels (either internal or directed towards another) constitutes a special type of “double-voiced discourse” (*ibid*: 324).

“It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. In such discourse there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions. And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they – as it were – know of each other (just as two exchanges in a dialogue know of each other and are structured in this mutual knowledge of each other), it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other. Double-voiced discourse is always internally dialogized” (*ibid*).

The links are made here between the written language of the novel (and indeed any written text) and spoken discourse in everyday life. In both cases there is a melding of the specificity

of the context and the moment that the words are spoken (or written), and the pervasive influence and interaction of social and historical heteroglossia. The verbal exchange of two people is envisioned as:

“each person as a consciousness at a specific point in the history of defining itself through the choice it has made – out of all the possibly existing languages available to it at that moment – of a discourse to transcribe its intention “in this specific exchange”...each will seek by means of intonation, pronunciation, lexical choice, gesture, and so on, to send out a message to the other with a minimum of interference from the otherness constituted by pre-existing meanings (inhering in dictionaries and ideologies) and the otherness of the intentions present in the other person in the dialogue” (Holquist in *ibid*: xix).

In the case of both spontaneous spoken exchange and crafted written discourse, language and its meanings are living and changing entities, always effected by the composition of heteroglossia or a “different dialogising background” (Bakhtin, in *ibid*: 420). Bakhtin viewed the speaking human being as essential to the novel’s representation of another world because “it is impossible to represent an alien ideological world adequately...without having first revealed the special discourse peculiar to it” (*ibid*: 335). He also recognizes the importance of the speaking person in everyday life and that “in real life people talk most of all about what others talk about” (*ibid*).

Bakhtin recognizes:

“...the psychological importance in our lives of what others say about us, and the importance, for us, of understanding and interpreting these words of others (“living hermeneutics”)” (*ibid*: 338).

This process of “living hermeneutics” – a phrase that I borrowed in Chapter 6 to describe the process of interpreting the verbal storytelling of the children – is something that takes place not only in verbal exchanges but even in the interpretation and words and images created long ago. Bakhtin concludes his essay on “Discourse in the Novel” with a re-emphasis upon the living quality of language and its openness to multiple and changing interpretations:

“ Great novelistic images continue to grow and develop even after the moment of their creation; they are capable of being creatively transformed in different eras, far distant from the day and hour of their birth” (*ibid*: 422).

PART 3: THEODOR ADORNO (1903-1969)

Adorno's relevance to this research lies primarily in his concept of "exact fantasy" which he outlined in his inaugural lecture at the University of Frankfurt in 1931, and was translated by Benjamin Snow in a publication of *Telos*, no. 31 (Spring 1977: 120-133). This translation has been included in O'Connor's "The Adorno Reader" (2000: 24-38) which is the reference I shall be using in this appendix. I was also influenced by Adorno's concept of philosophical interpretation as the interpretation of riddle figures in "ever-changing constellations" when I developed the "Tree Constellation" diagram to summarize the story-telling curriculum used in this research.

Experience: The Central Concept of Adorno's Thought (O'Connor, 2000: 10-18)

In his introduction to the collection of Adorno's writings in "The Adorno Reader", O'Connor suggests that the one concept inherent in all of the diverse subjects to which Adorno turns his attention is the concept of "experience". "Through various media Adorno presses the argument that experience might provide an alternative and potentially liberating model of rationality" (O'Connor, 2000:11).

Adorno's concept of experience is indebted to ideas outlined by Hegel in "The Phenomenology of Spirit":

"Hegel understands consciousness as the judging mind through which the world is mediated. This process is never passive in that consciousness brings presuppositions to the world....(but) human beings do change their criterion of truth...Hegel argues that this change is a rational process in that it occurs when consciousness is faced with certain pressures which challenge its criterion of truth....experience then, is the process of consciousness revising its criterion of truth" (ibid:11).

Hegel viewed this process as an ordinary and almost universal form of consciousness, the absence of which would be "unthinking inertia...inevitably challenged by the ineluctable demands of thought" (ibid: 12). Adorno however believed that "experience" as thus defined was actually absent in the many people who could not perceive the contradictions that clearly shaped their lives. These people, he posited, developed a "false consciousness" to perpetuate the myth of themselves as autonomous individuals whereas in reality society dominated and molded their lives.

"In false consciousness the subject cannot accept arguments which point to autonomy as semblance. The social constitution of consciousness entails...the foundational belief in autonomy as the self-founding essence of the individual;

without it we are nothing, non-persons. The notion that autonomy is compromised, indeed “contradicted”, by the needs of society is unrecognizable from within a false consciousness. Since this contradiction remains unrecognized, Adorno argues that false consciousness generates irrationality in that it disguises a state of affairs which has to be transformed. What is missing is the revolutionary moment of experience in which the criterion of truth is challenged” (ibid: 13).

Adorno however did not see society as an entity separate and opposed to the individual, but recognized the complex entwining of the two concepts.

“Society...is no external relation but is largely constitutive of the practices and values of the subject. The subject is also determined to an extent, by the linguistic possibilities of its context....for Adorno experience properly understood constantly undermines the model of a subject detached from its environment” (ibid:15).

One important aspect of Adorno’s concept of experience is also later essential to his description of the practices he believes constitute authentic philosophical interpretation. This aspect is the experience of particularity and the priority of the object (important also to the concept of “exact fantasy”).

“In experience subjectivity responds to what Adorno calls the priority of the object. This priority explains the process in which our concepts adjust to objects. As such it captures the experience of particularity, whereas the mechanisms of positivist thinking (which are manifest in philosophy too) grasp only the “essential” or universal” (ibid:16).

This process may also reveal how the general (society and its ideology) lies hidden within the particular.

“The Actuality of Philosophy” (1931) – Adorno (translated by Benjamin Snow)

Adorno makes clear at the start of his lecture that he rejects the claims made by earlier philosophical theories that “the power of thought is sufficient to grasp the totality of the whole” (Adorno, 1931 in O’Connor, 2000: 29). He also asserts that an understanding of the concept of the “existing being” is not available to the processes of rational thought, something that Husserl had recognized in his concept of the “non-deducible given....(highlighting) the fundamental problem of the relationship between reason and reality” (ibid:26):

“The idea of existing being has itself become impervious to questioning, for the idea could stand only over a round and closed reality, as a star in clear transparence,

and has now perhaps faded from view for all time, ever since the images of our life are guaranteed through history alone" (ibid: 29).

Following a discussion of recent philosophical theories, Adorno claims that all of these have failed in answering any of the great philosophical concerns and questions therefore, if "the authentic results of recent history ... (point to) the essential unanswerability of the cardinal philosophical questions" (ibid). He also makes a distinction between the central aims of science (research) and of philosophy (interpretation) whilst concomitantly denying both disciplines the aim of searching for "truth":

"... (and there) remains the great, perhaps the everlasting paradox: philosophy persistently and with the claim of truth, must proceed interpretively without ever possessing a sure key to interpretation; nothing more is given to it than fleeting, disappearing traces within the riddle figures of that which exists and their astonishing entwinings" (ibid:31).

In this quotation are also revealed two further important tenets to Adorno's re-definition of the purposes of philosophy. The first is his reference to "that which exists", for Adorno's conception of the world is essentially materialist whereby he sees the world as "entirely explicable in terms of human action" (ibid: 24); not by reference to some metaphysical conception of the nature of reality. This thereby leads to his belief that philosophical interpretation is not equivocal to assertions of "meaning"; "it is just not the task of philosophy toportray reality as meaningful and thereby justify it" (ibid: 31).

These beliefs shape Adorno's concept of authentic philosophical interpretation whereby:

"Interpretation does not meet up with a fixed meaning which already lies behind the question, but lights it up suddenly and momentarily and consumes it at the same time... the task of philosophy is not to search for concealed and manifest intentions of reality, but to interpret unintentional reality" (ibid:32).

This model of philosophical interpretation (or riddle-solving) owes much to Benjamin's (1928) theory of philosophical truth where he uses the metaphor of a constellation to describe the practice of philosophical truth.

"In this practice the subject mediates phenomena, striving to arrange them in such a way, in "constellations", that they might reveal their idea. Importantly, ideas are neither generalizations nor subjective reconstructions in that they are the very intelligibility and truth of the phenomena" (O'Connor: 4).

Such interpretation for Adorno was inextricably linked to social analysis and the illumination he was seeking was for a revelation of previously reified and assumed social structures. In

this sense interpretation had to be “earnest”, with understanding reaching out beyond the theoretical plane and being granted praxis:

“ The interpretation of given reality and its abolition are connected to each other, not of course, in the sense that reality is negated in the concept, but that out of the construction of a configuration of reality the demand for its (reality’s) real change always follows promptly. The change-causing gesture of the riddle-process-not its mere resolution as such – provides the image of resolutions to which materialist praxis alone has access” (ibid: 34).

The concept of “exact fantasy” comes towards the end of Adorno’s lecture and is described thus:

“An exact fantasy (is a) fantasy which abides strictly within the material which the sciences present to it, and reaches beyond them only in the smallest aspects of their arrangement: aspects, granted which fantasy itself must originally generate. If the idea of philosophic interpretation which I tried to develop for you is valid, then it can be expressed as the demand to answer the questions of a pre-given reality each time, through a fantasy which rearranges the elements of the question without going beyond the circumference of the elements, the exactitude which has its control in the disappearance of the question” (ibid: 37).

There are clearly elements of this process of interpretation used in the process of analysis in this research – as outlined in Chapter 7. However, there are also clear divergences, with perhaps the obvious being that a greater leap of “fantasy” took place in the interpretations in the research and also that an integral acceptance in the process was that the interpretations would be open-ended and open to other interpretations. The purposes of Adorno’s interpretations however were very far removed from the questions here and interpretation was viewed as...

“... no matter of approximation, nor is it one of open-mindedness. It cannot be since it aims to expose the falseness of social appearances, to reveal the illusions of second nature which sustain contemporary society” (O’Connor:23).

Appendix 2 : Ethical Approval

Part 1: Certificate of Ethical Research Approval: University of Exeter

Part 2: Copy of Parental Letter of Consent



School of Education and Lifelong Learning

Certificate of ethical research approval

STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS

You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level research (e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, then have it signed by your supervisor and by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guides.php> and view the School's statement in your handbooks.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter).

DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND

Your name: Beth McCaffrey

Degree/Programme of Study: PhD

Project Supervisor(s): Brahm Norwich/ Liz Wood

Your email address: bethmccaffrey@aol.com

Tel: (01202) 840464

Title of your project: "A Story of Stories" – "The nurturing, assessment and interpretation of story-telling by young children with language and learning difficulties"

Brief description of your research project: The use of a multi-sensory approach to story telling in the classroom to encourage the children to tell stories to be scribed by an adult. The stories will then be analyzed and interpreted, in the hope of learning more about the ways in which children use the language, symbols and themes of stories and what this can tell us about their development – cognitive, social and emotional.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

The 7 children in the class – all with a statement of Moderate Learning and Language difficulties- aged 6-8 years

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
October 2005

Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) a blank consent form can be downloaded from the SELL student access on-line documents:

The parents of the children will be shown the collection of stories to be used as data. They will have an individual meeting with the teacher/researcher to explain the use that will be made of these and given time to consider signing a letter of consent on behalf of their child (letter shown to and approved by Brahm Norwich). The children themselves will be told that I am writing about their stories and telling them to others

When collecting the stories – any references that would identify any of the children (eg: names) will be removed. In writing up the stories different names will be used to refer to the children and the school will not be identifiable in any way

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

The children will tell their stories to the class teacher/researcher as part of a lesson. The only alteration made to usual classroom practice will be that each child will receive slightly more one-to-one time with the teacher

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

To ensure anonymity – there will be no data that would identify any of the children. The recorded stories will be transcribed and the tapes re-used as is usual classroom practice. No video recording will take place. Whilst the research is on-going the children's work will be stored according to the usual practices of classroom storage.

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

To ensure that the children still receive a balanced education, and that too much time of their time not taken over by my research – my lesson plans for each week and the progress of the children across all subjects will be monitored by the Head of Department

This form should now be printed out, signed by you below and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given above and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: Brahm Norwich date: 24/10/07

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: from now until: study completion

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): Brahm Norwich date: 2/2/07

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
October 2005

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.

SELL unique approval reference: D/06/07/16

Signed: Salah D. Ali date: 27/02/2007
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from
<http://www.education.es.ac.uk/students/index.php> then click on On-line documents.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
October 2005

Part 2: Copy of Parental Letter of Consent

Dear

I am carrying out a piece of research with the University of Exeter on the development of storytelling skills in children with language and learning difficulties.

I am hoping to use the stories that your children have told in class as part of the data. The identity of both your child and the school will remain completely anonymous and you are welcome to read the research once it is completed.

I can only use the stories if you give your consent for me to do so and you are entitled to withdraw your consent at any time before publication.

Many thanks for your consideration of this request.

.....
.....

I do / do not give permission for Beth McCaffrey to use my child's stories for publication as part of her research.

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX 3: CONTEXTS FOR STORYTELLING

CONTEXTS FOR STORYTELLING

Story-Context 1: Sand tray Story (1)

Introduction to storytelling activity:

- The sand-tray and miniatures available for use shown to the children.
- Teacher then demonstrates the telling of a story using some miniatures she chooses
- Teacher-chosen objects cleared away and each child chooses one object to place in the sand-tray and encouraged to make a suggestion towards the telling of a group story.

Context for storytelling:

- Children each given 15 minutes of individual play time with the sand tray and free choice of the number and type of objects to use. They are made aware that at the end of this time they will be asked to select some miniatures and to tell a story using these.
- Teacher watches and scribes the stories as told.

Story-Context 2: “Dunbi the Owl” (Aboriginal folk-tale- told by Daisy Utemorrah; retold by Pamela Loftus)

Introduction to Story-telling activity:

- Children act out the story several times – with different children in different roles. All children will get to experience acting in 3 roles: as Dunbi when the children are being unkind to him, as the children being unkind and as Wanalirri when he is angry. “Frozen statues” to show how the characters would be looking and thought-tracking to see how the characters would be feeling.
- Rehearsal of a final acted version to present as a class assembly
- Large paintings of favourite part of the story
- Group dance as the lizard dancing across the plains
- Group composition of music to accompany the storm and the flood in the story – using – rainmakers, shakers, drums and xylophone
-

Context for story-telling:

- Children shown a selection of puppet/toy characters that can be found Australia – including lizard, snake, frog, koala, owl and kangaroo. Each child then chooses an instrument to play. They take it in turns to play an instrument and the teacher tells a story to go with each sound using the puppets/toys.
- Children then work in pairs to experiment with making their own musical story – using the selection of instruments and puppets/toys.

Story-Context 3: “Jack and the Beanstalk”**Introduction to story-telling activity:**

- Three literacy lessons based around the story of “Jack and the Beanstalk” – where the children will be involved in 3 different activities:
- Learning and performing the giant’s repeated refrain in the story “Fee-fi-fo –fum etc” – joining in with the whole class telling of the story and also performing in pairs as the giant
- Sequencing pictures and re-telling story
- Learning to recognize and write the words “and/the”. Using these words to write title for own story entitled “.....(own name) and the Beanstalk .

Context for story-telling:

- Children individually draw pictures as a four-part storyboard and dictate the story using these.
- Children then introduced to the dramatization technique of Vivien-Gussin-Paley
- Teacher will look at the stories scribed and identify with the children which characters will be needed. Each child will then act as themselves and choose other children to be the other characters. The teacher narrates the stories and the children act them out.

Story-Context 4: Take a Line for a Walk”/ “The Scribble”

Introduction to Story-Telling Activity:

- Teacher demonstrates to class the “Scribble/Take a Line for a Walk” activity outlined in Violet Oaklander’s “Windows to Our Children” (1978:37)
- Firstly she will use her whole body to make a drawing in the air using wide rhythmic movements. The children then stand up and draw in the air with their arms.
- Teacher then takes a pencil and moves it randomly over a large piece of paper – “going for a walk”. When the paper is divided into different segments by this line, teacher holds it up and models for the children how to look for a picture in the pattern drawn. She then paints in certain segments on the page to make a picture (loosely imagined)
- Children all have a go at taking a line for a walk and “seeing” something to paint within the patterns made. Adults to sit with the children and talk about their ideas as they paint.

Context for Story-Telling:

- Children bring their paintings to the carpet. Teacher demonstrates telling a story about the picture in her painting.
- Each child in turn tells their own story. The teacher does not intervene unless the child is struggling for something to say in which case she will ask some questions eg: Who is in your painting? What are they doing?

Story Context 5: “Whatever Next?” by Jill Murphy

Introduction to Story-Telling:

- Children share and act out the story 3 times – with the children providing different dialogues for the characters and during the picnic on the moon.
- In numeracy, children make rockets using cylinders and cones – with squares and rectangles for the windows and doors
- In food technology/numeracy we will make sandwiches cut into different shapes and “moon crater” cakes (rock cakes iced and covered in hundreds and

thousands). The class then has a picnic – and choose different puppet characters to visit and speak to us.

- In art the children mix paint, glue and glitter to create the background colour for their planet. Talk about the colours being “hot” or “cold”.
- In art/science children use collage materials with different textures to create a picture of the land where their rocket will land. (Adult support with cutting some of the materials).

Context for story-telling:

- The children choose one of the small teddy bears in the classroom to “fly “ their rocket to the paint and collage planet. Teacher then scribes the story that they tell. If a child finds it difficult to tell a story without prompts the teacher will ask 3 different questions. “Where is teddy now?” “What is on the planet?” “What does teddy do at the end of the story?”

Story Context 6: “On the Way Home” by Jill Murphy

Introduction to Story-Telling:

- Shared reading of text and joining in with the repeated phrases : “Look at my bad knee.....” etc!
- Acting out the verbs used to describe the characters’ movements. Charade game – where children select a picture of one of the characters in the story and have to move in that way – whilst others guess which character it is.
- Sequencing widget pictures of the characters in the order in which they appear in the story. Checking against the book
- Phonic activity – writing the dominant phonemes for each of the characters.
- Rehearsal of story for presentation at an assembly

Context for Story-Telling:

- Teacher demonstrates telling a story based on “On the Way Home” – but changes the name of the main character to herself, changes the place she is going to eg: “On the way to school”, and chooses just one character to meet.

- Children given an A5 booklet to draw a 4-part story – ready to dictate to teacher and then to act out V-G-P style.

Story Context 7: Character for class “On the Way to the Park” story

Introduction to character description:

- This activity is a continuation of the previous activities. The class will have rehearsed the Jill Murphy story to perform in assembly and they are then going to tell our class version of this called “On the Way to the Park”. In this version – the children will come forward in turn with their created characters as part of the story.
- The children describe their chosen character before painting it – so that adult help can then be given to make these large paintings representative

Context of description:

- Specific questions asked of all children, so that the paintings can be created and the characters acted out – Who is your character? What colour is it? What does it do?
- The art materials available to work from will be laid out so that the children can see the colours they may wish to use.
- The children’s description will be written down and printed out so that it can be referred to during the painting activity.

Story Context 8: “The Bad-Tempered Ladybird” by Eric Carle

Introduction to Story-Telling Activity:

- The story will mostly be used mostly during numeracy lessons on time.
- Class will act out the story and then be asked to write their own version of the story with a different bad-tempered character. Each new event has to start at a new time as in the Bad-Tempered Ladybird.

Context for Story-telling:

- Children make a time on a “clock” – and then dictate the first part of their story to the teacher. They then illustrate the first part of story. The children will be working on the same table as 2 or 3 other children for this activity.
- When the stories have been scribed they will be acted out V-G-P style.

Story Context 9: Sand tray Story (2)

Introduction to story-telling activity:

- There will be no introduction to this activity. The children will have been using the sand-tray for play/story-telling during Golden Time since the first time it was introduced. They will be told that this time they will need to take it in turns and to let the teacher know when they are ready to tell their story.

Context for story-telling:

- Children will have free choice of miniatures to use and their story will be recorded onto audio-tape for later transcription. The children will be able to listen to their stories as they are played back to them individually.

Story Context 10: “Rooster’s off to see the World” by Eric Carle

Introduction to story-telling activity:

- Examining the illustration of the rooster and making shades of different colours so that children each make 6 different coloured feathers to be used in a class illustration of a rooster
- Story acted out with individual children acting as different animals and holding up the number of animals they are to represent
- Sound effects decided upon for each of the animals and a “sound scape story” created with the introduction of different sounds each time new animals join the rooster. These vocal sounds to reach a crescendo when all the animals are together and then fade away as the different animal sounds stop when the animals leave the rooster to go back home.
- As the final activity at the end of the sound-scape story - all children (and adults in the room) pretend to be asleep and to dream like rooster that they are on a journey around the world. When they are touched by the teacher they say what they were dreaming about. The adults will be the first to be touched to model what is expected.
- Children then asked to draw and dictate a 4-part story of Rooster’s dream – ready to be acted out V-G-P style

Context for story-telling:

- Children draw pictures independently and then tell story to an adult. They will be dramatized within the same session.

Story Context 11: “Come with Me” by Maggie Walker**Introduction**

- Children shown book and told that we are going to create our own different versions of the story
- Outline of process explained – read a page together and then each child adds an idea of their own (scribed)

Context for story-telling

- Shared reading of first page – “Come with me to the dark, dark forest”. Children close their eyes to make it dark and then reach into a feely bag containing objects that might be found in a forest – for example; leaf, twig, conker, and pine-cone. Each child selects and names an object and describes how it feels (with adult prompts if necessary). Teacher then demonstrates reaching out her hands into an imaginary forest and describes what she can feel. The group will then do this with each child making a contribution.
- Shared reading of second page of the book “Can you see the dark, dark house?” and discussion of the illustration. Adult then takes book to a different part of the room and the children take it in turns to creep quietly up to the “house” and then report back to the group what it looks like (using either the illustration or their own imagination)
- Third part of the book is read and the group acts together to creep quietly up the “dark, dark staircase”. Adults model the mime – including holding onto each other/ looking scared/ saying “sssh” to each other. After the climb the children are asked what they can hear as the teacher makes a range of sounds including a vocal creak, bang on a drum, scraping on a wooden scraper, cymbals – and children given their ideas as to what the sounds might be. They then take it in turns to make a noise and to say what it is

- Return to story and shared reading of “Oh no! It was a mouse” (toy mouse made to run off behind a chair)
- Group reading of “Can you see the dark, dark cupboard? Teacher outlines an imaginary cupboard and asks adults in the room if there are any markings on it. Adults demonstrate coming to the empty space and creating a picture/pattern with their hands in the air – describing the shapes they are making. Children then take turns to do this.
- Teacher shows a plain dark wooden box to accompany the page just before the end of the book – “in the dark, dark cupboard is a dark, dark box”. Shared reading of the page and teacher starts to open the wooden box lid, but then turns the page in the book and reads/screams the word “aaaaaaaggggghhhhh!” and shuts the box. Children to join in the screaming and to run off to quiet corners of the room to hide. They are then asked to draw what they think will be in the box if the teacher opens it. A few minutes quiet drawing before returning to the circle
- Following an adult demonstration, each child then shows and describes what is in the box as the teacher opens the lid. The rest of group as the audience look scared (unless any of the children choose to draw something that evokes a different emotion)
- Shared reading of the end of the book where the author writes “wait, come back there’s a wish in the box!”
- Following adult demonstration children tip-toe back into the “house” and make their wish.

Story Context 12: “Nobody Rides the Unicorn” by Adrian Mitchell

Introduction to story-telling activity:

- Class will initially see this story performed as a giant puppet –play at a local Arts Centre.
- Read the story together on several occasions before asking the children to choose which character they would like to be in a class performance.
- Children make and decorate a unicorn stick puppet. We then take these to a local beauty spot with its own waterfall and place the unicorns beside it. We also dance with the unicorns and place them in different positions

around an old yew tree. The photographs of this outing will be used as background “scenery” on the plasma screen in the hall.

- As the culmination of a week-long D&T project on hinges and levers we will make “moving pictures” of the “Land of Joppardy”. Children will be given the task of including 5 landscape features (created in a choice of media including paint and collage) and 3 characters they might meet in the Land of Joppardy. They will also prepare (with adult support) a short talk and demonstration of their pictures to be used at the introduction of the performance.
- Children plan and prepared the “feast of the unicorns” – including fruit kebabs, magic star biscuits and gingerbread unicorns. Parents will be invited to come into the classroom after the assembly to eat this with the children.

Context for Story-telling

- Children use their moving pictures to tell a story about the Land of Joppardy.

Story Context 13: “Alice in Wonderland” by Lewis Carroll

A shortened version of this story will be told using the illustrations – and the activities will all take place prior to a class outing to an “Alice-in-Wonderland theme park”)

Introduction to story-telling : This will be a group-drama activity with the teacher-in-role (T-in-R) for much of the time and the children giving their individual suggestions to create their own stories throughout the process

- Group act out the weather being hot and sunny and then gradually falling asleep. Instructed to suddenly wake up and T-in-R as white rabbit runs about saying “I’m late ! I’m late” before crawling into a soft-play tunnel and “disappearing”. Illustration of rabbit shown to children and explanation that the tunnel leads to a place called “Wonderland”. Each child in turn is invited to go through tunnel (which will lead out of the classroom door) and then to come and report back what is happening in “Wonderland” (scribed)

- Group shown a bottle with pink liquid (strawberry and kiwi squash!) which says “Drink Me!” (Discuss dangers of drinking things if we do not know what they are – but that this will be OK because adults they know have told them that it is safe). T-in-R takes a sip and “shrinks”. Each of the children copy.
- T-in-R acts out being very small and being in a room and not able to reach the handle. Each child in turn “performs” next part of their story – but reminded first of what is happening in their Wonderland (ideas scribed)
- Plate of biscuits then produced which say “Eat Me!” T-in-R then acts out getting bigger and bigger – opening door but then growing so big she knocks her head against the ceiling. Each of children then repeat the previous sequence (ideas scribed)
- T-in-R and then all the children act out crying and crying (as loudly and dramatically as possible) . T –in – R swims out of the room in a big sea of tears. Children each say what happens in their Wonderland as a result of this “flood” (ideas scribed). Whole class “swims” around the room and then told to meet up together so that they are all back in the same “Wonderland”. Greet their friends and then run around the class-room shaking themselves to get dry. All return to carpet for last part of the story
- T-in-R as caterpillar sits on a mushroom. Class instructed to say to the caterpillar “We’re fed up of getting big and small. What can we do?!” Rehearse a few times to sound loud enough and fed-up enough. Caterpillar pretends to be a bit deaf, says “you don’t sound very fed-up... this is a fed-up voice” etc. until class produce a satisfactory piece of class acting!
- Each child then given an imaginary piece of mushroom and told to go and see the Cheshire Cat . All go and sit at table and T-in-R acts as different characters shown in the illustrations – Mad Hatter, Dormouse, and Queen of Hearts . Children asked to draw illustration of the character they will meet and how it will tell them something do something (scribed in speech bubble by adults)
- Children bring drawings to carpet. T-in-R acts out being told by the Cheshire Cat to run away from the Queen of Hearts. She runs as a TA shouts “Off with her Head” then slips and slides back through soft-play tunnel back on the chair and wakes up as herself.

- Each child in turn acts out their own different ending to the story until all have gone back through tunnel and different endings scribed.

Story Context 14: Sand-tray Story (3)

Introduction to story-telling activity:

- Children given usual instructions – but this time asked to make their story take place in a “Wonderland” – an imaginary world of their own.

Context for story-telling:

- 15 minutes individual free-play given with the sand-tray. Children then asked to prepare the sand-tray for a photograph to be taken of their imaginary world. They then tell their story to be scribed by the teacher.

Story Context 15: “Teeny Weeny in too Big a World” by Margot Sunderland

Introduction to story-telling activity:

- Shared reading and discussion of the story “Teeny Weeny in too Big a World”
- Children think of times when they have been scared and felt alone and then of times when they have been happy with their friends.
- Marble A3 pieces of paper to make books with illustrations in the same style as Margot Sunderland/ Nicky Armstrong (illustrator)
- The children first decide who their central character (like Teeny Weeny) will be and draw a picture on their cover
- They then use oil pastels to draw an illustration of a nasty creature that would make their character scared.
- The next day the children create an illustration of a friendly character who will make friends with their main character
- On the last day of the book-making the children decide on the ending of their story when their character is happy and not scared.

Context for storytelling

- The children use their illustrated books to tell a story to the teacher

- Stories acted out V-G-P style in the class.

Story Context 16: “Where the Wild Things Are” by Maurice Sendak

Introduction to story-telling activity:

- Story read completely through once to the children
- They are then asked to decide what outfit they might be wearing in their story – an outfit that might lead them to make mischief!
- Discuss what happens when people feel really angry. How does it make you feel inside and what things do you do when you are angry? Teacher then produces a large supply of newspaper and demonstrates folding it the sheets and ripping them into small pieces. This is then thrown around the room with the teacher very loudly! Children will then be encouraged to do the same and trying to make themselves look and feel as angry as possible. Following this play some calming music and talk about how this sort of anger (even acting) can make us feel very tired and calm once it has stopped. Paper all cleared up before the acting resumed!
- Children each act out with a partner what they do when they are angry angry. Take it in turns to show the group (scribed)
- T –in- R as mum shouts “Wild Thing!” to the children and they have to shout something back in the way Max does in the story (scribed)
- All act sailing away to the “Land of the Wild Things” (trying to imitate Max’s expression in the illustration)
- Children individually draw a map to show what Max will find in the Land of the Wild Things. Adult labels the map for inclusion as description in story.
- All act in role as the Wild Things as Max (T-in-R) approaches the shores. Each child says what the Wild Things look like (scribed)
- Group then has a “rumpus” – drumming and dancing
- Each child comes to sit on teacher’s chair as Max and is asked to imagine smelling some delicious supper from home. (scribed)
- At end of drama – discuss how Max is feeling now. Is he still angry? What does he feel about his mum now? Is he glad to be home or would he rather go back to the land of the Wild Things.

- To conclude the story – teacher in role as mum. She comes into the room and each “Max” has to decide what s/he would say to her.

Story Context 17: Fairy Stories

Introduction to the story-telling:

- Class to have “fairy /traditional story “ a day for the 5 school days preceding story-telling activity: Cinderella, The 3 Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, Hansel and Gretel and Snow White. They will then have opportunities to use puppets and dressing-up clothes to re-tell these tales.
- Display of a “Fairy-tale Forest” to be made in art/science for the classroom wall. This will include a path through the woods passing different characters’ houses – including the 3 Bears/ 3 Pigs/ Old Woman in a Show/ Troll’s cave under the bridge/ Dwarfs Cottage and the Gingerbread House from Hansel and Gretel.
- The activity immediately prior to the story telling will be to look at pictures of characters from well-known stories and to sort them into “good” and “evil”.

Context for story-telling:

- Whilst the class are completing the above sorting activity – the children come individually to the teacher to dictate their own “Fairy Story” They are reminded that it must start “Once upon a time ...” and finish “.... Lived happily ever after” The children are also reminded that fairy stories usually have good and evil characters.

Story Context 18: “The Iron Man” by Ted Hughes

Introduction to Story-telling activity: Group drama-story

- Class shown book and how it is divided into chapters.
- **Chapter 1:**
- Description of Iron Man read to class – and ideas discussed about how big a head as big a bedroom would be etc. Each child given the outline of a description to complete. Adults scribe ideas – intervening if necessary to explain to children that the comparison of the head has to be with something very big and that the description of the eyes needs to include their colour.

- Each child reads out own description to the group (with adult help as necessary)
- Description of the Iron Man's falling over the cliff read and acted out by teacher. Group then mime slowly toppling to the ground then finding and screwing all the different parts of their body back on again. As a group mime walking out to sea (with music in the background)
- Discuss with children the fact that because this is only the end of the first chapter the Iron Man cannot drown – he will be coming back. Children then asked to work with an adult to retell the part of the story where the Iron Man crashed into the sea and then to imagine what is going to happen to him next. (Scribed)
- Class use large boxes and gold foil to make a “giant” model of an Iron Man
- **Chapter 2:**
- Read next part of story to class up to the part where the farmers have to decide what is to be done. Children all in role as farmers, and adults start the role-play by giving their ideas about how they could deal with the Iron Man (teacher as “chairman” farmer writes the ideas down. Children then give their ideas – acting/talking like farmers and wearing a cap etc!
- T-in-R takes the idea (suggested by an adult if no child comes up with it) that “We’re going to dig a trap”
- **Chapter 3:**
- Whole class act out the digging of the trap. Then sit back and watch as T-in-R taps 2 knives together and TA brings the model Iron Man in to topple into the trap. Children then dramatize shovelling the earth back into the trap.
- Ask how Hogarth is feeling now that he has trapped the Iron Man and he is buried. Children draw his facial expression and dictate what he is thinking (scribed)
- **Chapter 4:**
- Class act out being the family having a picnic and all suggest something that they might be eating (scribed). T-in-R uses her hand to come and start rolling things around the ground and shaking the cloth etc. Model of Iron man then used to come out of ground and children act running away and screaming.
- Class called back together again for an urgent meeting. Hogarth has a plan this time and tells the farmers that the Iron Man just wants to eat metal and suggests he should go the scrap yard. Act out tapping of knives and Iron Man coming. Take

model to scrap yard and act him eating the cars. Children asked to think how Hogarth is feeling.

- Each child then retells that part of the story for the 4th chapter in their book.
- **Chapter 5:**
- First part of chapter read to children. They then paint their idea of how the space-bat-angel-dragon looks
- When paintings complete – children each present their creature to class and describe it to others (after a rolling of drums and clashing of cymbals!) (Scribed)
- **Chapter 6:**
- Class act out the contest between the Iron Man and the Space-bat-angel-dragon – to the music of “The Ride of the Valkyries”. Some peaceful music is then played as the dragon returns to sing the music of the spheres and make every one on Earth feel peaceful
- Children asked in turn to come say how they could end their story with something wonderful and peaceful and happy. (Scribed)
- Following completion of the story each child will have their own version read to them individually.

Story Context 19: Puppet/Toy and Character Story

Introduction to story-telling activity:

- Teacher demonstrates choosing 3 puppets as characters for her story and then draws another character to be part of the story also.
- She then tells a story using these characters.

Context for story-telling:

- Children each chose 3 puppets/toys and draw their own character. They then use these to tell a story that is scribed by the teacher.

Story Context 20: Independent Story

Introduction to story-telling activity:

- Children told that they are going to tell the last story for this term that will be acted out (V-G-P style) – and that it can be about anything that they like.

Context for story-telling:

- Children plan the story by drawing 4 pictures and then tell the story to teacher .
- Stories are dramatized

Story Context 21: Clay-Worlds (following reading of the Japanese Creation Myth in Chapter 1: “When all the World Was Slime” in Ann Cattanach (2002), “The Story So far: Play Therapy Narratives.

Introduction to Story-telling activity:

- The myth is read to the children and they are given a range of “slimy” materials to feel – wet clay, wet playdough, “gloop”.
- Children then mime “emerging” from the primeval slime and “freeze” in the shape of the creature they are imagining
- Children each given a large piece of clay and told that they can use it to create their When this is completed they can use coloured modelling clay to add details to the “world”. Activity to be completed without adult intervention. The children can create whatever they wish and in whatever way.

Context for the story-telling:

- Children individually tell a story to the teacher – using the model of their world to assist them in doing so.

APPENDIX 4:

THE ANALYSIS GRID

Part 1: Template of Analysis Grid

Part 2: Guidance on use of the Grid

Context			
31.	Name and C.A.		
32.	Story Title		
33.	Initial Stimulus		
34.	Story telling-Context		
35.	Number of words		
Syntax			
36.	DLS-'Best Fit' Level		
37.	DLS-Example sentence- Highest Level		
38.	T-Units	Total T Units	Mean T Unit lengths
			Longest T- Unit
39.	NC Level AT1: Speaking		
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)			
40.	Character : description		
41.	Character: social interaction		
42.	Character: inner world		

43.	Character: relationships	
44.	Predicament	
45.	Climax/High point	
46.	Resolution	
47.	Story setting/environment	
Rhetorical aspects		
48.	Use of language for effect	
49.	Figurative Language	
50.	'Story' Language	
Aesthetic Aspects		
	51. Creativity	
	52. Impact	

Emotional Aspects	
53. Range	Range score:
	Adjectives/adverbs:
	Action/dialogue:
54. Intensity	
55. Appropriateness	
56. Evaluative Devices used	
57. Story 'Theme'	
Social Aspects	
58. Source of Story material	
59. Cultural Code	
Reflections	
60. Comments by teacher/researcher on any other aspect	

APPENDIX 3: GUIDANCE ON HOW TO USE THE ANALYSIS GRID

Section 1: INITIAL STIMULUS (Row 3)

This is the introduction to the activity, or series of activities used by the teacher leading to the children's storytelling. Entries on the grid will be one of:

- Teacher-modelled storytelling
- Story – with title
- None (other than direction to activity eg: sandtray)

Section 2: STORYTELLING CONTEXT (Row 4)

This is a summary of the context in which the story was told and includes 4 sections

(i) Level of Support

Either: Independent story (Independent)

Or: Guided group activity with story-frame (Guided)

(ii) Main activity used to support story-telling

- Sandtray
- Toys/Puppets
- Role-play
- Artwork eg: painting/clay
- Storyboard with pictures
- Multi-activities (over a few days)

(iii) Number of sessions working with stimulus story

(iv) Context for final storytelling by child

- (1:1) 1:1 with teacher (away from rest of class)
- (Group) 1:1 with teacher (with group of children taking turns with storytelling)
- (Class) 1:1 with teacher in preparation for acting with class

Section 3: NUMBER OF WORDS (Row 5)

Source: Carol Fox: "At the Very Edge of the Forest" (1993: 53/54) – Rules for what to include and exclude in the word count.

- **Garbles** are excluded.
- **Non-deliberate repetitions** are excluded
- **Contractions of both one and two words** (eg: can't and don't) are excluded
- **Compound and hyphenated words** are counted as one word
- **Dialogue** is included in the word count

The word count given in this analysis grid will also distinguish between the words in the story that were independently produced by the child (I) and those that were in the adult-devised story frame (SF)

Only those words produced independently will be included in the T-Unit analyses.

Section 4: LEVEL OF EXPRESSION – 2- 4+ WORD LEVEL (Rows 6/7)

Source: Derbyshire Language Scheme Progress Record - Two to Four Word Level

The complete progress record is to be used as it may illuminate the type of sentences most/least produced when children are telling stories.

Row 6: Will give a "best fit" word level for the whole story – and an example of a sentence at this level including the DLS reference number indicating the type of sentence that it is (eg: DESC (Description))

The levels given will be one of:

- 2/3WL (Early Three Word Level as for Two Word)
- 3WL (E) (Three Word Level – Easy)
- 3WL (H) (Three Word Level – Hard)
- 4WL (E) (Four Word Level – Easy)
- 4WL (H) (Four Word Level – Hard)
- 4WL (H+) (Four Word Level – Hardest)
- 4WL + (Demonstrating speech at above Four Word Level)

Row 7: Will give an example of a sentence at the highest word level produced in the story, alongside it DLS reference number:

D.L.S PROGRESS RECORD (Derbyshire Language Scheme Manual :9-13)

Three Word Expression Early – as for Two Word (2/3WL)

Sentence Type	Targets	Reference Number
Negatives: Rejection	No/No + Word	3.15 REJ
Negatives: Prohibition	No/Not + Word	3.15 PROHIB
Negatives: Denial	No/Not + Word	3.15 DEN
Negatives: Inability	No/Not + Word	3.15 INAB
Questions	What? Or Where? + Word	2.16 QW
Prepositions	In On	3.20
Concepts	Big/Little in use	3.24

Three Word Expression – Easy (3WL(E))

Sentence Type	Targets	Reference Number
Moving or Position of Object	Object+Preposition+Place eg: Book on table	3.1 CMD
Greeting	Greeting + 2 words eg: Hi Mr. Jones	3.2
Request	Request + 2 words eg: A drink please	3.3
Possession	Three Words (Incl. Poss.) eg: This Jo ('s) bag	3.4
Transfer to Person	Action + Object (to) Person eg: Give knife (to) Pete	3.5 CMD/DESC
Repetition/ Recurrence	More or Again + 2 Words eg: That story again	3.6
Actions (Intransitive)	Person + Action + Place eg: Damian sit mat	3.7 CMD/DESC
Actions (Intransitive)	Action + Prep + Place eg: Stand on chair	3.7 CMD/DESC

Action on Object	Person + Action + Object eg: Kylie paint nose	3.8 CMD/DESC
Absence	Gone + 2 Words Plane gone now	3.9
Attribute	Attribute+2 Words eg: A naughty dog	3.11
Movement to Place	Person + Action + Place Mike run park	3.12 CMD/DESC

Three Word Expression – Harder

Sentence Type	Targets	Reference Number
Moving Position of Object:	Object + Place (Incl Poss) eg: Pen Nadia ('s) bag	3.1P CMD/DESC
Moving Position of Object	Object + Place (Incl Adj) eg: Juice big cup	3.1A CMD/DESC
Moving Position of Object	Prep+Place (Incl Poss) eg: In John's car	3.1P CMD/DESC
Moving Position of Object	Prep +Place (Incl Adj) eg: On little plate	3.1A CMD/DESC
Request	Request word + Poss/Adj Phrase eg: Want daddy ('s) cup Big one please	3.3P 3.3A
Transfer to Person	Object (Incl Poss) (to) Person eg: Jacky ('s) hat (to) Sue	3.5P CMD/DESC
Transfer to Person	Object (incl Adj) (to) Person eg: Little shoe (to) Paul	3.5A CMD/DESC
Repetition/Recurrence	More or again + Poss/Adj Phrase eg: More Kim's soup Big push again	3.6P 3.6A

Actions (Intransitive)	Action + Place (incl Poss) eg: Sit Viv's chair	3.7P CMD/DESC
Actions (Intransitive)	Action + Place (incl Adj) eg: Sleep little bed	3.7A CMD/DESC
Action on Object	Action + Object (Incl Poss) eg: Clean dad ('s) shoe	3.8P CMD/DESC
Action on Object	Action + Object (Incl Adj) eg: Kick big ball	3.8A CMD/DESC
Absence	Gone + Poss/Adj Phrase eg: John ('s) car gone Little fly gone	3.9P 3.9A
Function Association	3 Word statement of function etc. eg: Sleep in it	3.10
Movement to Place	Action + Place (Incl Poss) eg: Walk Brett ('s) house	3.12P CMD/DESC
Movement to Place	Action + Place (incl Adj) eg: Run big swing	3.12A CMD/DESC
Negatives: Rejection	No + 2 Words	3.15 REJ
Negatives: Prohibition	No + 2 Words	3.15 PROHIB
Negatives: Denial	No + 2 Words	3.15 DEN
Negatives: Inability	No + 2 Words	3.15 INAB
Questions	What? Or Where? + 2 Words	3.16 Q

Four Word Expression – Easy

Sentence Type	Targets	Reference Number
Moving Position of Object	Object + Preposition + Place eg: Book on the chair	4.1 CMD/DESC
Moving Position of Object	Object + Place (Incl Poss) eg: A pen Nadia ('s) bag	4.1P CMD/DESC
Moving Position of Object	Object + Place (Incl Adj)	4.1A CMD/DESC
Request	Use of "want" in a request eg: Want daddy ('s) cup	4.3
Transfer to Person	Object (incl Poss) (to) Person eg: Jacky ('s) hat (to) that lady	4.5P CMD/DESC
Transfer to Person	Object (Incl Adj) (to) Person eg: A little shoe (to) Paul	4.5A CMD/DESC
Actions (intransitive)	Action + Preposition + Place eg: Sit on bed	4.7 CMD/DESC
Actions (intransitive)	Action + Place (Incl Adj) eg: Sleep a little bed	4.7A CMD/DESC
Action on Object	Person + Action + Object eg: Mike read a book	4.8 CMD/DESC
Action on Object	Action + Object (Incl Poss) eg: Cut the boy ('s) hair	4.8P CMD/DESC
Action on Object	Action + Object (Incl Adj) eg: Kick a big ball	4.8A CMD/DESC
Movement to Place	Person + Action + Place eg: Shelley go (to) the shop	4.12 CMD/DESC
Movement to Place	Action + Place (Incl Adj) eg: Walk (to) the big park	4.12A CMD/DESC
Adverbs	Only a few adverbs in use eg: Daddy read story now	4.13

Negatives	As for 3 Word Level No + 2 Words	3.15 REJ/PROHIB/DEN/ INAB
Questions	As for 3 Word Level What? Or Where? + 2 Words	3.16Q
Verbs	“Do” as a verb eg: “You do it”	4.17(a)
Articles	Articles used occasionally	4.19(a)

Four Word Expression – Harder

Sentence Level	Target	Reference Number
Moving Position of Object	Action + Object + Prep + Place eg: Put the cup in the cupboard	4.1 CMD/DESC
Moving Position of Object	Object + Prep + Place (incl Poss) eg: Book on John’s desk	4.1P CMD/DESC
Moving Position of Object	Object + Prep + Place (Incl Adj) eg: Car in little box	4.1A CMD/DESC
Possession	Use of “got” eg: I got a cat	4.4
Transfer to Person	Action + Object + Person eg: Give the ball to daddy	4.5 CMD/DESC
Actions (intransitive)	Person + Object + Prep + Place eg: Shaun sitting on the wall	4.7 CMD/DESC
Actions (intransitive)	Action + Prep + Place (Incl Poss) eg: Sit on Jason (’s) chair	4.7P CMD/DESC
Actions (intransitive)	Action + Prep + Place (Incl Adj) eg: Sleeping in little bed	4.7A CMD/DESC
Action on Object	Person + Action + Object (Incl Poss) eg: Tom driving Jan (’s) car	4.8P CMD/DESC
Action on Object	Person + Action + Object (Incl Adj) eg: Sarah wash little bowl	4.8A CMD/DESC

Attributes	Two adjectives in a phrase eg: A little tiny house	4.11
Movement to Place	Person + Action + Place (Incl Poss) eg: Ian going to Chris ('s) shop	4.12P CMD/DESC
Movement to Place	Person +Action + Place (Incl Poss) eg: Ian going to Chris ('s) shop	4.12P CMD/DESc
Movement to Place	Person + Action + Place (Incl Adj) eg: Karen walk big swing	4.12A CMD/DESC
Pointing Out and Labelling	Four Word Definition etc. eg: This a pretty flower Look a big balloon	4.14
Negatives: Rejection	No want that one	4.15 REJ
Negatives: Prohibition	Not sit my chair	4.15 PROHIB
Negatives: Denial	Not my coat	4.15 DEN
Negatives: Inability	No open this	4.15 INAB
Questions	Where or What + 3 words	4.16Q
Verbs	"ing" on present participle eg: baby sleeping	4.17(b)
Articles	Occasional use of articles with adjective eg: a big boy	4.19(b)
Prepositions	Use of on, in, under	4.20 (b)
Concepts	Boy, girl, man, woman, black, white	4.24

Four Word Expression – Hardest

Sentence Level	Targets	Reference Number
Moving Position of Object	Person + Action + Object + Prep + Place eg: Ann put the cup in the cupboard	4.1 CMD/DESc
Moving Position of Object	Person + Action + Object + Prep	

	+ Place (incl Poss) eg: Kim put the book on John's desk	4.1P CMD/DESC
Moving Position of Object	Person + Action + Object + Prep + Place (incl Adj) eg: Sean put the car in the little box	4.1A CMD/DESC
Transfer to Person	Action + Object (Incl Adj) + Person eg: Give the big ball (to) daddy	4.5A
Actions (intransitive)	Person + Action + Place (Incl Poss) eg: Emma sit on Jason's chair	4.7P CMD/DESC
Actions (intransitive)	Person + Action + place (incl Adj) eg: Baby sleeping little bed	4.7A CMD/DESC
Actions (intransitive)	Person + Action + Prep + Place (incl Poss) eg: Alex stand on John ('s) book	4.7P CMD/DESC
Actions (intransitive)	Person + Action + Prep + Place (Incl Adj) eg: Lady sit on big swing	4.7A CMD/DESC
Action on Object	Person + Action + Object + Place eg: Jane washing her hair in the kitchen	4.8CMD/DESC

Abbreviations Used:

Adj Adjective

CMD Command – Request for action

DESC Description of object, person or event

Poss Possessive Construction eg: Jim ('s) hat. The 's is optional for the child

Prep Preposition eg: in, on and under

Section 5: CALCULATING T-UNITS (Column 8)

Source: Carol Fox "At the Very Edge of the Forest" (1993: 52)

"Hunt (1964:1965) defined a T-Unit as "consisting of one main clause with all the subordinate clauses attached to it ". A main clause connected to another by "and" would therefore become a new T-Unit."

This definition is used in this analysis also.

Mean T-Unit length is calculated by dividing the total number of words by the total number of T-Units.

Section 6: NATIONAL CURRICULUM LEVELS FOR SPEAKING (AT1)

Source: "Supporting the Target Setting Process " (Revised March 2001) (DfEE)

The statements below are those elements of the descriptors that could relate to storytelling

P4: Repeat, copy and imitate between 10 and 20 single words. Use single words for familiar objects. Communicate about events and feelings eg: likes and dislikes

P5: Combine 2 key ideas and concepts. Combine single words to communicate meaning to a range of listeners.

P6: Use phrases with up to 3 key words to communicate simple ideas, events or stories to others (eg: " I want a big chocolate ice-cream"). Use facial expression and intonation to enhance meaning.

P7: Communicate ideas about present, past and future events and experiences using simple phrases and statements. Use conjunctions, for example "and" to link ideas or add new information. Contribute appropriately one-to-one and in small group discussions and role-play

P8: Link up to 4 key words in communicating about own experiences or in telling familiar stories. Use a growing vocabulary to convey meaning to the listener (eg: to convey feelings and evaluations). Take part in role-play with confidence

1C: Communicate about matters of interest to individuals and groups. Convey meanings, including some relevant details to a range of others

1B: Communicate clearly about matters of interest to individuals and groups. Take turns in a range of situations and groups. Convey meaning, making what they communicate relevant and interesting to the listener.

1A: Communicate clearly about matters of interest, taking turns in a range of situations and groups. Convey meaning, sustaining their contribution and the listeners' interest

2C: Communicate on topics of interest with people they know and include some details the listener needs to know. Express ideas using appropriate vocabulary

2B: Communicate on different topics with people they know, explaining details the listener needs to know. Develop ideas using more varied expressions

2A: Communicate on a range of topics, sometimes with people who are unfamiliar with them, including relevant information the listener needs to know. Develop and explain ideas, using a more extensive vocabulary and beginning to adapt to more formal situations.

Section 7: STRUCTURAL ASPECTS OF STORYTELLING (THE 3 WORLDS OF NARRATIVE) (Rows 10-17)

Source: The 3 Worlds of Narrative – Richard Fox in: “Language and Literacy: The Role of Writing” (University of Exeter INSET at a Distance) (1990:105-106)

The levels given are from the Richard Fox's framework. If the level is given a bracketed number - (+1/2/3) - this refers to an additional level descriptor that I have inserted. Richard Fox's levels indicate a hierarchical level of progression. The additional statements are meant to be within that hierarchy but the + does not indicate that the statement is at a higher level than the initial descriptor, it is just an additional descriptor within that level.

Entries on the grid indicate the level of each aspect of the story – and an example given to support this assessment

CHARACTER: DESCRIPTION (Row 10)

- L1:** Characters are identified but not described
- L2:** Characters described by simple stereotyped "labels"
- L2(+1)** Physical description using one or two simple adjectives eg: colour and size
- L3:** Characters described by simple global traits (eg: nice/nasty)
- L3(+1):** A more detailed physical description using simple vocabulary (eg: "A monster with blue spots, 10 eyes and 100 teeth")
- L3(+2):** Details given of behaviour of character (eg: "the lion roars and eats meat")

CHARACTER: SOCIAL INTERACTION (Row 11)

- L1:** No social interaction, except adult permission and shared activity
- L2:** Interaction is via physical action and exchange and one-sided communication (asking, telling and conventional social exchanges")
- L2(+1):** Some simple two-way dialogue
- L3:** Real dialogue – a two-way communication with exchanges of information, thoughts or plans.
Expressions of current emotion, mood or purpose

CHARACTER: INNER WORLD (Row 12)

- L1:** Minimal. Simple perception (eg: see), cognition (know) and motivating states/wants of a single character
- L1(+1):** Feelings of main character described eg: "He was cross ...she was sad"
- L1(+2):** Use of dialogue to express inner state eg: "Help"/"I'm going to eat you up"
- L2:** One character has a richer world of cognition or simple motive/affect state.
Other characters as for Level 1.
- L2(+1):** Connections made between a character's affective and motivational state eg:
"The duckling was crying because he couldn't find his mum"
- L3:** Any and all characters may have a rich inner world of thought
Some straightforward attitudes, feelings or states represented (eg:anxious, bored, disappointed, frightened).
Simple projection by one character into the mental state of another
Signs of character revealed via tone of voice and expressive behaviour
(eg: shiver of fear)
Adverbs and adverbial phrases used to describe the character's actions

eg: “She slammed the door loudly....she danced happily”

CHARACTER: RELATIONSHIPS (Row 13)

- L1:** Co-operation, conflict, friendship or authority may be implicit in actions but are not made explicit
- L2:** Background of adult power unquestioned
Magical allies may share power with children
Co-action or arbitrary conflict without reciprocal co-ordination of intentions
- L3:** Children act with limited autonomy: adults provide safety net when needed
Teamwork and mutual help operate
Conflict based on explicit motives
Conflict may be regarded as troublesome or wrong
Co-operation and conflict achieved easily to suit needs of the plot
The reader may be addressed directly

PREDICAMENT (Row 14) This row will give the level only – not an example.

- L1: (a)** Simple chronicle of social events or
 - (b)** Single character pursues wishes and wants. Resolutions and outcomes are either incoherent, or wishes are fulfilled, or chronicles are concluded.
- L2: (a)** Elaborated chronicles, special occasions described
 - (b)** Adventures with emphasis on actions and reactions and on material safety, rewards and punishments. Generally a single disruption of normality or ordinariness. Resolution in terms of power endings, bedtime endings or waking from dreams
- L3:** Seen as problems to be solved, often involving coordinated social planning and Action. Main predicaments involve material safety and comfort, finding out the truth, being believed and the nature of reality. Endings provide comfort by restoration of normality; helps solve a problem; use of power justified or qualified.

CLIMAX/HIGH POINT OF STORY (Row 15)

(This is not part of the Richard Fox framework – but used in Grove’s analysis of the structural aspects of storytelling (Grove: 2005:74))

I will try to ascertain which part of the story is the climax and write this into the grid. This “high point” or climax may have evaluations clustered around it.

RESOLUTION (Row 16)

(As above)

The ending of the story (or resolution of predicament if these are not the same) will be written into the grid.

STORY SETTING/ENVIRONMENT (Row 17)

This row will include 2 parts:

(i) Description of main setting of story eg: Fantasy World – Land of the Unicorn/ At a friend’s house/ In the jungle.

(ii) Level and example from the 3 Worlds of Narrative Framework.

L1: Not elaborated beyond mentions of location and key objects

L2: Instrumental power (weapons and tools) may be the focus of interest; some environmental detail but unselective

L3: Times, places and physical environment are regularly sketched in as an initial background to the plot. These are provided rather than being shaped or extended.

L3(+1): Simple but effective descriptions given of the setting in which the narrative takes place

Section 8: RHETORICAL ASPECTS OF STORYTELLING

(Source: Grove (2005:74) and Fox (1993:73))

The rhetorical aspect of storytelling is the fourth element in Grove's framework outlining the aspects of storytelling. She has 4 sections within this element of which two have been used here and one – "repetition for effect" - is expanded to become the use of "language for effect". This section will now also include the prosodic features outlined by Sutton-Smith in Fox (1993)

Use of Language for Effect (Row 18)

This section will record any examples of language used to create an effect including

- repetition
- alliteration
- assonance
- rhythm
- particular words of meaning to the social group at the time

Figurative Language (Row 19)

Any metaphors or similes used will be recorded in this row. It will also be made clear if the figurative language was used independently (I) or created as part of a story frame (G)

Story Language (Row 20)

This will record any examples in the stories of both conventional story language eg "Once upon a time" and any words/ ideas that are known to have come from stories that would not necessarily be recognizable to anyone unfamiliar with these.

Section 9: AESTHETIC ASPECTS OF STORYTELLING

(Source: Grove (2005: 97))

Grove states that “although aesthetic judgments are both relative and subjective, there is general agreement that aesthetics is concerned with the fitness of form of purpose, artistic creativity, and cultural relevance”. Her framework is to evaluate responses to literature – but is used here to evaluate the stories told. Therefore only two of her three sections are used: Creativity and Impact

Creativity (Row 21)

This will be a subjective analysis of where a story shows a degree of creativity – defined in this sense as being innovative/ unusual/ “bringing something new into being”

Impact (Row 22)

(Links also with social aspects of storytelling)

The impact of the story on the rest of the group (where this is applicable). Does it contribute in a way that affects the social context? “This relates to Geertz’s idea that art is not perceived in isolation, but is part of a network of social and cultural interactions” (Grove :97). (This will also relate to the work of Gussin- Paley).

The entry in this row will come from any observational notes made during the storytelling process and performances.

Section 10: EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF STORYTELLING

(Source: Grove (2005: 94))

Grove evaluates the quality of feelings shown by students in response to literature. This framework will evaluate the quality of feelings portrayed in the stories told by the children under the same three headings: range/ intensity/ appropriateness

Range (Row 23)

This row will be divided into three sections:

Range score: The first section will give a score for the number of emotions it is interpreted that the story conveys. The emotions listed below have been collated as a temporary list of those most likely to occur in the children's stories and that are cross-culturally relevant: happiness, excitement, love, pride, anger, annoyance, hate, sadness, loneliness, guilt/shame, fear, courage, anxiety.

I am also including feelings of: friendship, dislike, physical comfort and physical discomfort because these feelings give rise to a sense of emotional affect when listening to a story.

Adjectives/adverbs: This section will list the adjectives and adverbs used that convey emotion.

Actions/dialogue: This will be a more subjectively interpreted section that will look at the emotions conveyed by the actions and dialogue of the characters (and will link closely with the section on the "Inner World" of the characters).

Intensity (Row 24)

How involved was the storyteller in the story? Did they portray any emotions during the telling and at which points (Entries will only be made in these rows if observational notes were made at the time of the storytelling – so the record will only be partial)

Appropriateness (Row 25)

Are the emotions expressed in the stories appropriate to the content?

Section 11: EVALUATIVE DEVICES USED

Source: Peterson and McCabe (1993) in Peterson and Biggs in "Sex Roles; A Journal of Research (2001)"

Stories will be analyzed for evaluative devices used and examples given from the following categories of evaluative devices:

- **Emotional states or frames of mind:** This category includes not only emotion labels such as "I hated him" but emotion-signalling actions eg: "I was crying".

- **Cognitive and perceptual states:** These interrupt the action of the event by providing information such as intentions, hopes, desires, predictions etc.
- **Speech of participants:** These suspend action by reporting dialogue taking place during the described events eg: “He told me to stop that”
- **Hedges:** These indicate when the speaker is unsure. “it was probably him that did it”
- **Negation:** These are indications of what did not happen. Because there are many possibilities of what did not these are evaluative eg: “He did not fall”
- **Intensifiers, gratuitous terms or qualifiers:** These serve little function by to emphasize, intensify, question some information etc. “I want some, some happy.....it was pretty cold out”
- **Onomatopoeia or sound effects:** These provide emphasis through representations of sounds heard during the story telling eg: “The she went (screams)”
- **Repetition of words:** This emphasizes the importance of the words being repeated “ I ate, ate, ate”
- **Idea repetition:** This is the repetition of an idea (not words only) for emphasis. It stresses its importance, sometimes using different words “it was pretty fun ... it was really fun”

Section 12: STORY THEME (Row 27) (links also with social/cultural aspects)

Source: Barthes (1970) in Carol Fox (1993:172)

Barthes analyzes texts using 5 codes and the “symbolic code” ... “ structures the larger themes or ideas organized over the whole narrative. Often these themes are not relayed to the reader by the direct authorial voice, but are reflected in the myriad of happenings, descriptions, characters and so on. The reader must make the connections..... In stories told by very young children one might expect very basic and simple oppositions – goodies and baddies “

The main theme of the story will be entered into this row.

Section 13: SOCIAL ASPECTS OF STORY TELLING

“Source” of Story Material (Row 28)

Source : Adapted from Carol Fox (1993:15/16)

This row will record the main source/influence (s) reflected in the story from:

- Home-life
- School - life
- Immediate context of storytelling
- Stories
- TV and Films
- Toys
- Pictures
- Dreams (almost impossible to trace this category, but included just in case!)

The Cultural Code (Row 29)

Source: Barthes (1970) in Carol Fox (1993:172)

This is similar to Culler’s (1975) cultural level of “vraisemblance” (in Fox:79) – where the narrative implicitly assumes that there will be shared knowledge between the reader and the text. Behaviour codes that are “natural” only in terms of the norms of specific groups. Barthes refers to “innumerable references to the world of knowledge, to the arts and sciences, to psychological “truths”, to ideologies, manners and customs” he calls them “the superlative effects of the real”.

The entry into this row will be an example of where a particular example of the “real” reveals something about the world as the child sees it or anything else that seems worthy of note

Section 14: REFLECTION BY TEACHER/RESEARCHER ON ANY ASPECT OF THE STORY AND IT’S CONTEXT (Row 30)

This row will be for any reflections that have not been adequately represented anywhere else on the framework. It is likely that the reflections will mostly be related to the context in which the storytelling took place.

Appendix 5

Part 1: One example of each of the 21 stories and their completed analysis grids.



Sandtray Story (1)

1



One day there was a Billy Goat Gruff and along



came a spider. "Go away!" And then he falled down.



"Ouch!" And then they all lived happily ever after.

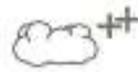
Context				
Name and C.A.	Emily (6:5)			
Story Title	Sandtray Story (1)			
Initial Stimulus	Teacher – modelled story telling			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Sandtray	1	1:1
Number of words	29			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	3 WL (E)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	3 WL (E) – but only because language used does not fit easily with examples given.			
T-Units	Total T – Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	6	4.9	8	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P6: 3 key word phrases and intonation used to enhance meaning ‘Go away!’			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1: Identified characters – Billy Goat Gruff, Spider.			
Character: social interaction	L2: ‘Go away’ – 1 sided communication.			
Character: inner world	L1 (although ‘Ouch’ conveys inner state (L1(T2)))			
Character: relationships	L1: ‘Go away!’ indicating conflict, but at the end ‘all lived happily ever after.’			
Predicament	L1: (b).			
Climax/High point	‘And then he falled down. ‘ Ouch!’			
Resolution	‘they all lived happily ever after.’			

Story setting/environment	(i) fantasy world – (-fairy tales/nursery rhymes). (ii) L1 – or less – no key objects mentioned.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	‘Ouch!’
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	‘One day’ ‘all lived happily ever after’ Billy Goat Gruff ‘along came a spider’ (most of story)
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Combination of ideas from different stories – with an element of humour ‘Ouch!’
Impact	None – 1:1 storytelling
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 3 (Happiness, fear, physical discomfort)
	Adjectives/adverbs: happily
	Action/dialogue: “Go away” “Ouch!”
Intensity	Fully involved including her own battle of nervousness with the large rubber spider!
Appropriateness	Fully appropriate at each point.
Evaluative Devices	Speech of participant ‘Go away!’, ‘Ouch!’ – both spoken with expression – one assertion over fear and the other to overcome this with humour.

Story 'Theme'	Confrontational and then resolution overcoming fear.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Stories/nursery rhymes, Toys.
Cultural Code	Knowledge of Nursery Rhymes
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	From observations; Emily liked 'happy endings' and her perseverance with the spider was interesting. I wonder if she felt it was expected that she used the same character in her own story or if she was trying to become a little braver.



Lizard in the Desert



My lizard danced and the clouds whirling up in the



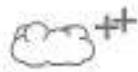
sky (drums)



Warm and cross (bells) (Who?) the sun. Because



ummmm chucked Dunbl up in the sky. And chucked



up the clouds



"WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?" (Drums)



The monster, the scary monster and the dancing one

Context				
Name and C.A.	Tessa (6:4)			
Story Title	Lizard in the desert.			
Initial Stimulus	Story – ‘Dunbi the Owl.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Multi activity	5	1:1
Number of words	41			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	3 WL (H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (E) Question: ‘what have you done?’ (What? + 2 words). ‘clouds whirling up in the sky’ (4.7 CMD/DESC)			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	9	4.5	7	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P5 (although much more solid).			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1: Several characters identified ‘My Lizard’ Dunbi.....scary ,monster..... dancing one.’			
Character: social interaction	L2: Physical action ‘chucked Dunbi up in the sky’ and one-way dialogue ‘What have you done?’			
Character: inner world	L1 (+1): the sun is ‘warm and cross because uummmms chucked Dunbi up in the sky’.			
Character: relationships	L1 (-): Characters mentioned but not clear how they are relating to each other e.g. – ‘the monster, the scary monster and the dancing one.’			
Predicament	L1 (b) (-)			
Climax/High point	‘WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?’			
Resolution	No clear resolution/ending ‘the monsterscary monster			

	and the dancing one’.
Story setting/environment	(i) Desert (ii) L2: reference to ‘clouds whirling in the sky’ and ‘the sun’.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	From field notes; Tessa had picked up the emotional resonance of the story and remembered the word ‘whirling’. She spoke with great emphasis saying ‘ what have you done?’ and accompanied this with drumming picked up the rhythm of the story more than its events
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	‘What have you done?’ Part of the dialogue taken from the story.
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Tessa is attempting a re-telling but because she could not remember the name of the Sky God Wanalirri – she substitutes the sun ‘warm and cross’ which is effective.
Impact	Tessa was remembering and re-creating the shared event of the assembly rehearsal.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 3 (happiness, anger, fear)
	Adjectives/adverbs: cross, scary
	Action/dialogue: “WHAT HAVE YOU DONE”? (anger)
Intensity	Tessa was fully involved and clearly confident in expressing herself physically and musically - spoken with anger.
Appropriateness	Fully appropriate.
Evaluative Devices	Emotional state –‘warm and cross’.

Story 'Theme'	God above and the earth below. 'Sun' and 'the monster, the scary monster and the dancing one'.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story Dunbi the Owl.
Cultural Code	-
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Tessa has remembered the rhythms and emotions of the story more than the vocabulary and sequence of events.

James and the Beanstalk



James climbed the big beanstalk. he saw a



big castle. Loads of strong men lived there.



James jumped out of the the window and climbed



down the beanstalk and lived with his mum alone.

Context				
Name and C.A.	James (7:1).			
Story Title	'James and the Beanstalk.'			
Initial Stimulus	Story 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Story board	3	(class)
Number of words	34			
Syntax				
DLS-'Best Fit' Level	4 WL (E)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (H+). 'James climbed the big beanstalk' (Movement to Place; 4.12A CMD/DESC).			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	6	5.8	6	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P6 – 3 keywords – clear story. Only 1 use of a conjunction 'and lived with him mum alone'.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1: Characters identified – James/strong men/mum.			
Character: social interaction	L1: Actions of James alone – 'climbed the beanstalk..... jumped out of window'.			
Character: inner world	L1: Simple perception ' saw a big castle'.			
Character: relationships	L1: Conflict implicit when James jumps out of window - away from 'loads of strong men' (?) – also co-operation 'lived with his mum'.			
Predicament	L1 (b).			
Climax/High point	'loads of strong men lived there'.			
Resolution	'James climbed down the beanstalk and lived with his mum alone'.			

Story setting/environment	(i) land above and below the beanstalk. (ii) L1/2: some environmental detail – big beanstalk/big castle window.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Strong men replaced the giant
Impact	James was ready for a great fighting scene with his friends when they were all ‘strong men’ but struggled to choose a girl to be the mother. Found this very awkward.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 0
	Adjectives/adverbs: 0
	Action/dialogue: None
Intensity	-
Appropriateness	-
Evaluative Devices	-
Story ‘Theme’	Escaping from danger to home, good versus evil

Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story – Jack and the Beanstalk. TV/Films and Home life.
Cultural Code	-
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	James does live with his mum and older brother – but the sudden ending on this theme is both strange and quite dramatic.



It's a big bird. The bird eats the sky. People die. The bird fell down. It was fat.

Context				
Name and C.A.	Lauren (6:5)			
Story Title	'The Scribble.'			
Initial Stimulus	Teacher – Modelled Storytelling.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Artwork	1	Class
Number of words	18			
Syntax				
DLS-'Best Fit' Level	3 WL(E)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	3 WL(E). 'The bird eats the sky'. (Actions/intransitive; 3:7 CMD/DESC)			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	5	3.6	5	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P5/6; Sentences – simple – 3 key words not consistently used – but meaning is coherent and follows on (although unusual).			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1/2 ' big bird It was fat', 'people'.			
Character: social interaction	L1: no social interaction.			
Character: inner world	L1: motivating state of big bird – 'eats the sky'.			
Character: relationships	L1 (-1): no relationships.			
Predicament	L1 (b) (-).			
Climax/High point	'The bird eats the sky'.			

Resolution	‘The bird fell down’.
Story setting/environment	(i) The sky and ground(?) (ii) L1 (-): only reference to setting is the sky’.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	A strange all-consuming image of a bird who ‘eats the sky’.
Impact	Lauren was pleased with herself at the ending and group appreciated humour of the fat-bird falling to the ground.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 1 (sadness)
	Adjectives/adverbs:
	Action/dialogue: People die (sad)
Intensity	
Appropriateness	
Evaluative Devices	

Story 'Theme'	All destructive being consumed the earth.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Picture (and I've no idea where the rest came from).
Cultural Code	-
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	The mixture of the random painting – 'out of control' and the strange image intrigued me although I struggled to find meaning. Both Lauren and her class mates seemed happy with this story however.



Whatever Next?



Teddy goes into a planet. He flew on his rocket



and landed at a planet - Alien Planet. He went



into the planet and then he saw a tree and



he climbed up the tree and he saw the



moon. He went back down the tree and met



a hedgehog and the hedgehog had a ball. Then



he went back into his rocket and he flew off






 the planet and went back home. But the rocket ran







 out of fire and he fell off but he had a

parachute.

Context				
Name and C.A.	Joshua (7:2)			
Story Title	Whatever next?			
Initial Stimulus	Story – ‘Whatever next?’			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Artwork	3	1:1
Number of words	88			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	3 WL (H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	3 WL (H) – ‘landed at a planet – alien planet ‘(movement to place (3:12A)			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	10	8.8	16*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P6 – conveys a simple story clearly and uses intonation to enhance meaning.			

Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)	
Character : description	L1: characters identified but not decision led - Teddy/hedgehog.
Character: social interaction	L1: Very minimal showed action – ‘met a hedgehog and the hedgehog had a ball’.
Character: inner world	L1: motivating state perception of Teddy – ‘saw a tree..... saw the moon.
Character: relationships	L1: Minimal reference – possibly implicit friendship, ‘hedgehog had a ball.
Predicament	1 (b).
Climax/High point	No clear high point. Possibly ‘landed on a planet – Alien Planet’.
Resolution	‘..... went back home’. There is then another mini climax and resolution ‘but then the rocket ran out of fuel and he fell off but he had a parachute.
Story setting/environment	(i) Alien Planet (ii) L1: ‘Alien Planet/tree/moon/home.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None.
Figurative Language	None.
‘Story’ Language	None.
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Dramatic ending.
Impact	N/A. 1:1 Storytelling.

Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 0
	Adjectives/adverbs: 0
	Action/dialogue:
Intensity	Just the development of suspense especially at the end.
Appropriateness	Appropriate.
Evaluative Devices	-
Story 'Theme'	Adventure story – sequence of actions.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story 'Whatever next?' Picture – Artwork.



On the Way Home



Poppy met Holly the witch



She smacked me.



Emily came and she looked after me and she chased the



witch away.



Emily and Poppy went on holiday in a caravan



"Polly met a witch.
She smacked me."

Context				
Name and C.A.	Poppy (6:4)			
Story Title	'On the way home'.			
Initial Stimulus	Story 'On the way home'.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Multi activity	5	Class
Number of words	30			
Syntax				
DLS-'Best Fit' Level	3 WL (H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (E). 'Emily and Poppy went on holiday in a caravan'. (Movement to Place (4:12) CMD/DESC)			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	5	6	9	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P6 – using 3 key words and communicating a simple story to others.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1: Poppy/Holly the witch/Emily', (Poppy's friend, and her sister).			
Character: social interaction	L2: Via physical action, 'she smacked me..... she chased the witch away.'			
Character: inner world	L1: Motivating state/want of single character, 'Emily came and she looked after me.'			
Character: relationships	L2/3: clear friendships and co-action, Emily came and looked after me....Emily and Poppy went on holiday in a caravan.			
Predicament	L1 (b).			
Climax/High point	'she smacked me'.			

Resolution	‘.....she chased the witch away went on holiday in a caravan.
Story setting/environment	(i) On the Way Home. (ii) L1 (-): minimal reference to environment – just the ‘caravan.’
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Creative mix of the fairy tale character of the witch and real people (Holly – Poppy’s sister and Emily her friend).
Impact	Story written for her best friend of the moment - Emily and the acting out recreated the unkind playground exclusion of Lauren, (see notes).
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 2 (dislike/anger, friendship)
	Adjectives/adverbs:
	Action/dialogue: smacked me (dislike/anger)...looked after me (friendship)
Intensity	Story told with feeling and the picture of the witch revealed. Poppy’s sense of anger at being ‘smacked’.
Appropriateness	Appropriate.
Evaluative Devices	Emotion – signalling action; ‘smackedchased witch away’ (anger) ‘went on holiday’ (happy).

Story 'Theme'	Sadness versus happiness. Good versus bad. Being saved.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story 'On the Way Home' (although little taken from this). Home life/school life. Context of story telling.
Cultural Code	Going on holiday in a caravan.
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	it is likely that the ending is something that Poppy would like to see happening. She does not often talk about rivalry with her younger sister but it is inevitable there would be some.



He's an orang-utan. He's scary.



He's nasty. He's got red eyes,



green chest and gold, purple and



gold arms. He swings in the trees.



If you meet him he will eat you.



Context				
Name and C.A.	Joshua (7:3)			
Story Title	Character description			
Initial Stimulus	Story ‘ On the Way Home			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Artwork	1	1:1
Number of words	32			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	4 WL (H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (H) - 2 attributing phrases : ‘gold, purple and blue arms’.			
T-Units	Total T – Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	6	5	12*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P7			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L3: Description – ‘red eyes, green chest and gold and purple arms. Global traits: he’s scary/he’s nasty.			
Character: social interaction	L1 – move although future possibility of contact ‘if you meet him he will eat you’.			
Character: inner world	L1 – Motivating state of wanting to eat something mentioned – no other reference to inner world.			
Character: relationships	L1 – possible future conflict.			
Predicament	N/A			
Climax/High point	N/A			
Resolution	N/A			

Story setting/environment	N/A
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
'Story' Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	An exotic fantasy orang-utan.
Impact	A character enjoyed by the group.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 2 (Fear, dislike)
	Adjectives/adverbs: scary, nasty
	Actions/dialogue:
Intensity	Told in a scary voice to engender fear!
Appropriateness	Fully appropriate to context
Evaluative Devices	None
Story 'Theme'	N/A

Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Picture – Toy.



The Happy Ladybird



At 2 o'clock a happy ladybird was playing in the garden.



At 3 o'clock it met a little cat with his friends.



At 4 o'clock it meets a sleepy ladybird and a wake-up



hopper. "Hey you! Do you want to play basketball



and dance all around to the music and drum



all the way home?

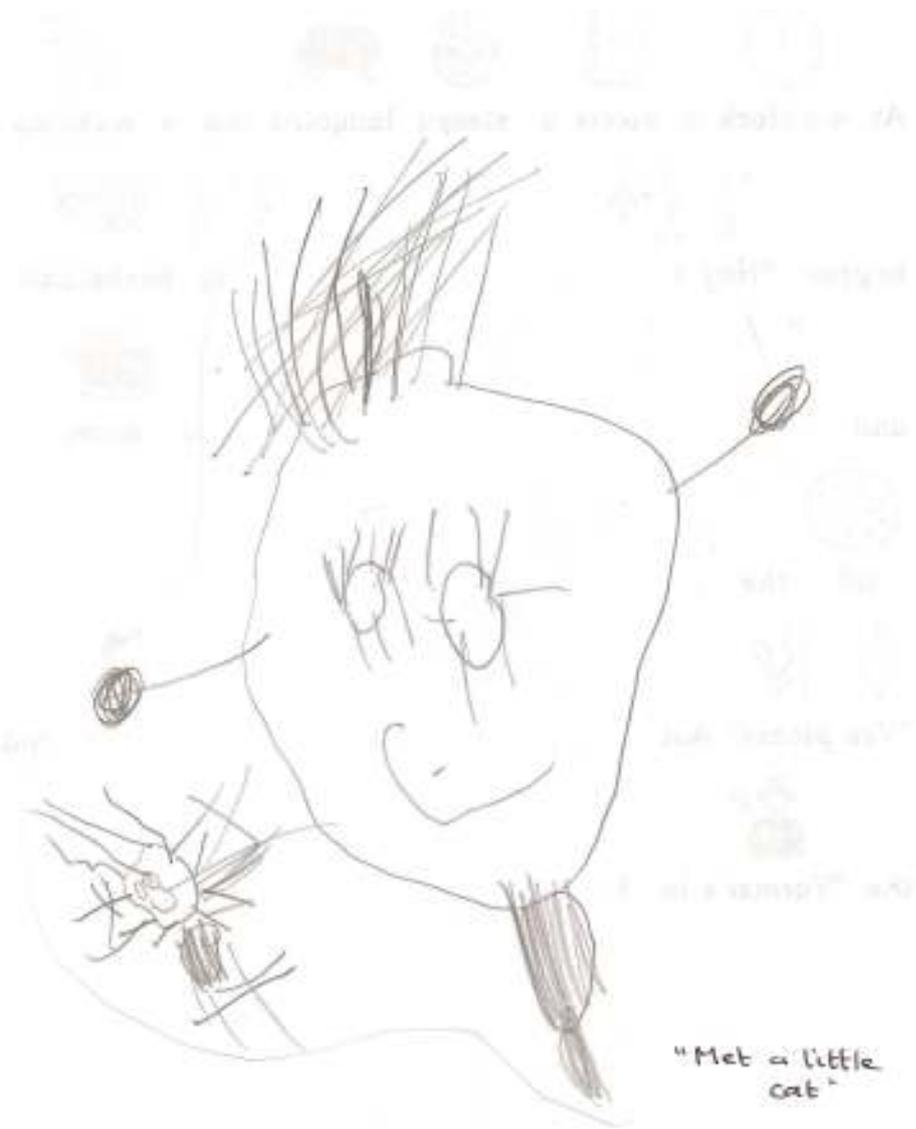


"Yes please" And they played "Ring-a-ring a roses" and



the "Farmer's in his Den".





Context				
Name and C.A.	Poppy (6:4)			
Story Title	'The Happy Ladybird'.			
Initial Stimulus	Story – ‘The Bad Tempered Ladybird’.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Storyboard	1	Group
Number of words	66			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	4 WL (E)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (E) ‘ It meets a sleepy Ladybird’. (Actions (intensive), 4.7, CMD(DESC)			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	9	7.3	12*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P7 Simple phrases used top convey meaning and all connected meaningfully . Adjectives used.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1/2: Simple descriptions given for each character. ‘Happy ladybird/little cat sleepy/ladybird/wake-up/ happy.’			
Character: social interaction	L2(+1) some simple 2-way dialogue ‘hey you! Do you want to play basketball and dance all around to the music and drum all the way home?’ ‘Yes please’.			
Character: inner world	L1: wants of characters met in the last part of the story ‘they played’.			
Character: relationships	L1: Friendship implicit both in the playing of games and previously where the ladybird ‘met a little cat with his friends’.			
Predicament	L1(b)			
Climax/High point	‘Hey you! Do you want to play basketball and dance all			

	around to the music and drum on the way home?’
Resolution	‘they played ‘Ring –a-ring-of-roses’ and the ‘Farmers in his Den.
Story setting/environment	(i) Minibeast world. (ii) L1; minimal reference to environmental features - ‘gardenhome’.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	Story structure given ‘as 2 o’clock/3 o’clock/4 o’clock’ and also ‘hey you!’ from ‘The Bad Tempered Ladybird’.
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	The ‘sleepy ladybird and wake-up hopper are wonderful creatures!
Impact	A much more inclusive story – Poppy got great pleasure in including the whole class in her stories final games.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 2 (happiness, friendship)
	Adjectives/adverbs: happy
	Action/dialogue: playing/played
Intensity	Whole story feels happy and Poppy tells it with some glee and confidence.
Appropriateness	Appropriate.
Evaluative Devices	Dialogue! Moves action on and enhances feeling of happiness.

Story 'Theme'	Friendship and happiness an 'idyllic child's world.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story – 'Bad Tempered Ladybird'. Home life/school life.
Cultural Code	Children's games mentioned.
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	I was delighted with how far Poppy's story telling had come on in 2 months! ⇨ Clearly this topic has suited her and she adapts it to her own interests.



Sandtray Story (2)



Spiderman is in the army. He is jumping on tanks.



He is in the jungle. The dinosaurs come. The



Tyranasaurus Rex bit the tank in half but



spiderman jumped away. He's too fast. The dinosurs



are fighting the lions and the tigers. the



dinosaurs are winning. Spiderman and the army come



and shoot all the dinosaurs. They are dead and there



is blood. Spiderman and the army are goodies.

Context				
Name and C.A.	Joshua (7:3)			
Story Title	Sand tray Story (2)			
Initial Stimulus	None			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Sand tray	1	1:1
Number of words	69			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	4 WL (E)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (H): Spiderman and army come and shoot all the dinosaurs.			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	11	6.2	12*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P7 – less clarity of meaning than in previous story.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1: many characters identified but none described – spiderman,/T-Rex dinosaurs/lions/tigers/army.			
Character: social interaction	L1: Interaction via physical actions – ‘dinosaurs are fighting the lions and the tigers.....spiderman and the army come and shoot all the dinosaurs.			
Character: inner world	L1: several characters involved but none with any developed descriptions/motivations.			
Character: relationships	L2: Co-action and arbitrary conflict throughout.			
Predicament	L1 (b): (Although not just one character.			

Climax/High point	‘The dinosaurs are fighting the lions and tigers. The dinosaurs are winning.’
Resolution	‘They are dead and there is blood. Spiderman and the army are goodies
Story setting/environment	(i) Fantasy world, ‘in the jungle’. (ii) L1: - ‘jungle/tank only environmental features mentioned.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Spiderman in the army – in the jungle with dinosaurs.
Impact	N/A– 1:1 – storytelling
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 1 (anger/dislike)
	Adjectives/adverbs:
	Actions/dialogue: fighting...shoots all the dinosaurs (anger/dislike)
Intensity	Fully involved.
Appropriateness	Appropriate

Evaluative Devices	None
Story 'Theme'	Goodies versus Baddies. (Joshua needs to make it clear at the end who the 'goodies' are.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Toys, TV/Films
Cultural Code	-
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Development from first 'all action story in sand. Many reasons are given for events – e.g. 'spiderman'stoo fast'.



Rooster goes around the World



The Battle of Thunder



The good guys are trying to crash the bad guys.



They are in speed boats. Rooster flies over them. He



flies into the roof and knocks. One of the



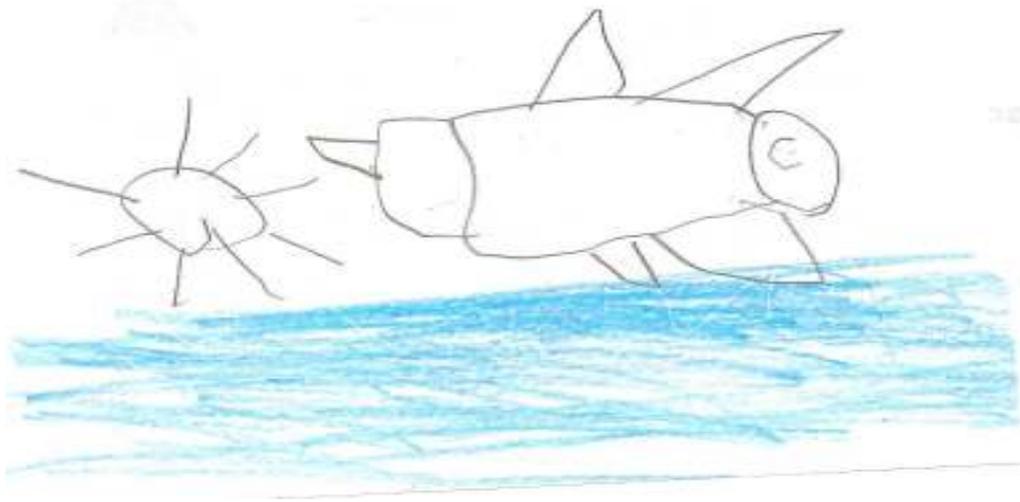
good guys opens it and rooster helps them.



The starfish and his friend are swimming under



the water. They sees the good guys and go



in.



The bad guys are in a spiky boat. They are



multi-coloured spikes. When you are shot by the

spikes you turn multi-coloured.



The bad guys shoot the starfish and he dies, but



the big fish saves him.



The bad guys turned rooster into one of the



bad guys and then he don't fight so they make

him [?] do it.



There is a button on his hand and he presses it and



he goes back to being good.



Context				
Name and C.A.	James (7:5)			
Story Title	'Rooster goes around the world'./'the Battle of Thunder'.			
Initial Stimulus	Story – 'Rooster's off to see the world'.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Role-play	2	Class
Number of words	131			
Syntax				
DLS-'Best Fit' Level	4 WL (E)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (H+). 'The good guys are trying to crash the bad guys'. (4.7 CMD(DESC).			
T-Units	Total T – Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	20	6.5	10*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P7/P8 – Uses grouping vocabulary. Good sentence structure. Still not fully connecting ideas not conveying feelings.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L2: Characters described by stereotyped labels – good guys.....bad guys – 'others identified – Rooster/starfish/big fish'.			
Character: social interaction	L2: Interactions in a physical action, 'good guys are trying to crash the bad guys.....flies into the roof and knocksswimming underwater.			
Character: inner world	L1			
Character: relationships	L2: Co-action and arbitrary conflict predominate – 'starfish and his friend are swimming under the water'big fish saves him.....good guys trying to crash the bad guys'.			
Predicament	L1/2(b).			

Climax/High point	No clear point – possibly ‘the bad guys turned Rooster into one of the bad guys’.
Resolution	‘There is a button on his hand and he presses it and he goes back to being a good guy’.
Story setting/environment	(i) sea/speedboats. (ii) L1: Some environmental details – speedboats/swimming under water/Spiky boat.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Lovely image of the multi-coloured spikes – ‘when you are shot by the spikes you turn multi-coloured’.
Impact	James very involved in writing a ‘play’ – dramatic opening scene – but he and Joshua were both reluctant to let Charlie be the only one to do the shooting in the final dramatization
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 2 (anger/dislike, friendship)
	Adjectives/adverbs: 0
	Action/dialogue: trying to crash...shoots (anger/dislike), big fish saves him...helps (friendship)
Intensity	Story told with intensity – but all is in the acting.
Appropriateness	-

Evaluative Devices	-
Story 'Theme'	'Good guys versus Bad guys.' Explain clearly as a permanent or reversible state. 'Starfish dies but the big fish saves him.'
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story - Rooster's off to see the World / Context/ Films
Cultural Code	-
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Very original idea that Rooster had 'a button on his hand and he presses it and goes back to being a good'. James could have done with one of the buttons himself at play times.



Come with me to the dark, dark forest.



I can feel a bumpy tree.



Can you see the dark, dark house in the dark, dark forest?



There is spiky grass outside.



Can you see the dark, dark stairs in the dark, dark house.



What can you hear?



Someone coming downstairs for a bath.



Oh no! It was a mouse!



Come up the dark stairs. Can you see the dark, dark room?



Can you see the dark, dark cupboard in the dark, dark room?



It has circle patterns carved on it.



In the dark, dark cupboard is a dark, dark box?

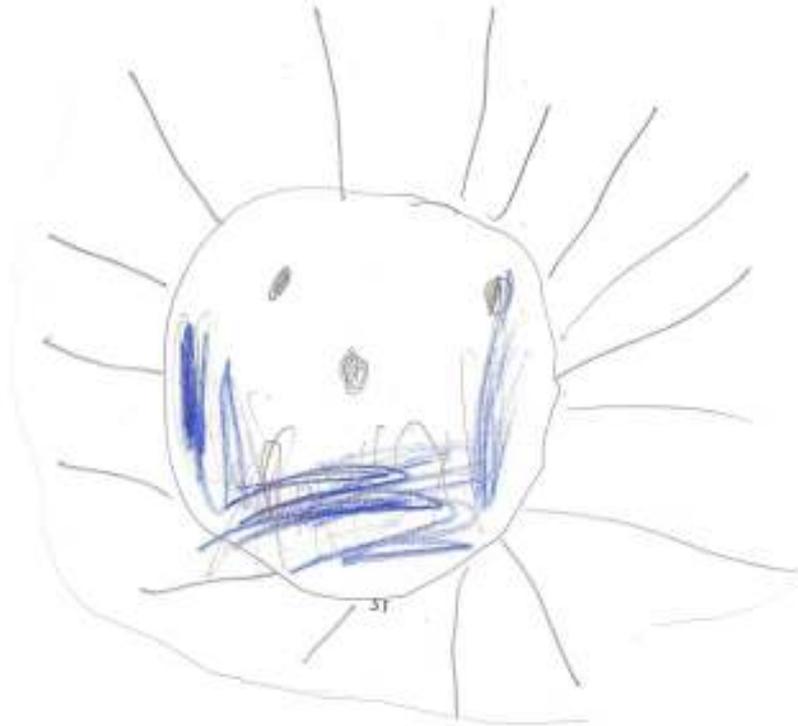


What can you see in the dark, dark box?

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaagggggggggghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!



A big grey spider. He bites with all his blue teeth.



Context				
Name and C.A.	Tessa (6:8)			
Story Title	Come with me.			
Initial Stimulus	Teacher – Modelled story telling.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Guided	Role play	1	Class
Number of words	85 (SF) 39 (I)			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	4 WL (E)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (H). e.g to adjectives in a phrase – ‘a big grey spider’ – ‘he bites with all his blue teeth. (action on an object).			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	7	5.5	7 (2)	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P6 – 3 key words (easily) and facial expression. Context prevented P7.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L2 (+1): ‘A big grey spider. He bites with all his blue teeth.			
Character: social interaction	N/A (SF)			
Character: inner world	N/A (SF)			
Character: relationships	N/A (SF)			
Predicament	N/A(SF)			
Climax/High point	N/A (SF)			
Resolution	‘a big grey spider. He bites with all his blue teeth.’			

Story setting/environment	(i) Dark, dark house in a dark, dark woods. (SF). (ii) L1 – ‘bumpy tree..... spiky grass..... circle patterns.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	Tessa’s final picture had been carefully thought out to be used with effect – she revealed it dramatically and spoke with expression to scare her audience!
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None.
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Adding blue teeth to a spider made it scarier.
Impact	2 levels: See description in comments re: possibly trying to please teacher. Children as audience responding well to her scaring them.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 1 (Fear)
	Adjectives/adverbs: scary
	Action/dialogue:
Intensity	
Appropriateness	Trying to scare audience picked up the predominant theme of the story.
Evaluative Devices	-
Story ‘Theme’	-

Social Aspects	
Source of story material	School life –using new vocabulary. Story – ‘Come with me’.
Cultural Code	Spiders are scary.
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Interesting links made between subject and trying new vocabulary in her story telling.

Land of the Unicorns



The bad king wants to get the Unicorn. The



shark helps the unicorn get away.



King and unicorn go under the waterfall. Go



to Rainbow Land where it is safe.



They live in the happy Rainbow Land where they live



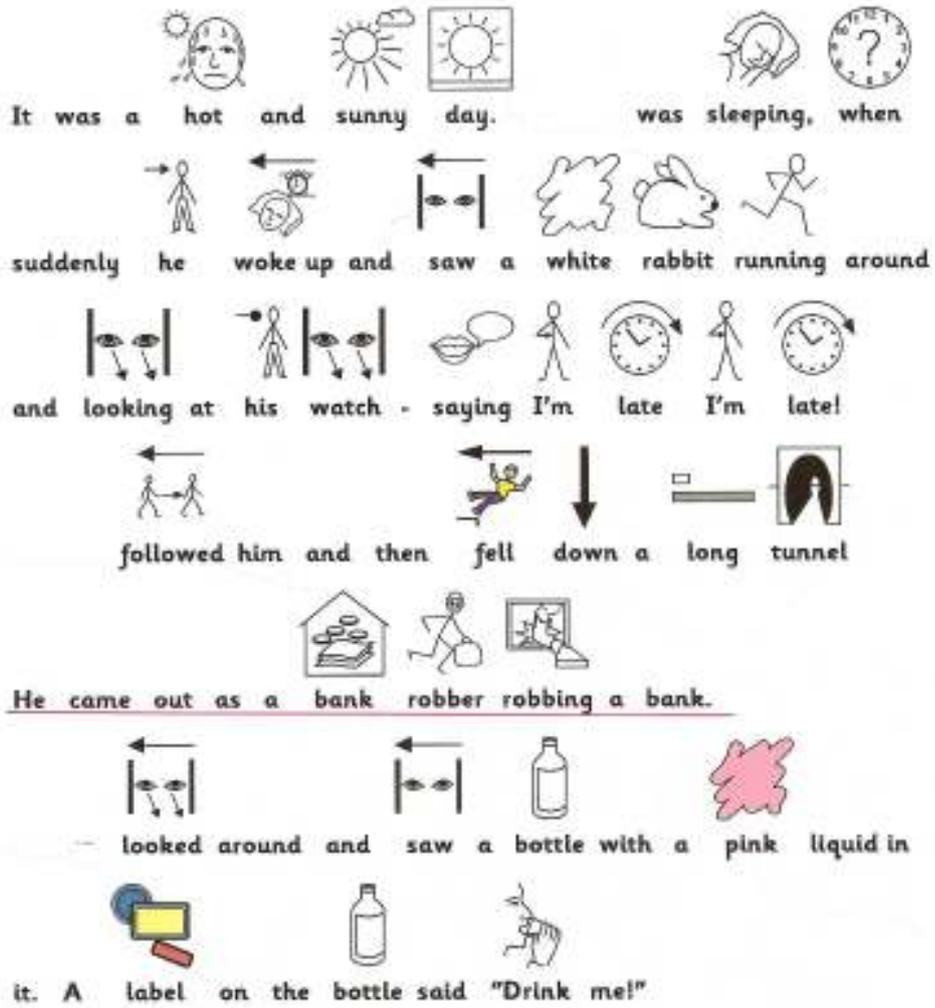
in a house.

Context				
Name and C.A.	Lauren (6:9)			
Story Title	'Land of the Unicorn'.			
Initial Stimulus	Puppet show of the story – 'Nobody Rides the Unicorn'.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Multi activities	8	1:1
Number of words	43			
Syntax				
DLS-'Best Fit' Level	3 WL (H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (E) – 'they live in happy Rainbow Land'.			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	5	8.6	13*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P6 – One confusion in meaning is whether the second time the 'king' is mentioned, it should have been the shark.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1: 'shark/unicorn with one simple description – 'bad king'.			
Character: social interaction	L2: Interaction via physical action. 'king and unicorn go under the waterfall..... shark helps unicorn to get away'.			
Character: inner world	L1: Motivating states of 2 characters 'king and unicorn go under the waterfall. Go to Rainbow Land where it is safe'.			
Character: relationships	L2: Implicit friendship and co-action "The shark helps unicorn get away...they live in happy Rainbow Land" and arbitrary conflict " bad King wants to get the unicorn"			

Predicament	L1(b)
Climax/High point	‘The shark helps the unicorn to get away’.
Resolution	‘ They live in the happy Rainbow Land where they live in a house’. (I’m sure Laruen meant it to be the shark and unicorn and not the king’).
Story setting/environment	(i) Land of the Unicorns. (ii) L2: Environmental details essential to plot – ‘under the waterfall.....happy Rainbow Land where they live in a house.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	‘Rainbow Land’ under the waterfall but with a house.
Impact	N/A- 1:1 story telling.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 3 (happiness, friendship, dislike)
	Adjectives/adverbs: bad king, happy
	Action: helps the unicorn (friendship)
Intensity	-
Appropriateness	Appropriate

Evaluative Devices	None
Story 'Theme'	Escape from danger to a 'safe' home.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story – Land of Unicorns'.
Cultural Code	Living in houses
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Lauren gets characters confused – the shark should have gone with the unicorn under the waterfall.

J. In Wonderland





sipped the drink and suddenly shrunk until he was very

small.



He tried to rob a coin but he couldn't lift it and



it fell on top of him.



Then I saw some biscuits that said "Eat me!" When



he eat the biscuit he started growing bigger and bigger!



He was so big that he lifted up the whole bank.



Then started to cry. He cried so much that the bank



floated away.

 was swimming in a sea of tears and suddenly he

 was joined by all his friends from Class 2.

 They ran around to get dry and then saw a caterpillar

 smoking a pipe and sitting on a mushroom.

 The caterpillar gave him some mushroom to eat so that he

 could stop getting big and small.

 The caterpillar told - to go and see the Cheshire Cat







 The Cheshire cat said "You've got to drink a






 potion to get to normal size". Joshua drank a






 really disgusting potion and was boy size again






 - but really strong and went to the party. The








 bad boys party. He shouted and we




 all drank disgusting drinks and then Joshua woke



 up and it was all a dream!

Context				
Name and C.A.	Joshua (7:7)			
Story Title	'Joshua in Wonderland'.			
Initial Stimulus	Shortened version of Alice in Wonderland!' Teacher – Modelled story telling.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Guided	Role Play	2	Class
Number of words	170 (SF) 92 (I)			
Syntax				
DLS-'Best Fit' Level	4 WL (H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (H+) – 'Joshua drank a really disgusting potion' (action: intensive – 4.7A CMD)			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	13	7	11 *	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P8/1C – Clear connections to convey meaning.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L2 (+1): Joshua was’so big..... boy size again.....really strong’.			
Character: social interaction	L2: one – way communication ‘ you’ve got to drink a potion to get to normal size’. ‘He shouted and we all drank disgusting drinks’.			
Character: inner world	L1: Motivating wants of main character ‘tried to rob a bank....went to the party’.			
Character: relationships	L1: Possible friendships/authority shown by Cheshire Cat – but not explicit.			
Predicament	L2 (b) – although aided by SF.			
Climax/High point	‘..... went to the party. The bad boys party.’			

Resolution	Joshua woke up and it was all a dream.
Story setting/environment	(i) Wonderland (SF). (ii) L1: Few environmental details – ‘bank....party...bad boys party.’
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	Repetition of ‘really disgusting’ designed for effect.
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	‘..... it was all a dream.’
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Fairly ordinary image of a bank robber – but creatively used within the story frame when he gets bigger and smaller – couldn’t lift up a coin but then lifted up a whole bank.
Impact	Joshua will go to a party – but obviously only if it is a ‘bad boys party.’
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 1 (pride?)
	Adjectives/adverbs: “bad boys” (I am interpreting this as pride, because James would be proud to be “in the gang”. Different to Lauren’s use of the term which indicated dislike
	Action/dialogue:
Intensity	Fully involved and skilled at weaving own elements into story frame.
Appropriateness	None
Evaluative Devices	None

Story 'Theme'	N/A – SF
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story – 'Alice in Wonderland TV/Film. Immediate context of story telling.



Sandtray Story (3)



It's Wonderland. It's a park in Wonderland. The



daddy is playing on the slide and the brother is



riding his bike. He keeps falling off. But the



magic fairy waves her wand and he can ride



really fast. And all the magic animals come and



play in the park. The dolphin is swimming in the



sand and the frog wants to play on the slide.



Then the dragon flies down and eats the elephant



and everybody cries "Boo Hoo!" and daddy and the



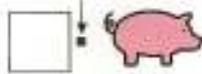
brother go home and wake up.



Context				
Name and C.A.	Tessa (6:10)			
Story Title	Sand – tray story (3)			
Initial Stimulus	None			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Sand –tray	1	(1:1)
Number of words	89			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	4WL(H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (H) – several examples of actions (interactive) CM/DESC. Eg: ‘Dolphin swimming in the sand.’			
T-Units	Total T – Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	13	6.8	10	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P7 – uses ‘and’/has contributed to role play / 3-4 key words/conveys meaning.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1/2: ‘daddymagic fairy.... magic animals...dolphin.....frog....dragon....elephant....brother.’			
Character: social interaction	L2: Mostly shows action and physical interaction – ‘magic fairy waves her wand so he can ride really fast dragon flies down and eats the elephant.’			
Character: inner world	L1: Motivating states of several characters ‘magic fairy waves her wand and he can ride really fast..... animals come to play in the park.....frog wants to play on the slide.’			
Character: relationships	L2: Co-action and arbitrary conflict – ‘the dragon flies down and eats the elephant.’			
Predicament	L1 (b)			
Climax/High point	‘Then the dragon flies down and eats the elephant.’			

Resolution	‘Daddy and the brother go home and wake up.’
Story setting/environment	(i) Alice in Wonderland (ii) L1/2: Setting plays significant part in the story – ‘park....slide.....bike...park....sand...home.’
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	‘Boo Hoo’: becoming a popular device for Tessa for dramatic effect.
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	‘Wake up’ – reference to ‘wake up and it was all a dream in the previous story.’
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	A real-life event – ‘brother (keeps falling off his bike)’ . But in this world a “magic fairy” waves her wand and he can ride really fast
Impact	N/A: 1:1 story telling to adult.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 2 (happiness/friendship, sadness)
	Actions/adverbs: 0
	Action/dialogue: play in the park (friendship)...everybody cries “Boo Hoo!”
Intensity	Confident telling of the ‘happy’ story – built in surprises by bringing in the outside attacker.
Appropriateness	Fully appropriate.
Evaluative Devices	Sound effects – ‘Boo-Hoo.’

Story 'Theme'	A happy 'Wonderland'/Garden of Eden – attacked and disrupted by an enemy from outside.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Home-life! Enjoyment of the park/ immediate story-telling context.
Cultural Code	Playing in the park is a happy thing to do.
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	



Tiny pig is very small. He is playing Ring a ring a roses



with nobody. He's upset.



4



A blue and purple monster with four eyes and yellow



wings whacks the pig. Then he smacks him. He runs off.



Pig runs somewhere else. He meets Rainbow Man. Rainbow



Man always smiles a lot. He says "Don't cry. I will play



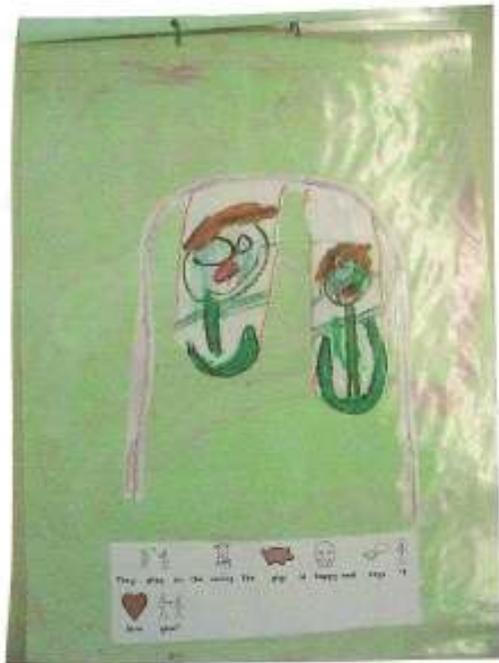
with you".



They play on the swing. The pig is happy and says "I



love you!"



Context				
Name and C.A.	Emily (7:1)			
Story Title	'Emily in too big a world.'			
Initial Stimulus	Story – 'Teeny-Weeny in too big a world.'			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Storyboard/ Artwork	B	(1:1)
Number of words	75			
Syntax				
DLS-'Best Fit' Level	4 WL (H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL + - See longest T-unit.			
T-Units	Total T – Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	12	6.2	14*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	1B/1A: Story told with a good degree of detail and with feelings and actions clearly connected.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L3(+1): 'Tiny pig is very small' – 'a blue and purple monster with 4 eyes and yellow wings.' L3(+2) 'Rainbow Man always smile a lot.'			
Character: social interaction	L2: Physical action – 'monster..... whacks the pig.' 1 – sided dialogue: he says 'don't cry – I will play with you.' Physical action: 'the play on the swing.'			
Character: inner world	L1 (+1) Tiny pig – 'he is upset' – 'the pig is happy and says ' I love you!'' Possible L2(+1): Although no explicit connections – poignant reason for being upset 'playing ring-a-ring-a roses with nobody.'			

Character: relationships	L2: Arbitrary conflict ‘monster...whacks the pig. Then he smacks him.’ Co-action ‘they play on the swing.’
Predicament	L1 (b)
Climax/High point	‘He meets Rainbow Man. Rainbow Man always smiles a lot.’
Resolution	‘They play on the swing. The pig is happy and says ‘I love you!’
Story setting/environment	(i) Fantasy world (un-specified)/park. (ii) L1: only reference to setting is the swing.’
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	This story is filled with Emily’s own creations – the pig and Rainbow Man. Most striking image of loneliness – ‘playing ring-a-ring a roses with nobody.’
Impact	‘Something for everyone!’ – The monster created for Joshua, and the familiar bonding with Poppy at the end.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 5 (sadness, happiness, love, friendship, anger/dislike)
	Adjectives/adverbs: upset, happy
	Action/dialogue: always smiles a lot (happiness), whacks the pig...smacks him (anger/dislike)...”Don’t cry, I will play with you”. (friendship)... “I love you” (love)
Intensity	Good use of expression in dialogue and great glee in saying the work ‘whacks’ – (a favourite word with boys!)

Appropriateness	Appropriate.
Evaluative Devices	Emily – signalling actions: smacks him...runs off...smiles a lot....'don't cry' I love you!
Story 'Theme'	Sadness and loneliness versus happiness and friendship.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story – Teeny Weenie in too big a world pictures immediate context of story-telling.
Cultural Code	Relies on knowledge that ring-a-ring a roses is a group game.
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Emily starting to move away from re-telling stories and becoming more confident in developing her own characters.



Nobody Rides the Unicorn



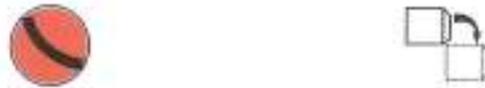
Unicorn with a golden mane. He makes magic.



He can ride. Gallop like a horse "Giddy-Up"!



He meets the chicken. They play ball. The



unicorn gets the ball and makes it disappear like



magic.



The sun comes out and the unicorn and chicken go



to sleep.

Context				
Name and C.A.	Poppy (6:7)			
Story Title	Nobody rides the Unicorn.			
Initial Stimulus	Puppet show of the story! ‘Nobody rides the Unicorn.’			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Multi activities	8	(1:1)
Number of words	46			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	3 WL (E)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (H). “The unicorn gets the ball and makes it disappear like magic”			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	11	4.1	7	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P7: good use of conjunctions to expand ideas.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1/2: One character with simple description – ‘unicorn with a golden mane’ – others identified – ‘chicken.’			
Character: social interaction	L2: Physical interaction. ‘He meets the chicken. They play ball.’			
Character: inner world	L1: Unicorn motivated by making magic – ‘The unicorn gets the ball an makes it disappear like magic.’ L2: One instance of dialogue ‘Giddy-up’ (but not really part of the story – Poppy comparing horses with unicorns).			
Character: relationships	L1: Friendship between chicken and unicorn implicit in actions – ‘they play ball unicorn and chicken go to sleep.’			

Predicament	L1(b)
Climax/High point	‘The unicorn gets the ball and makes it disappear like magic.’
Resolution	‘The sun comes out and the unicorn and chicken go to sleep.’
Story setting/environment	(i) Land of the Unicorns. (ii) L1(-): Only aspect of environment mentioned is the ‘sun.’
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	A unicorn and a chicken playing a magic game of ball.
Impact	N/A 1:1 story-telling
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 1 (friendship)
	Adjectives/adverbs: 0
	Action/dialogue; They play ball (friendship)
Intensity	Fully involved.
Appropriateness	Appropriate.

Evaluative Devices	-
Story 'Theme'	Playing with friends (but with a magic twist).
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story: Nobody rides the Unicorn. Pictures; home life.
Cultural Code	-
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Poppy relied completely on her picture – seems to be exploring the concept of the Unicorn and likening it to a horse. The chicken could be a confusion with the duck in the actual story.



The night Max wore his tiger suit he made mischief of one

kind or another.



He was swearing messing his room up and punching his brother



on the nose.



His mum said "WILD THING!" and Max said "I'LL PUSH



YOU!" So he was sent to bed without eating anything.

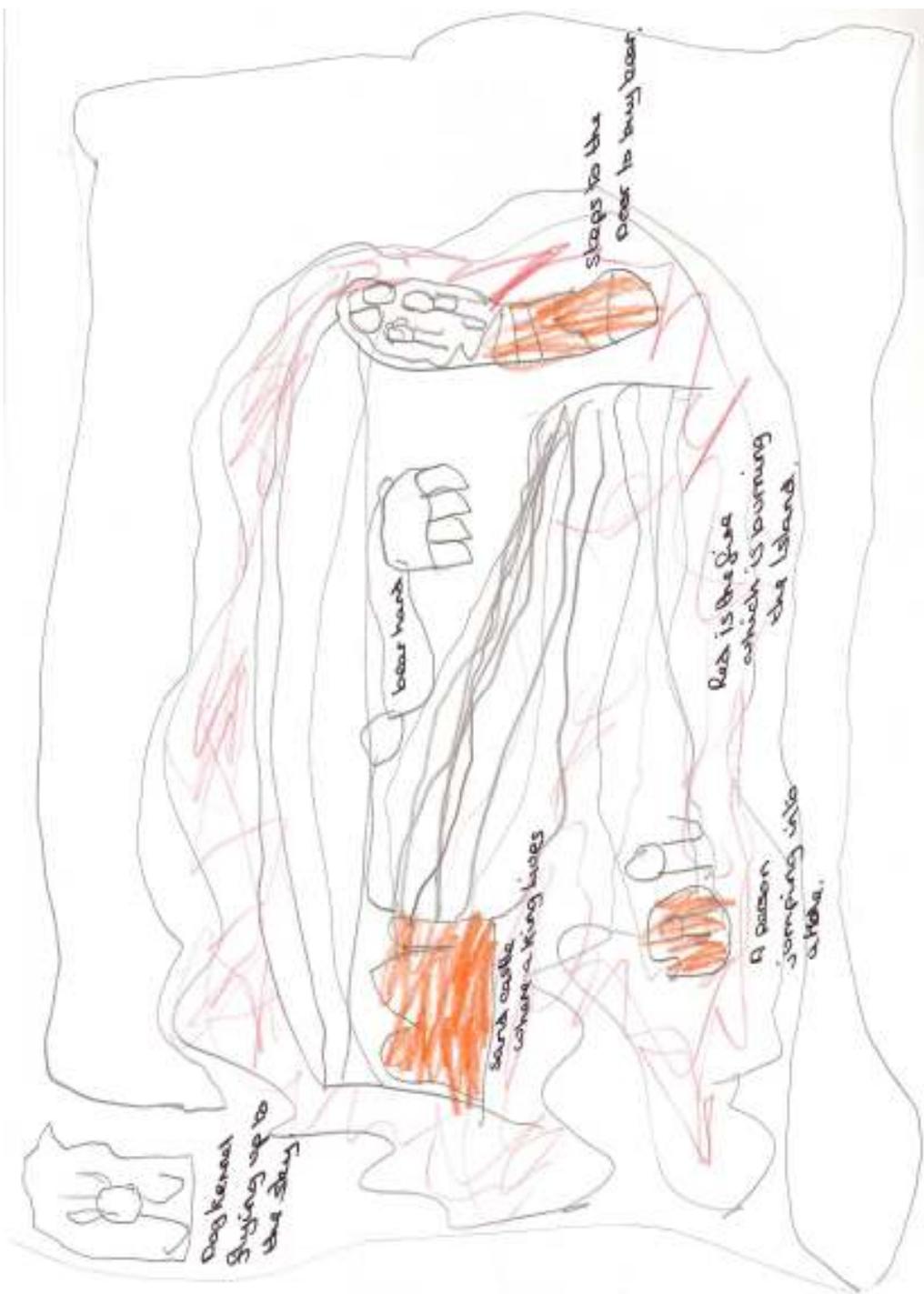


That night Max sailed away to the Land of the Wild

Things.



There was a sand castle where the king lives and a bear





hand and steps to the door to the bear. Red is the fire



which is burning the island. There is a person jumping onto a



bike and a dog kennel flying up to the sky.



The Wild Things were gangsters with earrings and round



bellies brown faces and mouths with sharp teeth.



Max was King of the Wild Things and he had a rumpus.



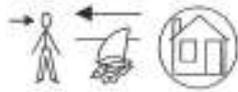
Then Max felt lonely and he smelt a massive massive



massive massive more massive than his- cake from home



with a gangster on top



He sailed home and his supper was waiting.



Mum came into the room and Max said "When I went



wild I saw a gangster and we had a rumpus"

Context				
Name and C.A.	James (7:9)			
Story Title	'Where the Wild Things Are.'			
Initial Stimulus	Story – 'Where the Wild Things Are.'			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Guided	Role Play	1	Class
Number of words	85 (SF) 108(I)			
Syntax				
DLS-'Best Fit' Level	4 WL +			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL +. E.g. he was swearing, messing up his room and punching his brother on the nose.			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	10	10.8	19*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P8 – Uses lots of detail for effect but all sentences do not make clear sense – e.g. description of island.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L3(+1): Characters with more detailed physical description – 'wild things were gangsters with earrings and round bellies, brown faces and mouths with sharp teeth.'			
Character: social interaction	N/A (SF)			
Character: inner world	N/A (SF)			
Character: relationships	N/A (SF)			
Predicament	N/A (SF)			
Climax/High point	N/A (SF)			

Resolution	‘Max said ‘when I went wild I saw a gangster and we had a rumpus.’
Story setting/environment	(i) Land of Wild Things (SF). (ii) L2: Details of setting given ‘sand castle where the king lives....fire is burning the island....dog kennel is flying in the sky.’
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	Repetition – ‘he smelt a massive, massive, massive, massive – more massive than his cake from home.’
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	‘Sand castle where the king lives.’ ‘Red is the fire which is burning the island’. Lovely phraseology.
Impact	Gangsters written partly for his friends and in competition with them eg: “More massive than his cake”
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 1 (anger)
	Adjectives/adverbs: 0
	Action/dialogue: swearing...messing his room up... punching... “I’ll push you!” (anger)
Intensity	Fully involved in the depiction of anger and in having a rumpus!
Appropriateness	Appropriate to story
Evaluative Devices	Repetition – ‘massive, massive, massive, massive – more massive than his cake’- desperate competitiveness

Story 'Theme'	N/A: (SF)
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story: Where the Wild Things Are. TV/Film.
Cultural Code	-
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Gangsters have started to enter James' play a lot recently and he talks about gangster films he must have watched avidly. He even describes the 'beer bellies' interestingly – unlike Joshua – James does not reject his mother to return to his fantasy world. He just tells her about it.

Once upon a time there was a good witch called P..... She

plays with her baby. She had her baby yesterday. They had

chewing gum and crisps and salad. "One two three!" the

giant in Jack and the Beanstalk said "Ha! Ha! Ha!". He slammed

the door and broke the door. He want to kill them. They

runned out of bed and the dad wizard comed home and

said "Where is my baby and my mum?" Dad killed the

giant with a gun and beat him up and they all lived

happily ever after. A giant never came ever again.

Context				
Name and C.A.	Lauren (7:0)			
Story Title	Fairy story.			
Initial Stimulus	Story – Fairy stories and traditional tales.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Storyboard	1 (+ sharing books).	(1:1)
Number of words	100			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	4 WL(E)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (E). ‘She plays with her baby.’ (Action object: 4.8 CMD/DESC).			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	14	7.1	11 *	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P7: - Ideas not well connected at beginning – more coherent at the end. Uses conjunctions and growing use of story language.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L2: Characters identified – with xxx simple descriptions and labels – ‘ good witch called Poppybaby.... giant in ‘Jack and the Beanstalk’dead lizard.’			
Character: social interaction	L2: One way dialogue – ‘One, two, three!’ the giant said ‘ha! ha! ha! ‘ – ‘where is my baby and mum?’			
Character: inner world	L1: Motivation of giant made explicit – ‘he wants to kill them.’			
Character: relationships	L2: Adult authority in the form of the ‘dead lizard.’ Arbitrary conflict of the giant – but dads action to protect family,			
Predicament	L1/2 (b).			

Climax/High point	(Giant) – ‘he slammed the door and broke the door. He wants to kill them.’
Resolution	‘Dad killed the giant with a gun and beat him u and they all lived happily ever after. A giant never ever came again.’
Story setting/environment	(i) Fairy-tale world – not really clear. (ii) L2: Some environmental details – door/home/bed – instrumental weapons ‘gun.’
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	‘Ha!, Ha!, Ha! – designed to be frightening.
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	‘Once upon a time.....happily ever after.’ Reference to giant in Jack and the Beanstalk.
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Another mix of fantasy and reality – perhaps most brutally where ‘dad killed the giant with a gun.’
Impact	N/A: 1:1 story-telling.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 5 (anger, hate, friendship/love, happiness, fear)
	Adjectives/adverbs: happily
	Action/dialogue: runned out of bed (fear)...broke the door, slammed the door (anger)... plays with her baby (friendship/love)... want to kill them...dad killed the giant and beat him up (hate)
Intensity	Very intense conflict with a giant threatening a family. Told with great expression.
Appropriateness	Very intense emotions but appropriate to the action.

Evaluative Devices	Dialogue: ‘one, two, three.Ha!, Ha!, Ha!, developed threatening atmosphere. Repetition: ‘a giant never came never again’ – to re-infer the ending.
Story ‘Theme’	Good versus Evil. Outsiders threatening family.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Fairy-tales – including Jack and the Beanstalk. Home life and TV.
Cultural Code	Use of a gun as a preferred weapon.
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Quite a powerful story of a dad rescuing his family. My own prejudice against guns is such that I would much have preferred it if dad had used a magical spell.



The Iron Man



Chapter 1: The Coming of the Iron Man



Taller than a bedroom



His head as big as a window



His eyes like blue shiny stars.



The Iron Man came.



He fallen down the mountain and died. And bled



everywhere. He twisted his arms around and went



"crrrrm" His bones broke and he went to hospital



and was mended.



He goes in the sea and swims and meets the



fishes and crabs and sharks.





Chapter 2: The Return of the Iron Man

1



One farmer said "Get the cows and sheep to



eat him"



Another farmer said: "Lock him up"



But they decided to dig a trap.



Hogarth banged the knives and the Iron man came



to eat them and fell in the hole with a great



big CRASH!



Hogarth was happy because he had trapped the



Iron Man.



Chapter 3: What's to be Done with the Iron Man?



A family had a picnic with jam cake. The hill



fallen down and the Iron Man's hand came out. The



Iron Man went to a tip and was given some metal



doors and hands. He is friendly.



Chapter 4: The Space-Being and the Iron Man



The terrible space-bat angel dragon had landed on



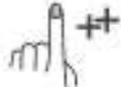
Australia.



He's got big brown and white eyes and a big



round circle blue body with long fingers and funny



sharp nails. He scratches things. He's got red



spikes that hurt you.



5



Chapter 5: The Iron Man's Challenge



When the Iron Man had defeated the space-bat-angel



dragon he commanded that he fly around the



earth and sing the peaceful music of the stars and



everyone on earth would be happy.



A person's walking in the park. She's got shiny hair.



She picks some grass and cooks it. Daddy eats it for



tea and he likes it and he kisses mummy.

Context				
Name and C.A.	Tessa (7:0)			
Story Title	The Iron Man			
Initial Stimulus	Story – ‘The Iron Man’ – Ted Hughes.			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Guided	Multi-activities	7	Group
Number of words	132 (SF) 90 (I)			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	4 WL(H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL (H+) –or higher – a family had a picnic with jam-cake (adjectival phrase).’			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	26	4.5	21*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P8 – 4 key words (see description of angel dragon: tells familiar parts of the story; growing vocabulary e.g. shiny, because and crrrrm (sound effect).			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L3(+2): ‘He is got big brown and white eyes and a big round circle blue body with long fingers and funny sharp nails. He’s got red spikes that hurt you.’			
Character: social interaction	L2: Interaction in a physical action – ‘he swims and meets the fishes and crabs and sharks. ‘Iron Man...was given some metal doors and hands.’ ‘Daddy eats it for tea and he likes it and he kisses mummy.’			
Character: inner world	L2 (+1) – ‘Hogarth is happy because he had trapped the Iron Man.’			

Character: relationships	N/A (SF)
Predicament	N/A (SF)
Climax/High point	N/A (SF)
Resolution	‘She picks some grass and cooks it. Daddy eats it for tea, he likes it and he kisses mummy.’
Story setting/environment	(i) Setting of the Iron Man (ii) L2: regular mention of environmental features – ‘mountain...hospital...sea...hill...tip...park.’
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	‘crrrrm.’ ‘Great big CRASH!’
Figurative Language	Part of SF. ‘taller than a bedroom his head is bigger than a window his eyes like blue shiny stars.’
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Description of monster ‘she picks some grass and cooks it’(might lack language to name other vegetables she has seen someone pick).
Impact	None
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 4 (happiness, fear, friendship, love)
	Adjectives/adverbs: friendly, spikes that hurt you
	Action/dialogue: “Eat him.. lock him up!” (Fear)... likes it (happiness)... kisses mummy (love)

Intensity	Told with sense of drama and excitement
Appropriateness	Appropriate
Evaluative Devices	Sound effects
Story 'Theme'	N/A (SF)
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Story of The Iron Man. Own painting Home life
Cultural Code	Mummy cooks tea for daddy Go to hospital when injured
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Domestic bliss seen as the perfect world.




 A pink good was in his nest and when the other one





 was flying in the sky he saw the evil ones down on




 the ground. He was gonna fly back to his nest so he





 did. He told "the evil one's coming!" to the pink bug






 and because the pink bug was only a baby and couldn't





 fly he had to bounce. So the other bug flew and the








 pink bug bounced. The baddie ate the pink bug then






 the spider came and pushed the baddie dinosaur and scratched

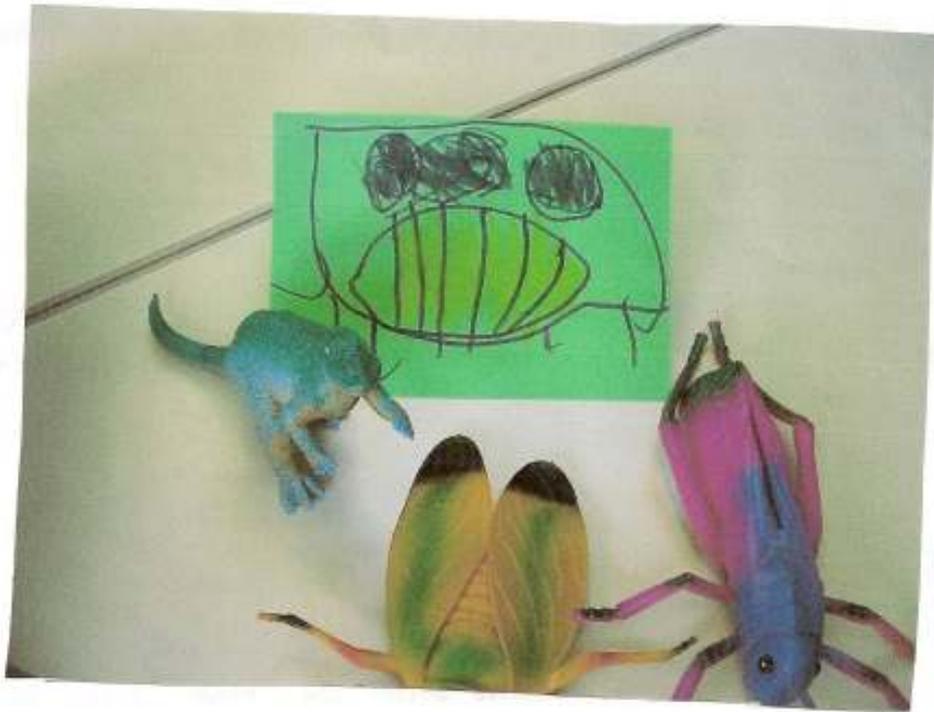





 him. He clicked his fingers and ate the flying bug. and



the baddies ruled the world.



Context				
Name and C.A.	Joshua			
Story Title	The Pink Bug			
Initial Stimulus	Teacher – Modelled Storytelling			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Toys/puppets	1	Grouped (1:1)
Number of words	107			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	4 WL +			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL + - e.g. because the pink bug was only a baby and couldn’t fly he had to bounce.			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	11	9.7	18*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	1C/1B: Coherent story with good detail and complex sentence structures but loses coherence at the end which prevents it being 1B.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L3: ‘pink good bug/ baddie dinosaur/flying bug’ – global trait/simple description.			
Character: social interaction	L2: Interaction in a physical action. ‘the baddie eats the pink bug then the spider came and pushed the baddie dinosaur.			
Character: inner world	L1(+2): use of dialogue and expresses inner state – ‘the evil one’s coming!’			
Character: relationships	L2: C- action/arbitrary conflict.			
Predicament	L2 (b)			

Climax/High point	‘So the other bug flew and the pink bug bounced.
Resolution	‘He clicked his fingers and ate the flying-bug and the baddies ruled the world.’
Story setting/environment	(i) Fantasy bug world. (ii) L1: nest
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Collection of characters.
Impact	‘Baddies’ seem to be ‘cool’ at the moment.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 2 (Fear, anger)
	Adjectives/adverbs: 0
	Action/dialogue: “The evil one is coming!” (Fear)... pushed...scratched (anger)
Intensity	Told in detail and with expression – ‘the evil one is coming!’
Appropriateness	-

Evaluative Devices	-
Story 'Theme'	Good versus evil – with evil winning.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Toys and pictures.
Cultural Code	-
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	Careful attention to detail at the beginning but it gets a bit muddled towards the end.



Independent Story



My sister and me went to her best friend's house.



We ate tea. My mum was still at the hospital.



She ate there. Meanwhile my brother and his friend



were up to mischief playing sword fighting. They both



hit each other and their nanny said "Stop it!". They



both kept on hitting. Then my sister came back (I



really banged the table) She was so cross that



her brother was being silly. Then sister said "Come

back I'm going to hit you". He didn't come back.

Then nanny and her they both went off to the

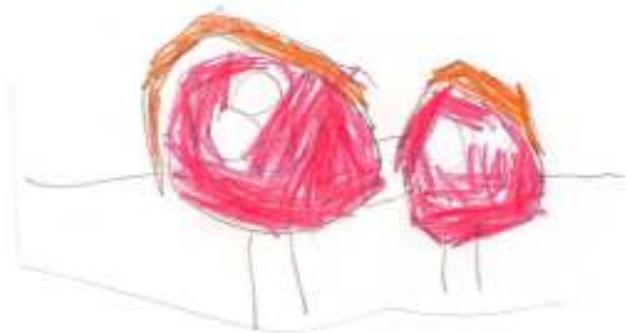
beach to get her brother. They both laughed.

"Brother please can we both stop fighting

Brother says "yes"

They kissed then. Nanny kissed them too.

"I love you brother". They both played together



Context				
Name and C.A.	Emily (7:3)			
Story Title	Independent story			
Initial Stimulus	None			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Storyboard	1	Class (1:1)
Number of words	129			
Syntax				
DLS-‘Best Fit’ Level	4 WL (H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL + - ‘brother please can we both stop fighting.’			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	20	6.45	13*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P8/1C – story starts clearly – but finally Emily gets confused in her stance as the narrator. First she is the sister and then she refers to herself for the brother’s point of view.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1/2: Mostly just identified – sister/best friend/mum/brother/his friend/nanny – ‘but brother being silly.’			
Character: social interaction	L2(+1): Mostly one-way dialogue. ‘Nanny said ‘stop it!’- ‘sister said ‘come back I’m going to hit you’ – but also 2 way! – ‘brother please can we stop fighting..... brother says ‘yes.’			
Character: inner world	L1/2: Feelings not made explicit except for “she was so cross that her brother was being silly”			
Character: relationships	L2: Story based around sibling/child/ adult conflict – no explicit motives nor reason for final co-operation.			

Predicament	L1 (b).
Climax/High point	‘The sister said ‘ Come back I’m going to hit you.’ He didn’t come back.’
Resolution	‘They played together.’
Story setting/environment	(i) Best friend’s house/beach. (ii) L1: best friend’s house/hospital/beach.
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	None
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Main creativity is in the dialogue – wonderful almost biblical overtones at the ending – ‘brother please can we stop fighting.’
Impact	The boys thoroughly enjoyed the sword fighting and Emily enjoyed being angry. Story well-understood and recognized by the whole class.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 4 (Friendship, anger, love, happiness)
	Adjectives/adverbs: so cross
	Action/dialogue: playing sword-fighting ... both laughed (friendship)... hit each other.. I really banged the table... “Stop it!” (anger)... kissed... “I love you” (love)
Intensity	Whole story told with great intensity – dealing with very important issues for Emily.
Appropriateness	Fully appropriate

Evaluative Devices	Emotion – signalling actions! ‘Kept on hitting....really banged the table....both laughed...nanny kissed them to. Dialogue ‘stop it! I love you.’
Story ‘Theme’	Love and hate as part of family life.
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Home – life.
Cultural Code	You have to go to hospital to have a baby.
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	This was a hugely important story psychologically for Emily – and she chose to have it acted out with her friends. I wished we had recorded it to show her mum!



A long time ago I made the world. There is a volcano with



fire coming out of it and the gangster with his gun tried



to get up the volcano and he does and he burns himself



and he falls and hits himself. He's got a plan. he stands



and throws stuff at the volcano. Boom! Boom! Boom! This



is all rain and this is all snow. The snow and the



rain are on all the bricks. The gangster hides in them



and then flies up to the volcano and dies. Then another



gangster comes and wakes him up, and he gets up and

   
falls down and all of his blood runs out of him but he's

     
still alive. A big cloud falls from the sky and the

   
volcano blows up the cloud and puts it back in the sky.

  
the gangsters shot the cloud so it breaks smaller and then

  
the gangsters go in their house and have gangster

chocolate.



Context				
Name and C.A.	James (7:11)			
Story Title	'Clay World.'			
Initial Stimulus	Story – Japanese Creation Myths – Ann Cattanach			
Story telling-Context	Level of support	Main activity used to support story-telling	Number of sessions working with story	Context for final story-telling
	Independent	Claywork	1	1:1
Number of words	160			
Syntax				
DLS-'Best Fit' Level	4 WL (H)			
DLS Example Sentence Highest Level	4 WL+ - e.g. a big cloud falls from the sky' (5 key words).			
T-Units	Total T - Units	Mean T - Unit lengths	Longest T - Unit	
	27	5.9	12*	
NC Level AT1: Speaking	P8 – again complex sentences and a good detail but not coherently connected.			
Structural aspects of story telling (3 Worlds of Narrative)				
Character : description	L1: All characters are 'gangsters.'			
Character: social interaction	L2: Interactive in a physical action. 'Then another gangster comes and wakes him up.			
Character: inner world	L1: Cognition of single character ' he's got a plan.'			
Character: relationships	L2: Co-action: 'the gangsters go in their house and have gangster chocolate' – and conflict against volcano' he stands and throws stuff at the volcano.'			
Predicament	L1 (H)			
Climax/High point	'The gangster hides in them and then flies up to the volcano			

	and dies.’
Resolution	‘The gangsters shot the cloud so it breaks smaller and then the gangsters go in their house and have gangster chocolate.’
Story setting/environment	(i) The World. (ii) L2/3: the setting plays a key point in the story – volcano and clouds almost seen as characters – ‘volcano with fire coming out of it.....rain/snow.....’
Rhetorical aspects	
Use of language for effect	‘Boom!, Boom!, Boom!’
Figurative Language	None
‘Story’ Language	None
Aesthetic Aspects	
Creativity	Whole setting an original creation – and the ending suddenly a return to the world of the child.
Impact	N/A 1:1 story telling.
Emotional Aspects	
Range	Range score: 3 (Physical discomfort, courage, friendship)
	Adjectives/adverbs: 0
	Action/dialogue: burns himself...hurts...blood runs out of him (physical discomfort)...throws stuff at the volcano (courage)...go in their house and have gangster chocolate (friendship)
Intensity	Fully involved when telling and acting out of the battle between gangsters and the elements.

Appropriateness	Appropriate
Evaluative Devices	Sound effects ‘Boom!, Boom!, Boom!, ‘ – Aggression of gangster but all to no avail against the volcano.
Story ‘Theme’	People versus the elements (?)
Social Aspects	
Source of story material	Art work, TV, Films.
Cultural Code	Going home and eating chocolate - safe (even for gangsters!)
Reflections	
Comments by teacher/ researcher on any other aspect	See my comments re: James the grown-up and the six year old boy. Death does not come to gangsters even if they bleed to death - ‘all of his blood runs out of him but he is still alive.’

Appendix 5

Part 2: Charlie's Stories



Sandtray Story (1)



The princess was walking when they came back to



her house. Then the lion came and he woke



her up and that fell and then the lady on



the camel went found a fairy and saw her and



fly back to her house.



Lizard in the Desert



Ummm Lizard in the desert (plays rainmaker)



It's raining and thunder (drums)



and he got hit by thunder (drums) and rain



and the lizard still alive (xylophone). It's raining



again and thunder came. He's gonna get hit now



(rainmaker). Them both gonna get hit.

Charlie and the Beanstalk.



Charlie climbed the beanstalk. There was a massive



house with lots of men with swords. Charlie



saw a man with muscles. The man lifted Charlie



up and ate him.



Mine's a rhino. He's going to eat J's frog and



the bird and the shark. The rhino puts the



log on his horns. He makes a tea-house with them.

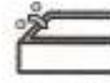


His friend the crocodile plays in the tea-house.





Whatever Next?



Teddy was at the house and he was in the bath



and he found a rocket. He went to the sun and



he went into the sun. It was hot and he



landed. He got out of his rocket and looked around.



Then he found some water. Hot water. Then he



went back to his house.



On the Way Home



T. was on his way to the circus. He met an

orang-utan.



The orang-utan jumped on T. and tried to eat his


pencil-case.





The orang-utan jumped on T's face



The orang-utan swung back into the trees. T. had a



bad



head.





He's got loads of fire. He won't



run out. He catches people and



animals with it. He has purple



sparkles and red wings so that



the other dragons can see him



in the night time.



The Bad-Tempered Dragonfly.



At 11 o'clock the bad-tempered dragonfly is flying up



in the sky.





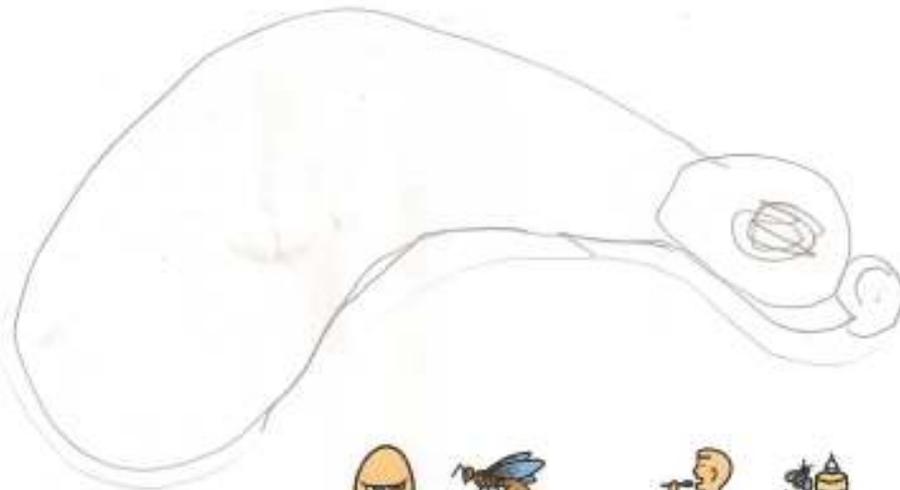
At 2 o'clock the bad-tempered dragonfly met a



nasty horrid wasp in a faraway land. There was a



really nasty horrid ant as well.



At 6 o'clock the nasty wasp was eating honey



that was dropped on the ground.





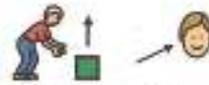
Sandtray Story (2)



The horse and the camel are going to fight. Over



here going to fall off and hit into here (a



knight). Fighting. He's going to lift him up.



Knight's on the roof. Skateboard's coming up. The



camel and the knight falling. Look at the knight. He's



dead now. The lady falls off. A person came.



Knights are fighting. They were biting. The car

came.  Him going to kill  all the knights.  All
the knights  lick the person up.  put  them back
in the  house and the knights  never came back and
 these  two and  giraffe and  horse were  all

comed and were friends.

The Battle



Rooster goes up to the moon. He's in a spaceship.



The lion is in the jungle on the moon getting



ready to eat them.



The rooster calls Superman. The lion eats him. The



lion's tummy is all wet with old people stuck



inside.



Batman comes and kicks the lion and the lion



is dead. Superman is behind there using his powers.



the rooster was safe and went back home. Then



the bad guys land. the good guys have a battle

and the bad guys are dead.





Come with me to the dark, dark forest.



I can feel a leaf.



Can you see the dark, dark house in the dark, dark forest?



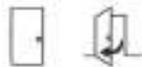
The paint is falling off.



Can you see the dark, dark stairs in the dark, dark house.



What can you hear?



A door opening! Creeeeak!



Oh no! It was a mouse!



Come up the dark stairs. Can you see the dark, dark room?



Can you see the dark, dark cupboard in the dark, dark room?



It has scary people carved on it.



In the dark, dark cupboard is a dark, dark box?



What can you see in the dark, dark box?

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaagggggggggggghhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!



A little man with yellow hair!





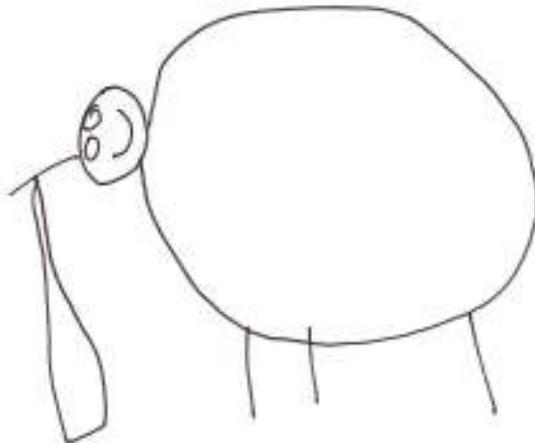
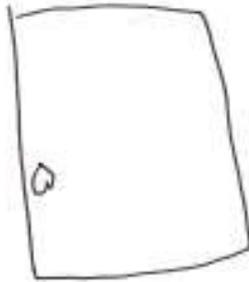
Nobody Rides the Unicorn

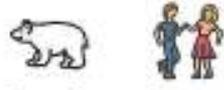


A polar bear plays a trick on the unicorn. He



disappears and knocks on the unicorn's door.

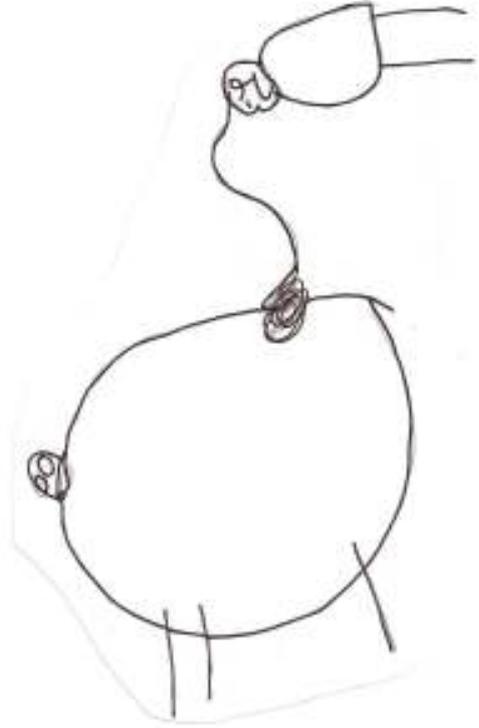




Then the unicorn makes the polar bear dance. He is a



good dancer.



The polar bear makes the penguin die with a magic

spell.





The unicorn walks away from the land and never

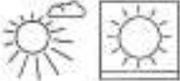


comes back because he doesn't like the polar bear. The



polar bear comes back to the land and gives a show.

Alice in Wonderland

   
It was a hot and sunny day. _____ was sleeping, when

    
suddenly he woke up and saw a white rabbit running around

      
and looking at his watch - saying I'm late I'm late!

    
_____ followed him and then fell down a long tunnel

 
He was in Wonderland with an army coming.

    
_____ looked around and saw a bottle with a pink

  
liquid in it. A label on the bottle said "Drink me!"



sipped the drink and suddenly shrunk until he was very

small.

A tank ran over him. Ow!



Then ... saw some biscuits that said "Eat me!" When



he eat the biscuit he started growing bigger and bigger!



He was so big that he lifted the tank up in the air.



Then started to cry. He cried so much that the tanks



floated away.



was swimming in a sea of tears and suddenly he



The Cheshire Cat says "Go in the kitchen and



wash up"



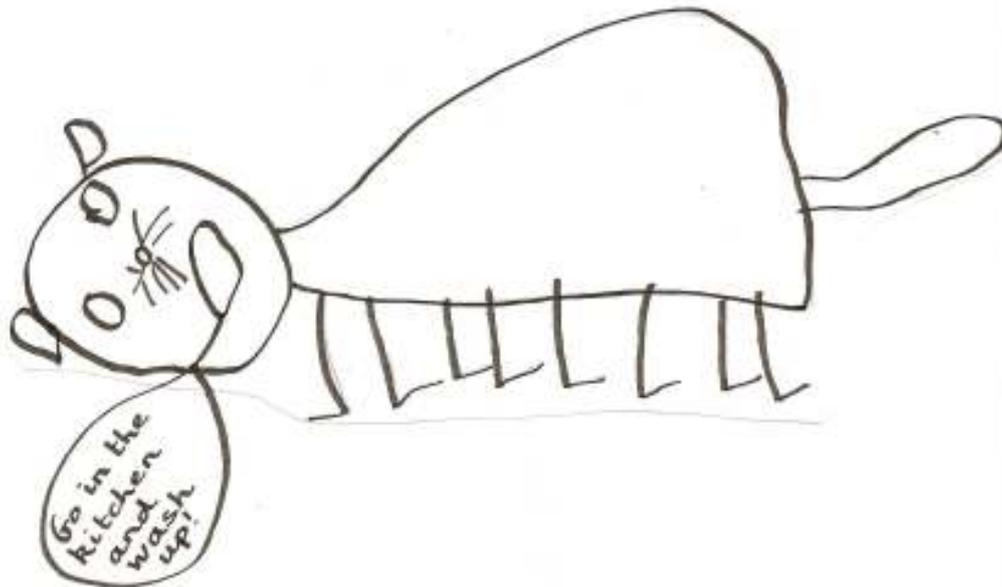
jumps in the sink and is sucked down the



plughole. He shouts very very very very



loudly and wakes up. It was all a dream!



    
was joined by all his friends from Class2.

   
They ran around to get dry and then saw a caterpillar

   
smoking a pipe and sitting on a mushroom.

    
The caterpillar gave him some mushroom to eat so that he

   
could stop getting big and small.

   
The caterpillar told to go and see the Cheshire Cat



Sandtray Story (3)



It's a magic land and things get big and small



and the snake is getting biggest and eating up the



small things. It eats the little boy and all the



balls and the baby zebra. It eats the polar bear.



But the cheetah is the fastest animal in the world



and it runs away and the snake turns round to



eat the frog. But the frog is magic and is



very big and there is a giant lizard dinosaur



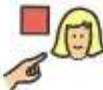
and it turns down and the snake turns round to



and they try to eat each other up and the



frog jumps on the snake's head. Then the magic



queen takes her wand. It's all different colours and



hits the snake hard on the head and the snake is



dead and it goes small again. And all the things

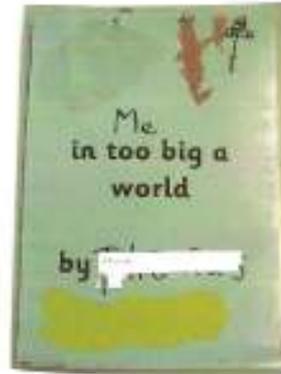


go back to being small and they don't change

anymore.



Me in too big a World.



I met a dragon. He had poisonous spikes that go in



and out. He's got poisonous wings to fly about in



the night. I'm scared. I chop him in half with



an axe. There was a axe lying on the floor.





I met a nice monster. He's orange. He's got



ice-cream in his hair.



We play football. The monster's hair melts because

it is sunny.





The night Max wore his army suit he made mischief of one

kind or another.



He rip paper up in his room and hit his brother .



His mum said "WILD THING!" and Max said "GO AWAY"



So he was sent to bed without eating anything.



That night Max sailed away to the Land of the Wild

Things.

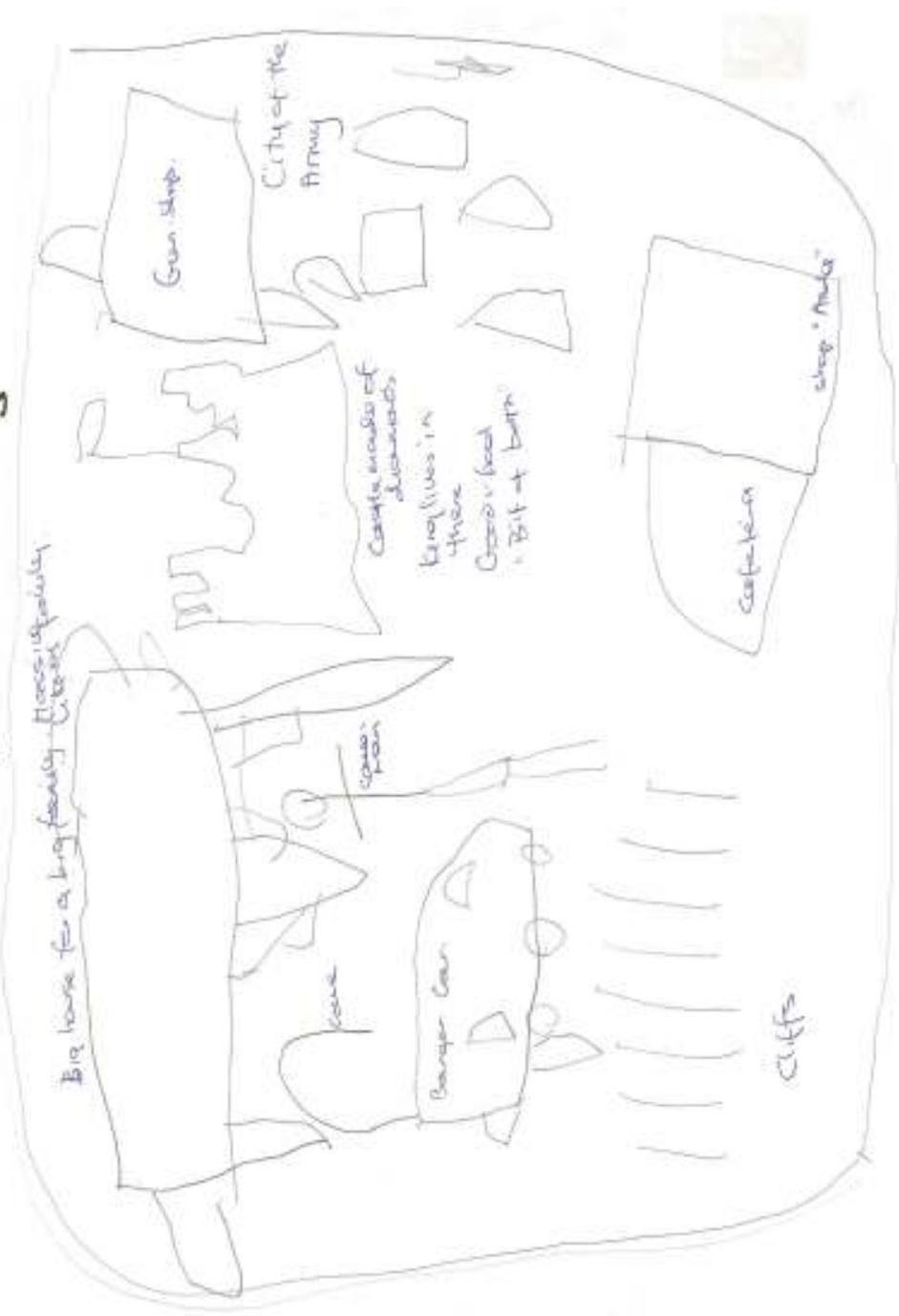


There were cliffs and a cave with a cave . There was a



castle made of diamonds with a king who was a bit

"Land of the Wild Things"





 bad and a bit good. There was the
 
 City of the
 
 army and



 the gun shop. There was
 ASDA

 and the cafeteria. There was







 a big house for a big family' a massive family like


 mine






 The Wild Things had fire and the sun and had 4 scary


 eyes.




 Max was King of the Wild Things and he had a rumpus.








 Then Max felt lonely and he smelt a big massive cake








 from home. He salled home and his supper was waiting.




 Mum came into the room and Max said " I want to go




 back to my army town.

2014-15
English



Once upon a time there was a good rhino. He was running home.



The man with a sword was there. The rhino got his horn and



ran the baddie over. Then he ran home but the baddie was still



alive. Then he came in the house and he trapped the rhino and



took him away to his house in the woods. A cheetah came



to save the rhino by pushing the man over and the rhino



knocked him off the rocks and he fell. The man was



dangling from the rock. The rhino saved him and the man



turned good and then the man and the cheetah and the rhino



lived happily ever after.

The Iron Man



Chapter1: The Coming of the Iron Man



Taller than a massive tower



His head as big as a sea



His eyes like purple diamonds.

The Iron Man came.



He fell over the cliff



All those bits on him fell off.



He fixed his



arm together and his head and his body.



He



went to the place with all the other robots and



then he went to the robot doctor and got fixed.



Chapter 2: How shall we get rid of the Iron Man?

1



One farmer said "Throw sharp metal knives!"



Another farmer said "All team together".



But they decided to dig a trap.

Chapter 3: Hogarth traps the Iron man

••

2

Hogarth hid near the trap and tapped two



knives together. The iron man walked towards the



sound and fell into the trap. The farmers came in



their tractors and piled earth on top of him.



Hogarth was feeling happy. He thought "I've got



him!"





Chapter 4: The Escape of the Iron Man



A long time later a family were having a picnic



on that hill. They were eating chocolate cake and



jam tarts.



The Iron Man's hand came out of the hill. The Iron



Man came out of the hill. Hogarth hit two



forks and the Iron man came. The Iron Man went



to the scrapyard. He ate the metal. he was



happy.



Chapter 5: The Space-Bat Angel Dragon



The terrible space-bat angel dragon had landed on

Australia.



He's got fire on his wings and fire coming from



his tail. He's got black scales and blood drips



from his fangs. He's going to shoot and eat and



stab people.





Chapter 6: The Iron Man defeats the Space-Bat-Angel



Dragon



When the Iron Man had defeated the



space-bat-angel-dragon he commanded that he fly



around the earth and sing the peaceful music of



the stars and everyone on earth would be happy.



Everyone would play on the playground and say sorry

 if they hurt someone.  We  would always win at  at

 football and  we would take the team that lost   

 to the shops and  make them happy. But we   

 would always win and I would be the striker and 

score thousands of goals.



2



A goodie dinosaur lives on his own. Two other goodie



dinosaurs live together. There is a big disgusting monster

6



with 6 orange eyes and big teeth and poisonous spikes



and legs. Thomas dinosaur went outside. He saw the monster



and the monster came after him. Then he jumped up and



all the dinosaurs come over. The monster was looking



backwards. The dinosaurs are hiding. When the monster turns



round the dinosaurs hide behind him so he can't see them.



But then he looked quickly round and saw them. Thomas



dinosaur plays a joke. He keeps dodging in front and behind



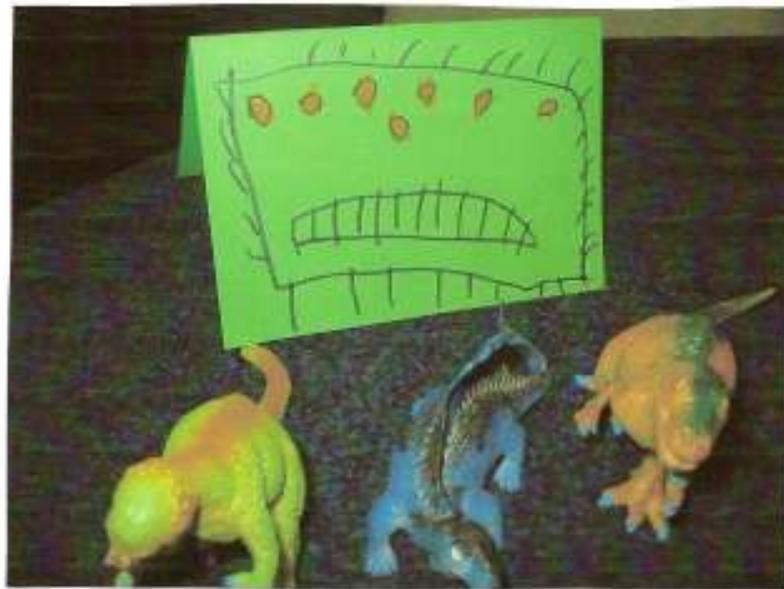
him and then kicks him. The others come and jump over



the monster and they all kick him and run away and



the monster dies.





The Gangster Story



A gangster kicks the ball and scores a goal.



Another gangster scores a goal. he is in a

different team.



Then the second gangster scores another goal but the



referee said it was a foul. Then it went to penalties

and the first gangster scored.



The first gangster's team won and they all



played football again.





The Dragon's World



There is a dragon with spikes all along his back and



fire coming out of his mouth. He flies over his



world every day. These are mountains and this is a



volcano. It has boiling hot fire. It burns the



dragon when he flies near. The dragon breathes



fire back. There is a big lake. It's deep. The



dragon will drown if he falls in. Dragon's can't



swim. These gangsters live in the caves. They



climb into the volcano and shoot arrows at the



dragon. Then they get guns. But the dragon is



too fierce. He burns them with fire and



poison drips out of his mouth. The gangsters go back



to the caves and make friends with the



dinosaurs. They all fight the dragon and he



gets injured and crashes into the mountain and there is



fire everywhere. But the dragon doesn't die. He



flies away. He can see all the land.



Appendix 6:

Results for the “Story of Progression”

Part 1: Tables of Results

Part 2: Graphs to show results for each child in the areas of:

- Word Count
- DLS “Best Fit” Level
- DLS “Highest” Level
- T-Unit “Mean Length”
- T-Unit “Longest Sentence Length”
 - NC/P Levels

TABLES OF RESULTS FOR EACH AREA IN THE “STORY OF PROGRESSION”

WORD LENGTH																					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Charlie	43	37	29	37	56	41	35	50	103	86	27	71	60	138	65	97	114	132	125	56	153
Emily	29	36	20	15	51	82	27	84	245	10	24	62	69	93	75	32	109	205	52	129	56
Poppy	7	17	26	13	28	30	27	66	110	36	29	46	60	45	51	33	56	131	66	68	55
Joshua	106	44	39	33	88	52	32	85	69	103	41	A	92	103	137	60	84	191	107	A	106
Tessa	31	41	36	34	27	54	25	133	46	59	39	41	94	89	74	44	57	90	86	36	65
Lauren	25	14	32	18	21	18	26	71	56	37	28	43	76	49	56	61	100	123	60	40	49
James	84	45	34	96	47	22	21	52	67	131	26	96	93	95	90	108	225	220	126	53	160

DLS BEST FIT LEVELS																					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Charlie	8	4	8	8	8	6	4	10	6	8	4	8	4	12	6	10	10	10	10	10	10
Emily	4	8	8	6	8	8	10	10	10	12	8	12	10	12	12	8	12	10	12	12	8
Poppy	2	4	4	2	4	6	6	8	8	8	4	4	8	8	10	8	6	8	8	10	8
Joshua	4	6	6	6	6	8	10	10	8	8	10	A	10	12	12	10	10	10	14	A	14
Tessa	4	6	4	6	8	6	8	8	8	10	8	10	10	10	10	8	10	10	10	10	10
Lauren	4	2	8	4	8	8	8	8	8	8	6	6	4	8	8	8	8	8	8	6	10
James	4	6	8	8	12	8	8	10	8	8	8	10	10	10	12	14	10	10	10	8	10

DLS HIGHEST LEVEL SENTENCE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Charlie	10	8	12	10	8	6	14	12	10	12	10	12	10	14	10	10	14	14	14	10	14
Emily	4	8	8	8	10	10	10	10	10	12	10	12	10	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Poppy	4	4	4	2	6	8	6	8	10	8	4	10	10	10	10	10	6	8	10	12	12
Joshua	8	6	6	6	10	10	10	10	10	12	10	A	12	14	14	14	14	14	14	A	14
Tessa	6	8	6	8	8	8	10	8	8	10	10	10	10	10	12	10	10	12	10	10	10
Lauren	10	4	8	4	10	8	10	10	8	14	8	8	8	6	10	10	8	8	8	10	10
James	12	8	12	12	12	8	8	16	12	12	8	10	14	10	14	14	12	14	14	14	14

MEAN T UNIT LENGTH

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Charlie	6.1	4.6	7.2	7.4	4.6	5.9	8.8	12.5	5.4	6.1	5.4	10	7.5	11.5	5.9	10.7	8.7	8.5	6.9	6.2	6.9
Emily	4.9	6	6	3.7	5.6	6.8	6.9	7.6	7	6.6	3.1	8.8	7.6	7.7	6.2	6.1	6.4	6.6	7.4	6.5	4.3
Poppy	2.3	2.8	4.3	2.1	3.8	6	6.7	7.3	5.7	5.1	5.8	4.1	7.5	4.5	5.1	5.5	5.0	5.4	7.3	9.7	3.9
Joshua	5.8	5.5	9.7	5.5	8.8	5.2	5	8.5	6.2	6.8	5.9	A	7	7.9	5.6	10.2	6.1	7.9	9.7	A	8.8
Tessa	3.8	4.5	6	5.6	5.4	5.4	6.2	10.2	9.2	5.9	5.5	10.2	7.8	6.8	5.7	9.2	6.3	4.5	5.5	9	4.6
Lauren	4.1	2.3	6.4	3.6	5.2	6	6.5	8.8	4.6	7.4	5.6	8.6	7.6	4.6	5.6	12.2	7.1	4.7	6.0	5.0	8.1
James	6.4	5.6	5.8	6.8	7.8	7.8	7	8.5	5.5	6.5	4.3	7.3	6.2	6.7	5.2	10.8	7.3	6.4	5.4	5.3	5.9

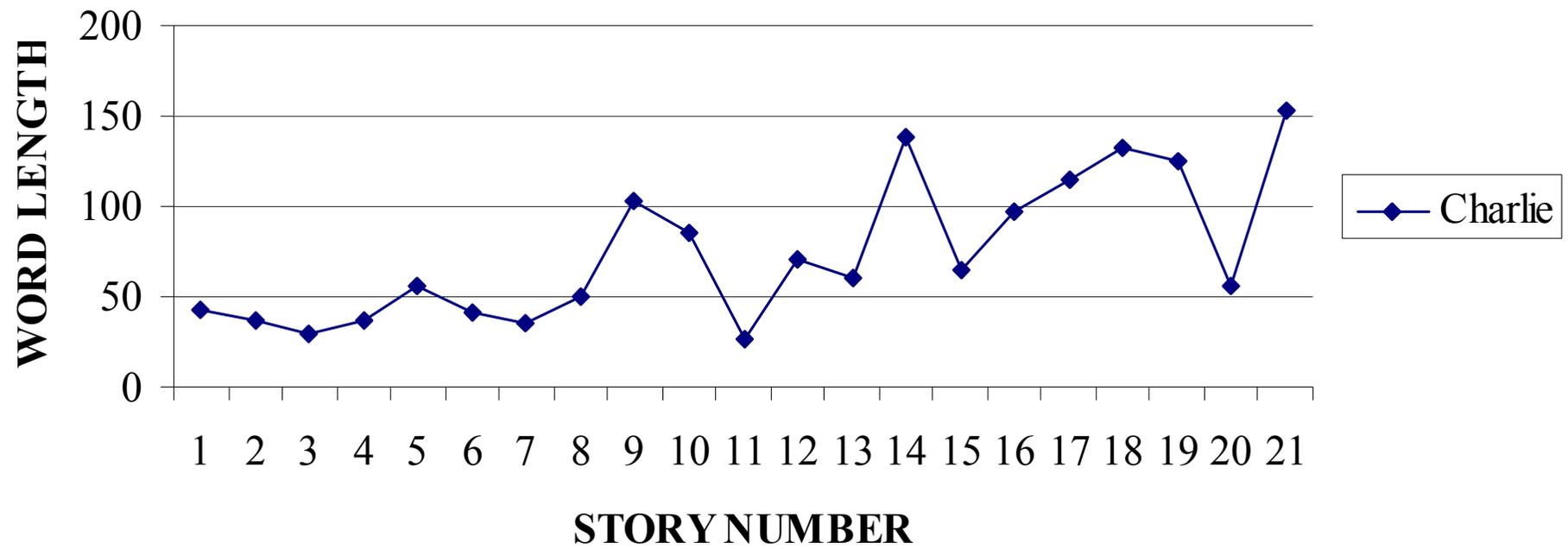
LONGEST T UNIT LENGTH

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Charlie	11	7	11	12	7	8	18	15	12	14	7	18	10	19	10	19	12	14	18	15	17
Emily	8	8	10	5	7	12	10	12	11	11	7	14	10	12	14	13	10	13	19	13	8
Poppy	3	4	7	3	5	9	9	12	9	6	10	7	9	6	13	11	10	11	10	17	5
Joshua	9	8	12	11	16	7	12	14	12	18	10	A	11	14	15	16	11	16	18	A	10
Tessa	7	7	9	9	10	8	8	12	20	11	7	13	14	10	9	15	10	21	14	11	12
Lauren	7	4	13	5	7	11	8	12	11	12	7	13	11	8	8	16	11	8	11	9	18
James	8	12	6	11	11	11	9	16	11	10	5	16	8	10	10	19	15	12	8	10	12

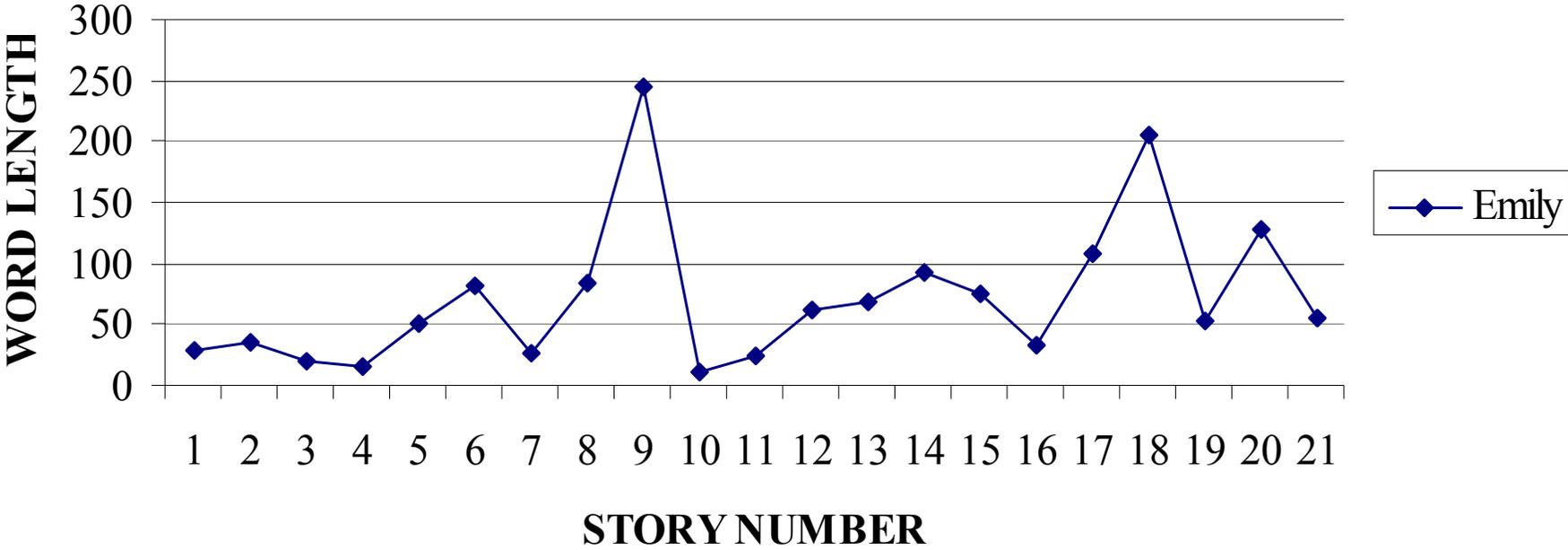
NC and P Levels

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Charlie	7	7	7.5	7	7.5	7	8	8	6.5	9	8	9	9	9.5	9.5	10	11	11	11.5	11	12
Emily	6	7	6	6	8	8	8	9	9	8.5	7	8.5	8.5	10	10.5	9	11	10.5	10	8.5	9.5
Poppy	4.5	4.5	5	4	5	6	6	7	6	6.5	6	7	6.5	6.5	7	7	6.5	7.5	7	7.5	7
Joshua	5	5	5.5	6	6	7	7	7.5	7	7.5	7.5	A	8.5	9	8.5	8.5	8.5	10	9.5	A	10
Tessa	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	6	6	7	7	6	7.5	6.5	8	7	7.5	7.5
Lauren	5	4.5	6	5.5	6	6	6	6.5	6	6	6	6	6	6.5	7	8	7	7.5	8	7	7
James	5.5	5.5	6	7	6.5	6.5	7	7.5	6.5	7.5	7	7.5	8	8	8.5	8	7.5	9	8	7.5	8

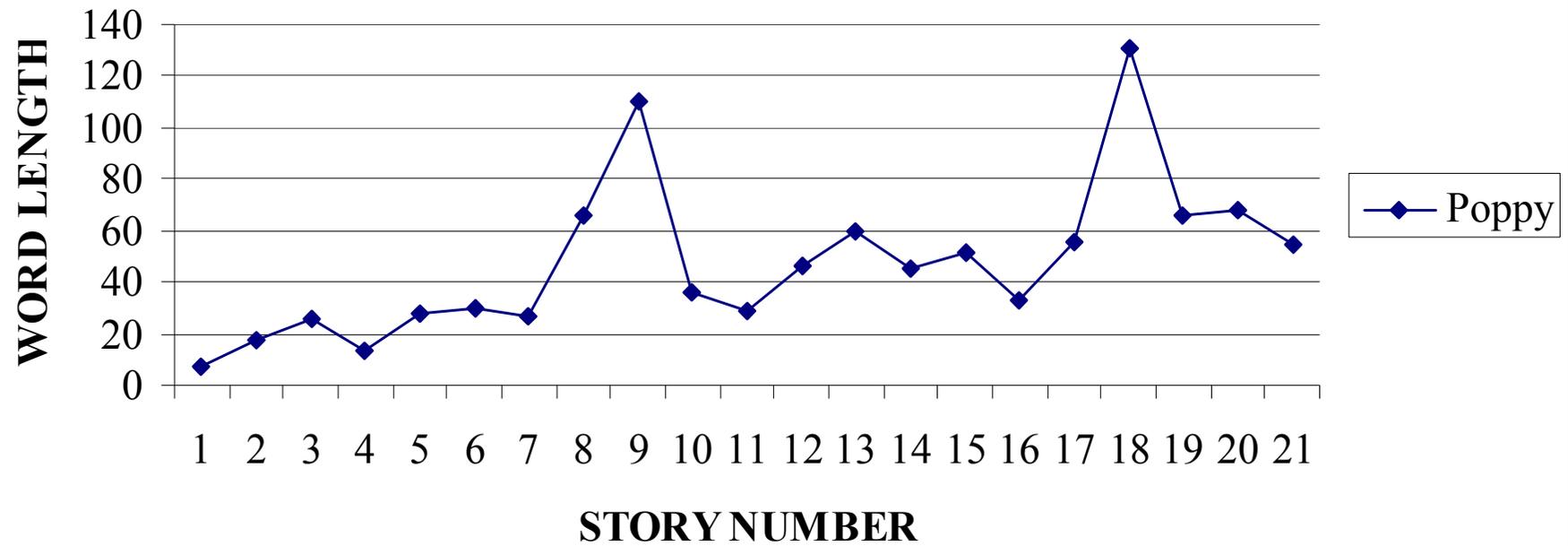
Charlie WORD LENGTH



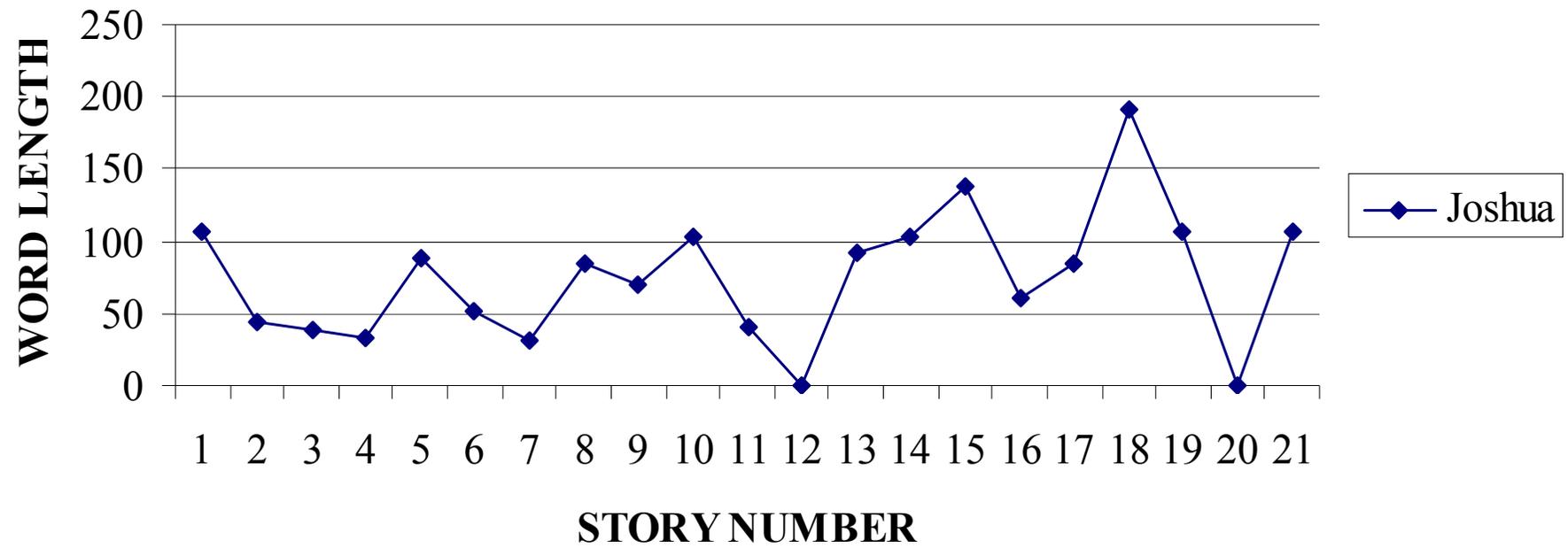
Emily WORD LENGTH



Poppy WORD LENGTH



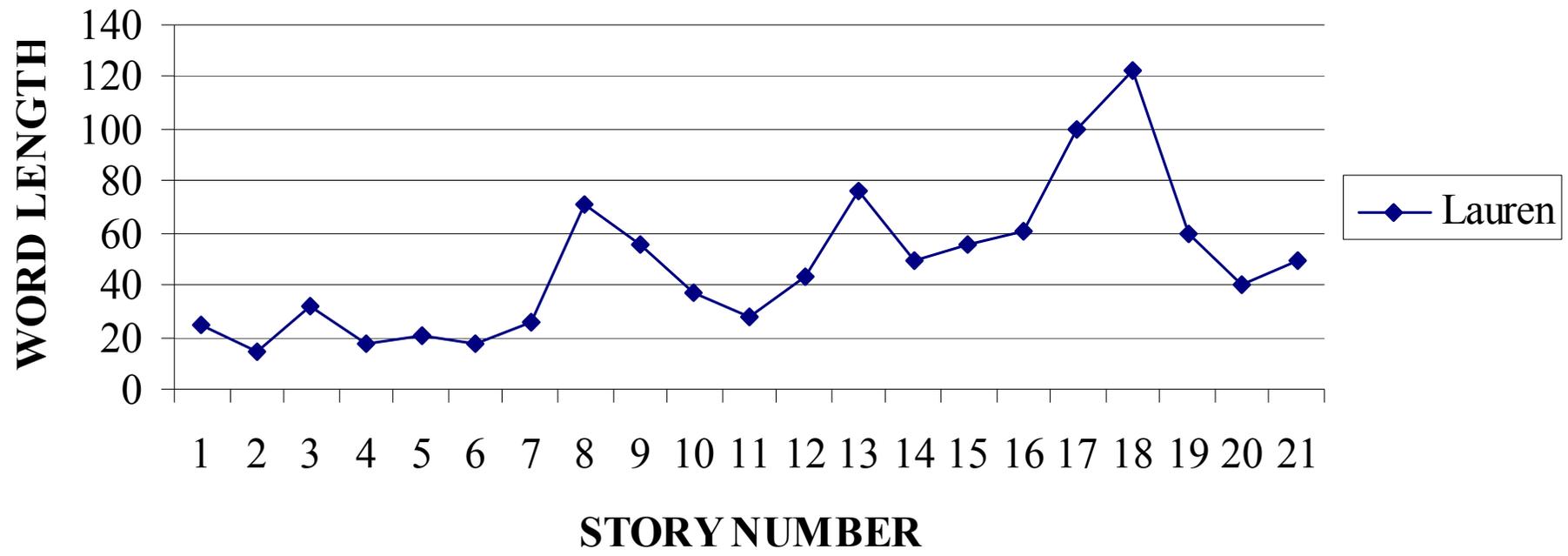
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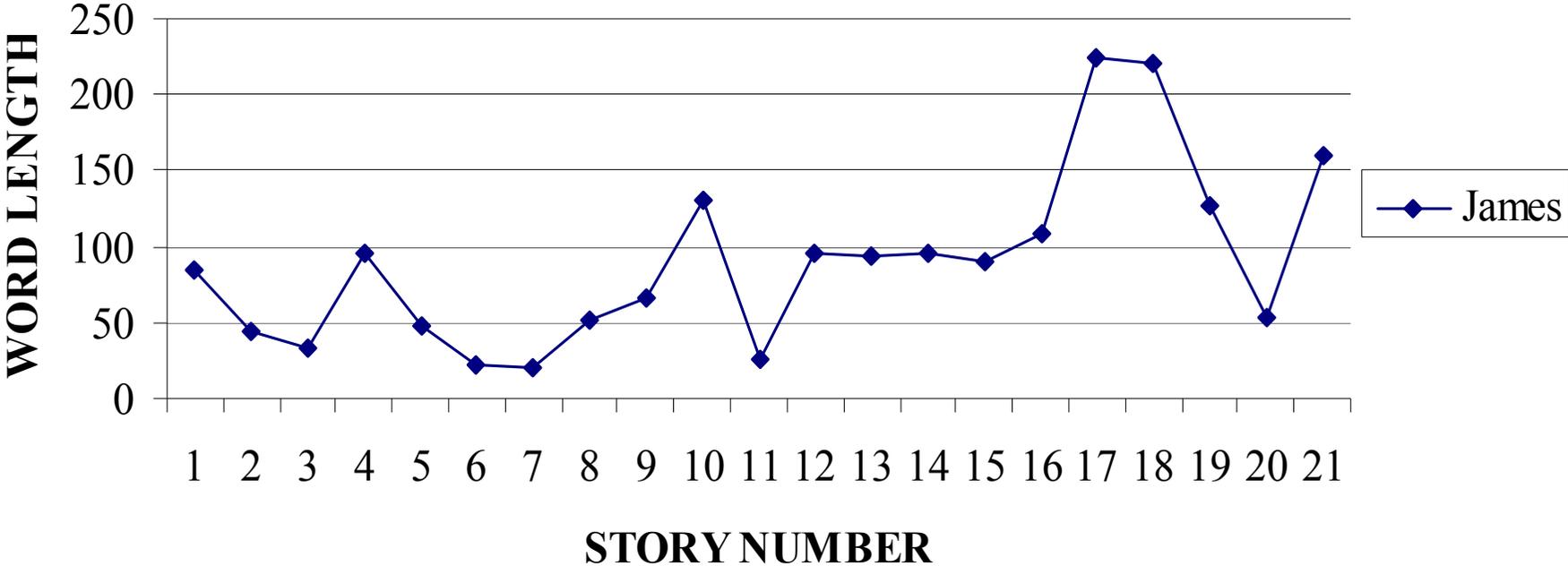
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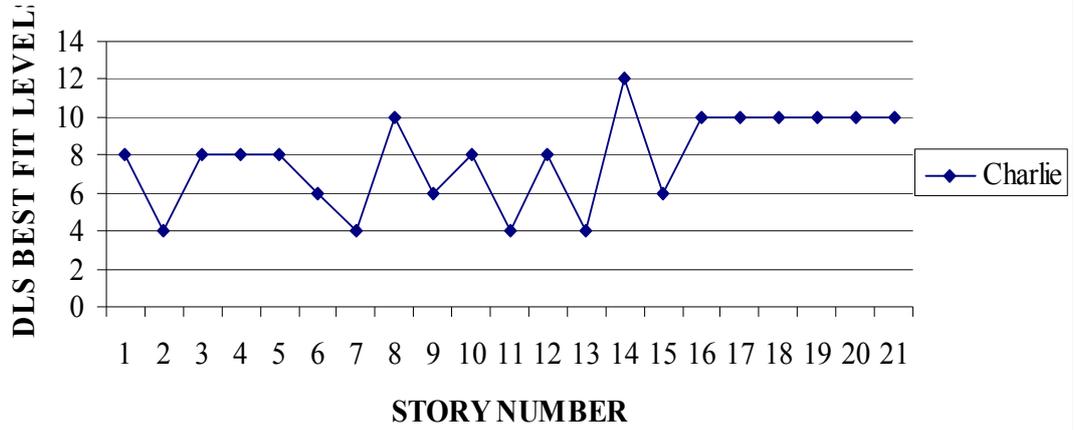
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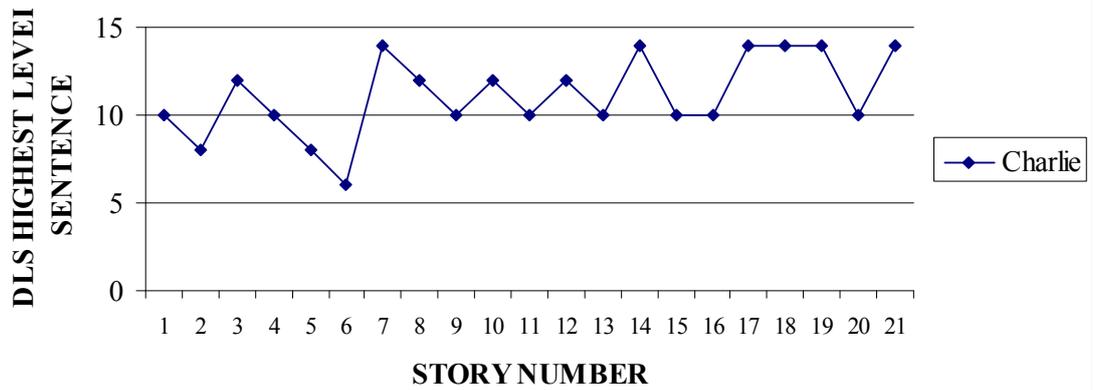
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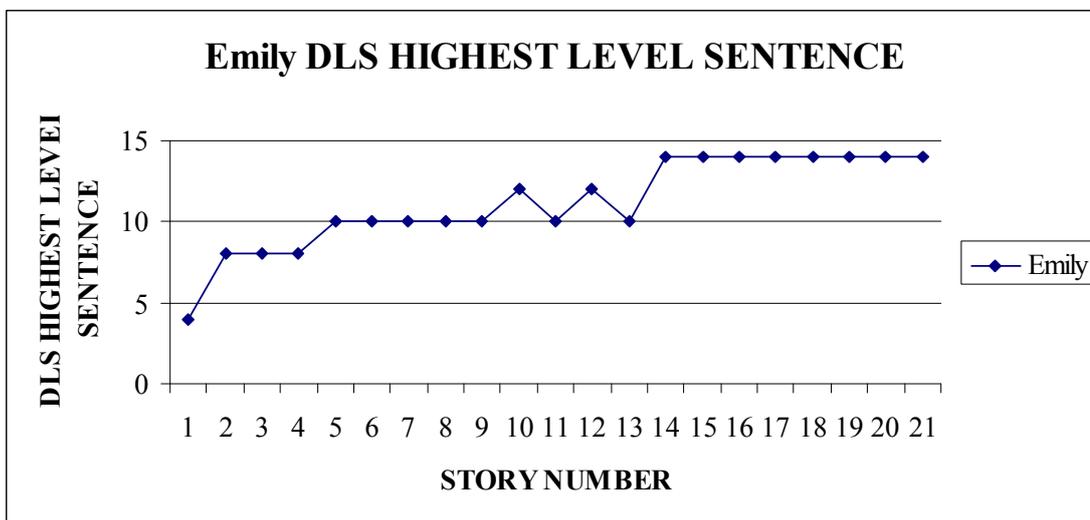
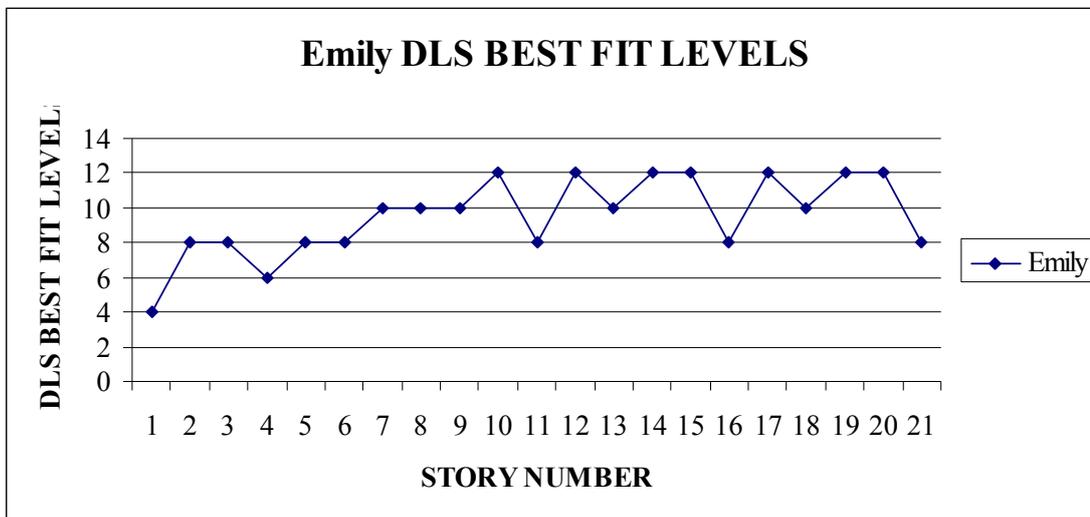


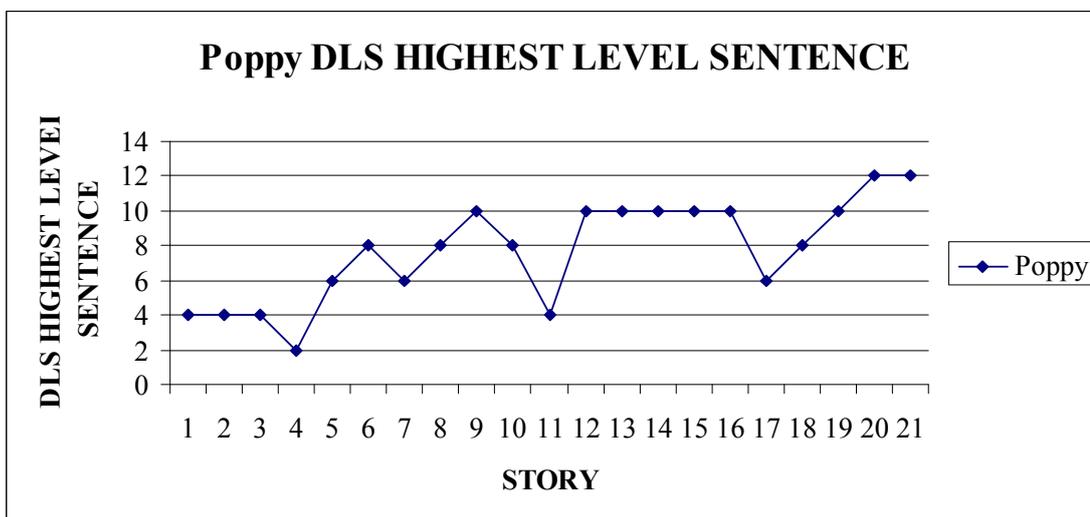
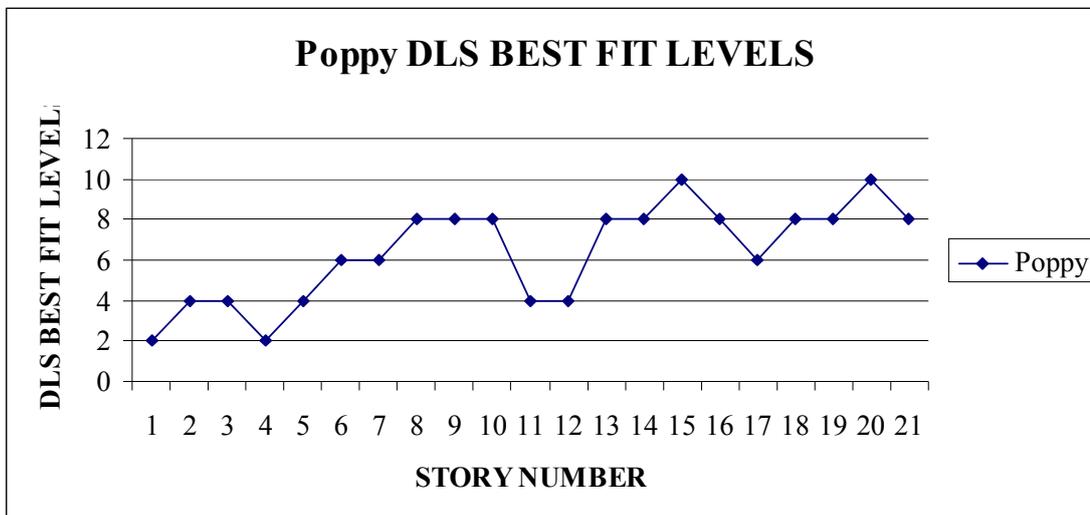
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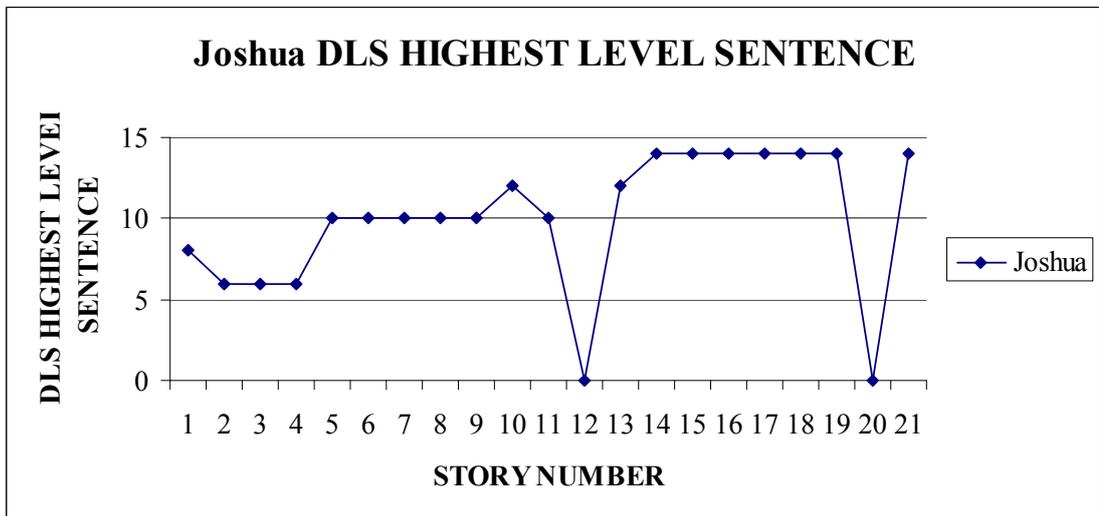
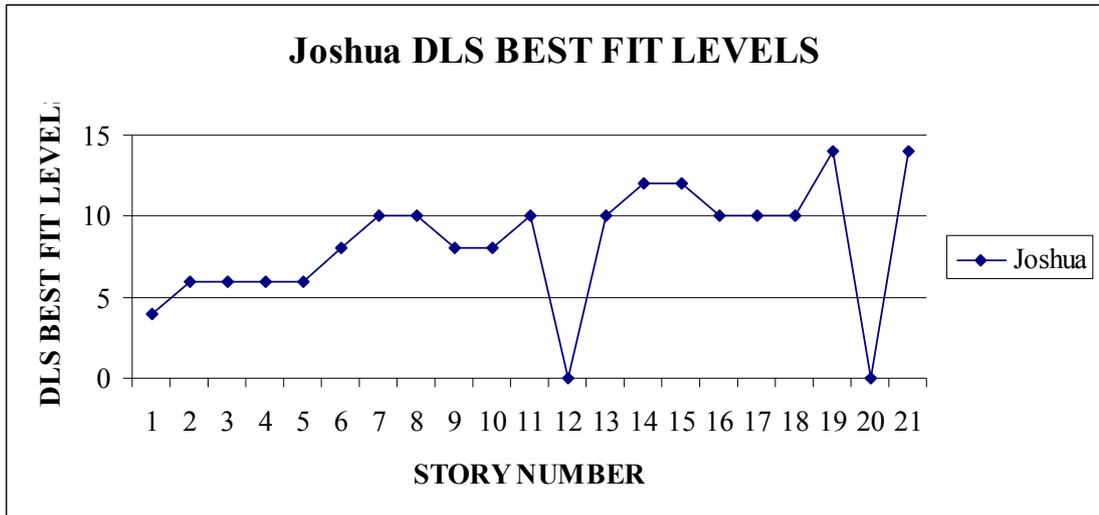


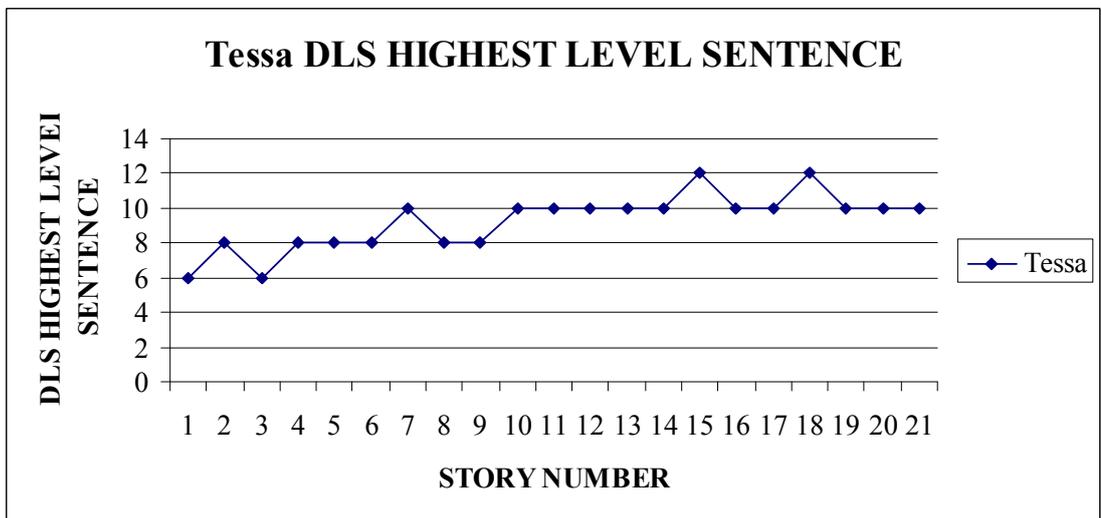
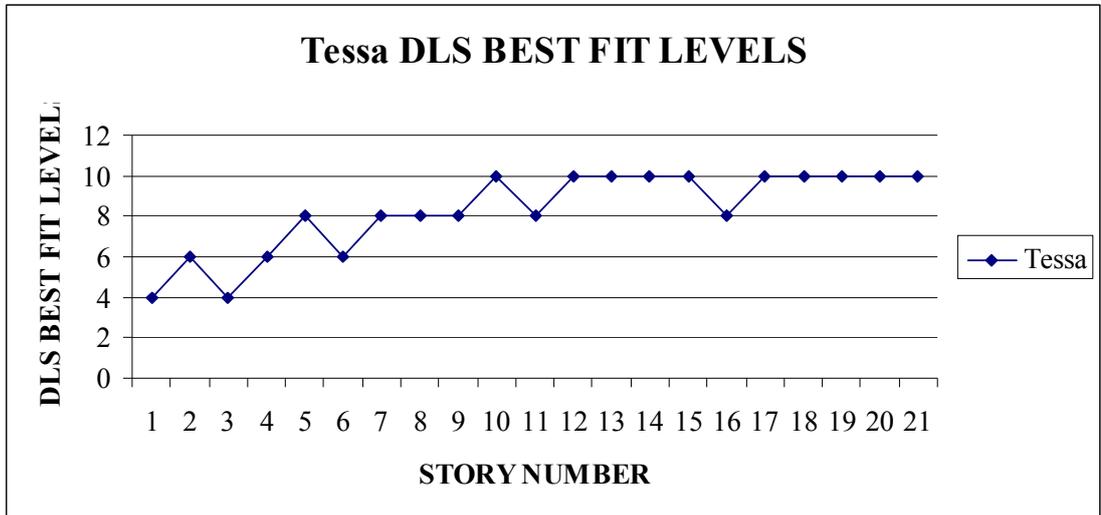
Charlie DLS HIGHEST LEVEL SENTENCE



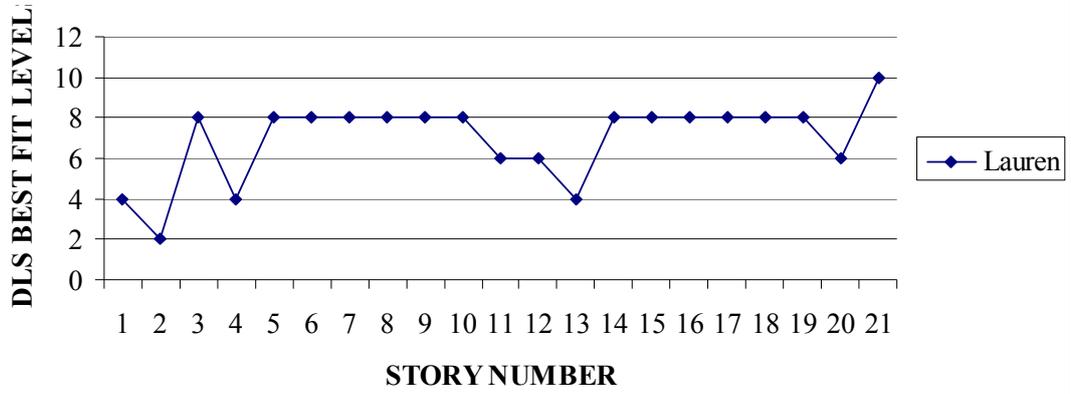




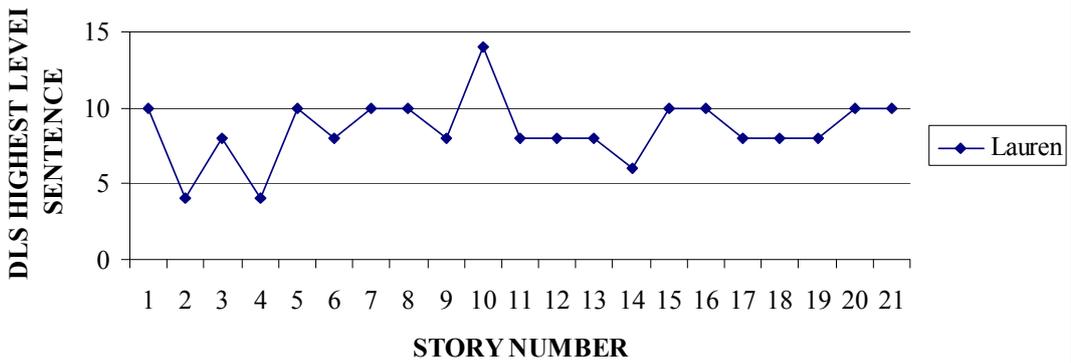


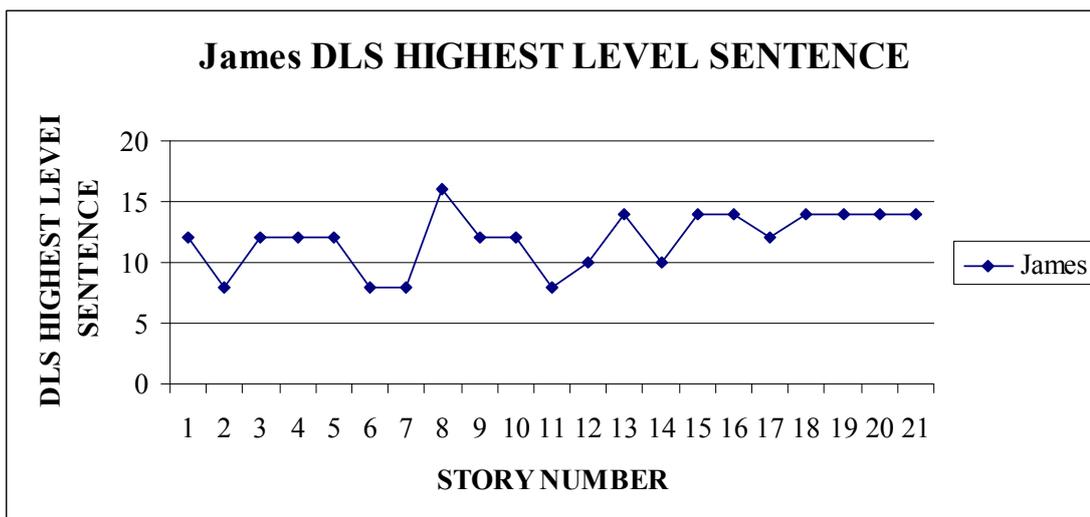
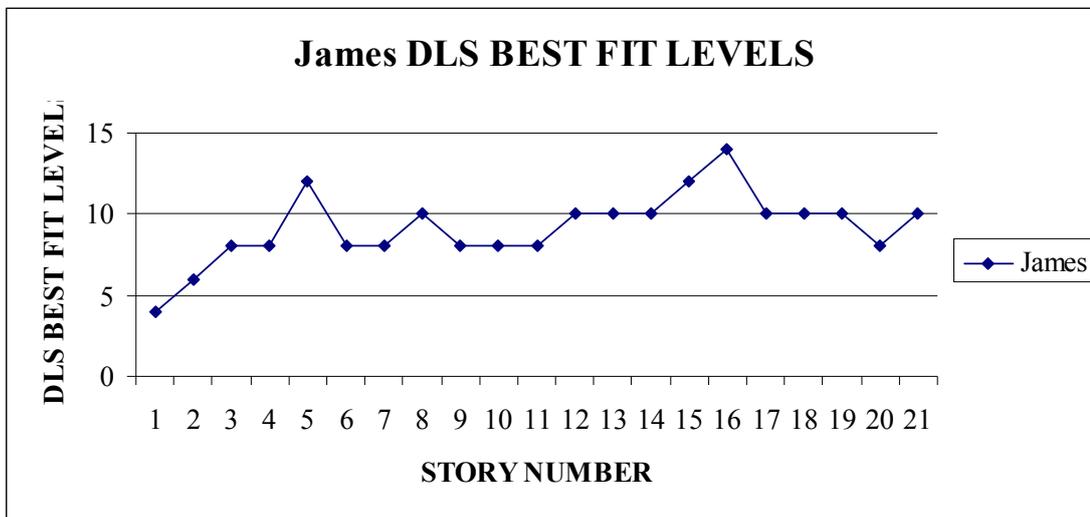


Lauren DLS BEST FIT LEVELS

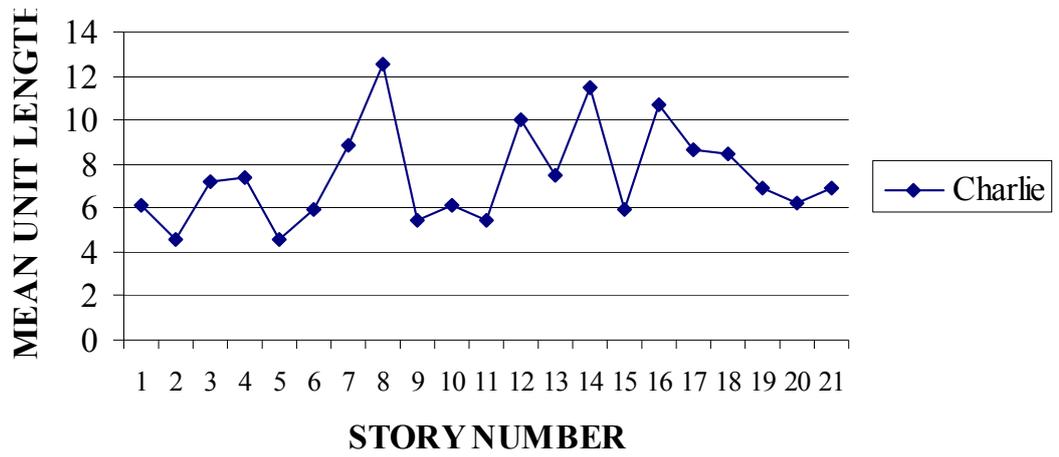


Lauren DLS HIGHEST LEVEL SENTENCE

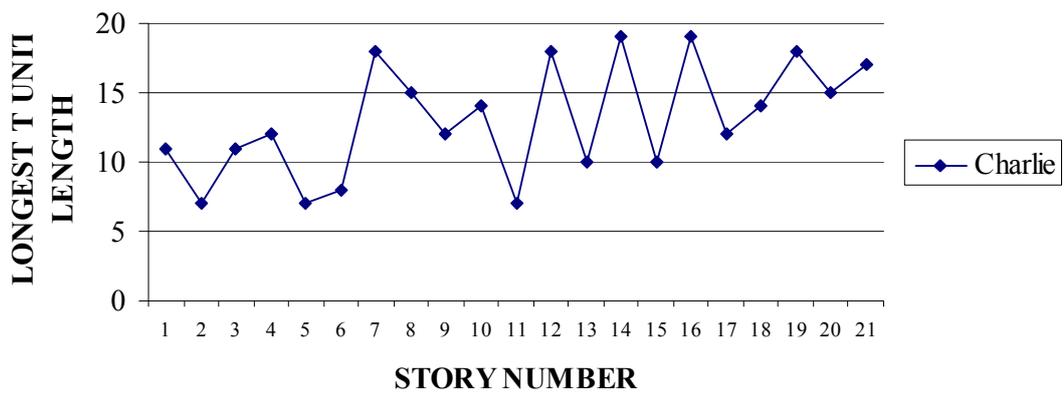




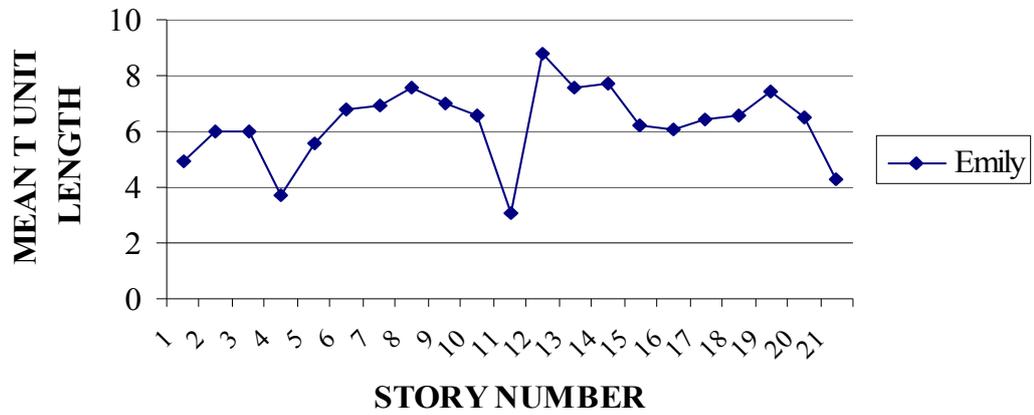
Charlie MEAN T UNIT LENGTH



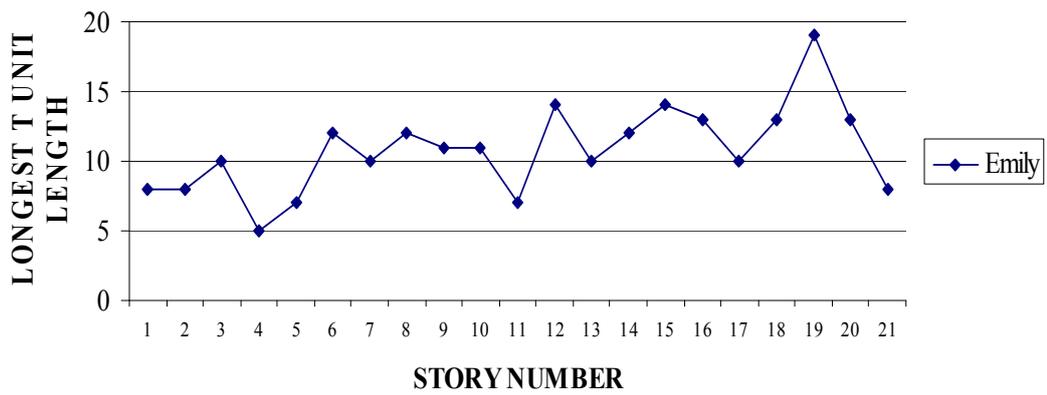
Charlie LONGEST T UNIT LENGTH



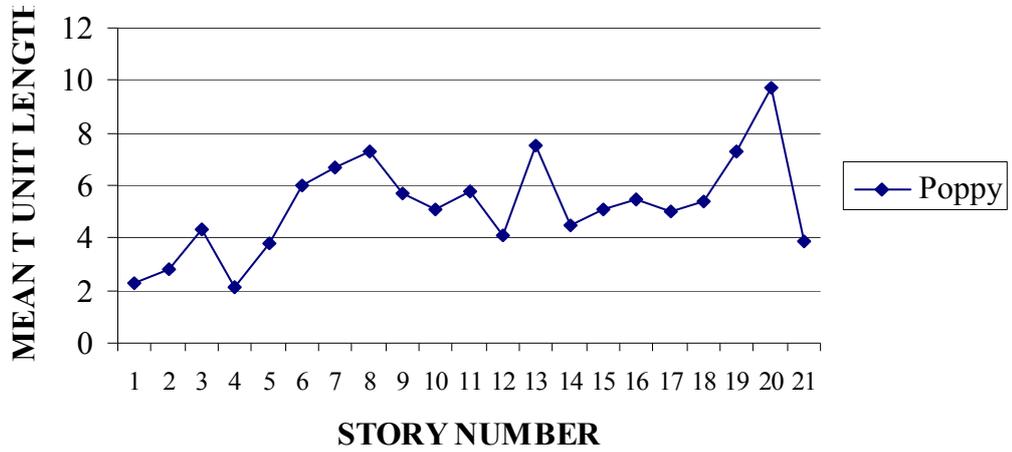
Emily MEAN T UNIT LENGTH



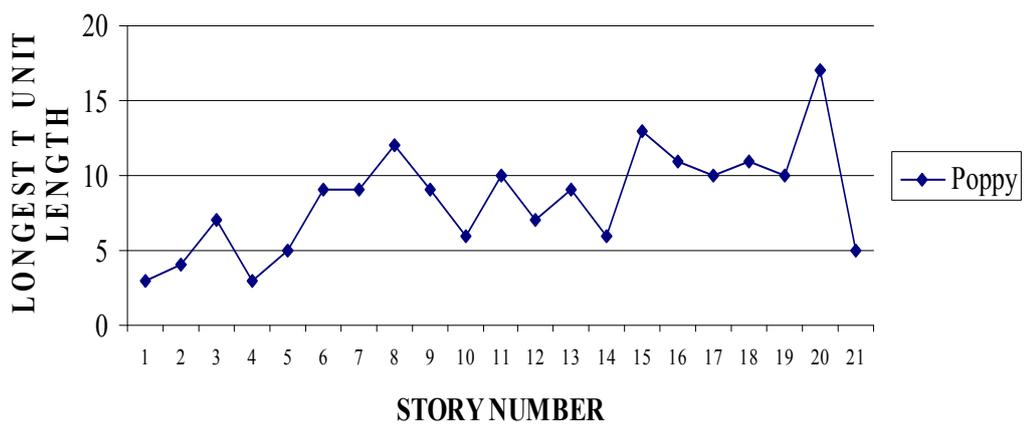
Emily LONGEST T UNIT LENGTH



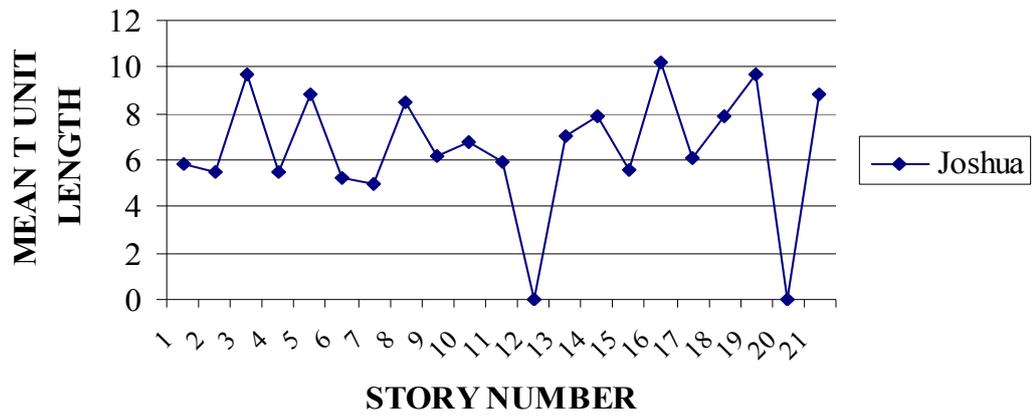
Poppy MEAN T UNIT LENGTH



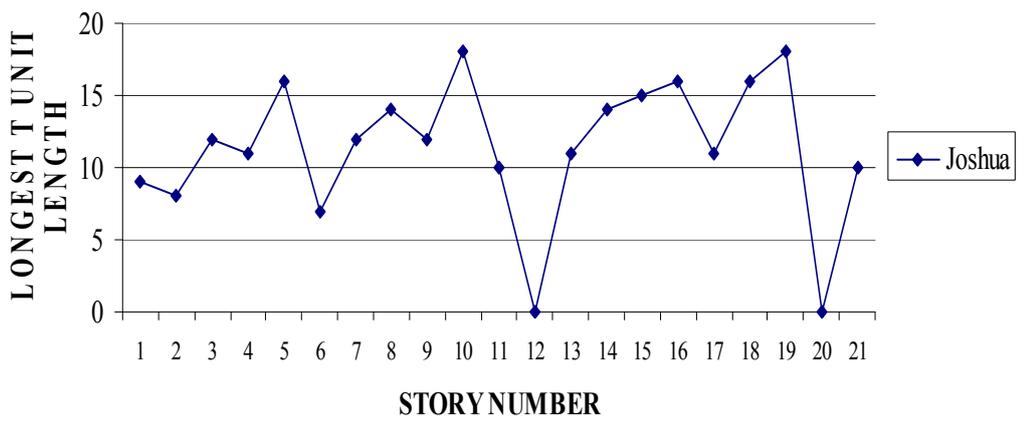
Poppy LONGEST T UNIT LENGTH

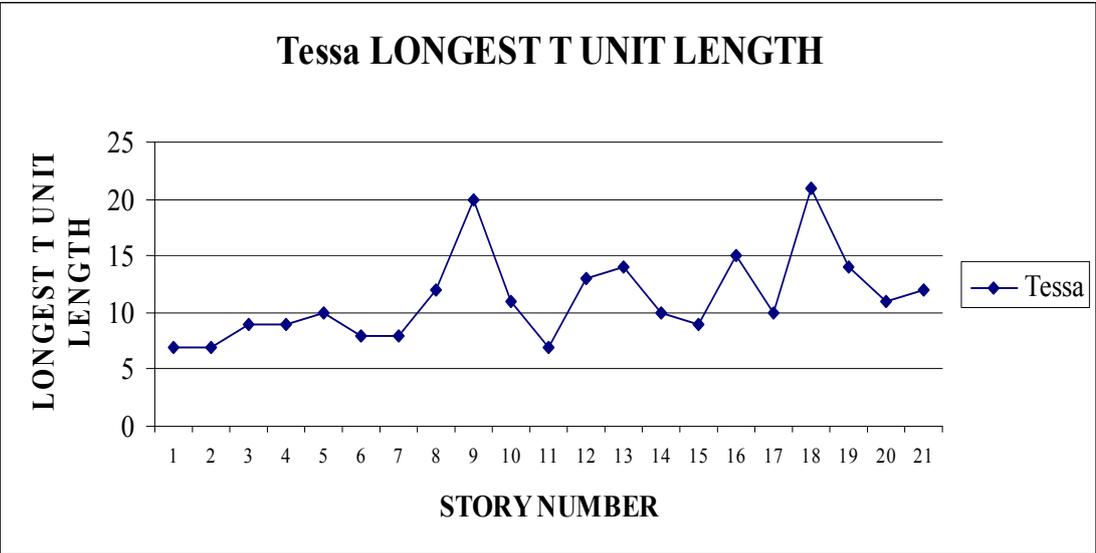
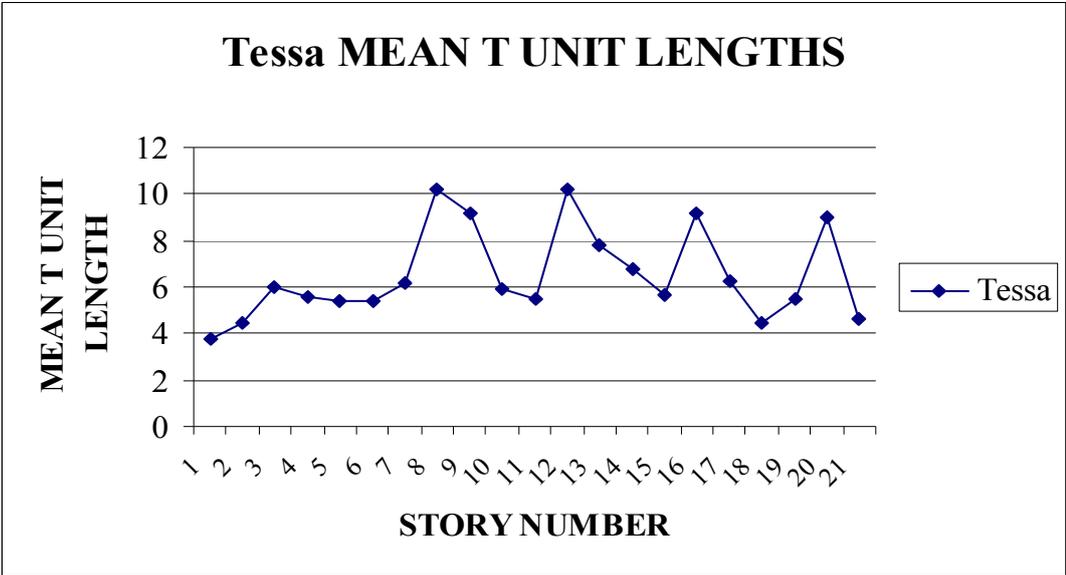


Joshua MEAN T UNIT LENGTH



Joshua LONGEST T UNIT LENGTH

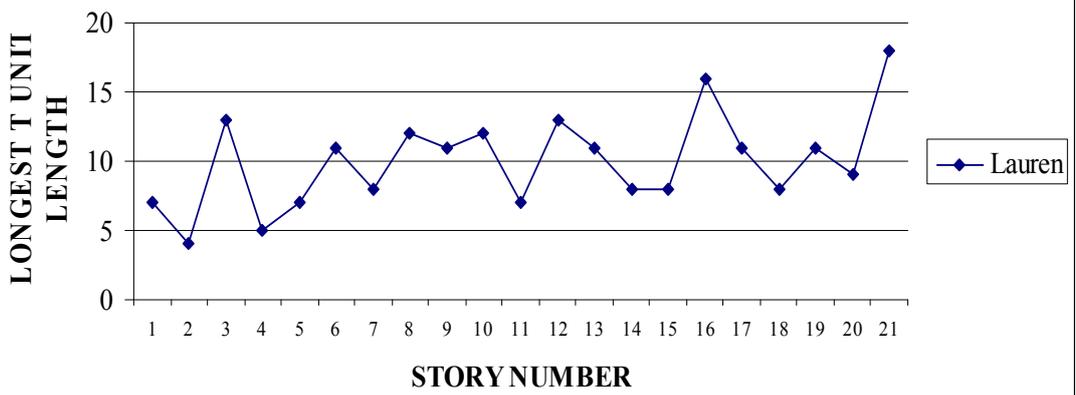




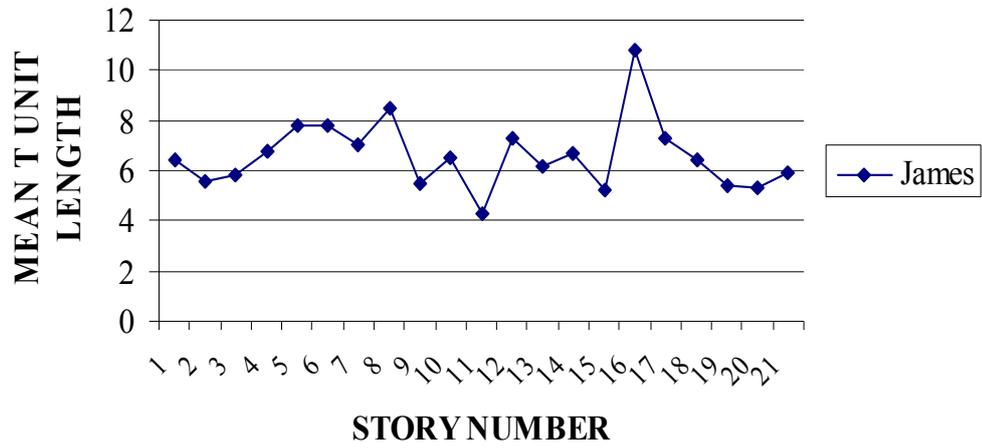
Lauren MEAN T UNIT LENGTH



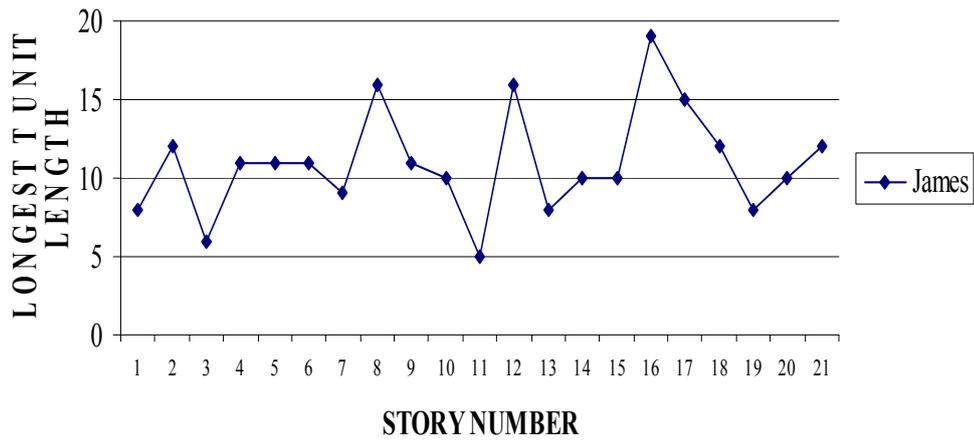
Lauren LONGEST T UNIT LENGTH



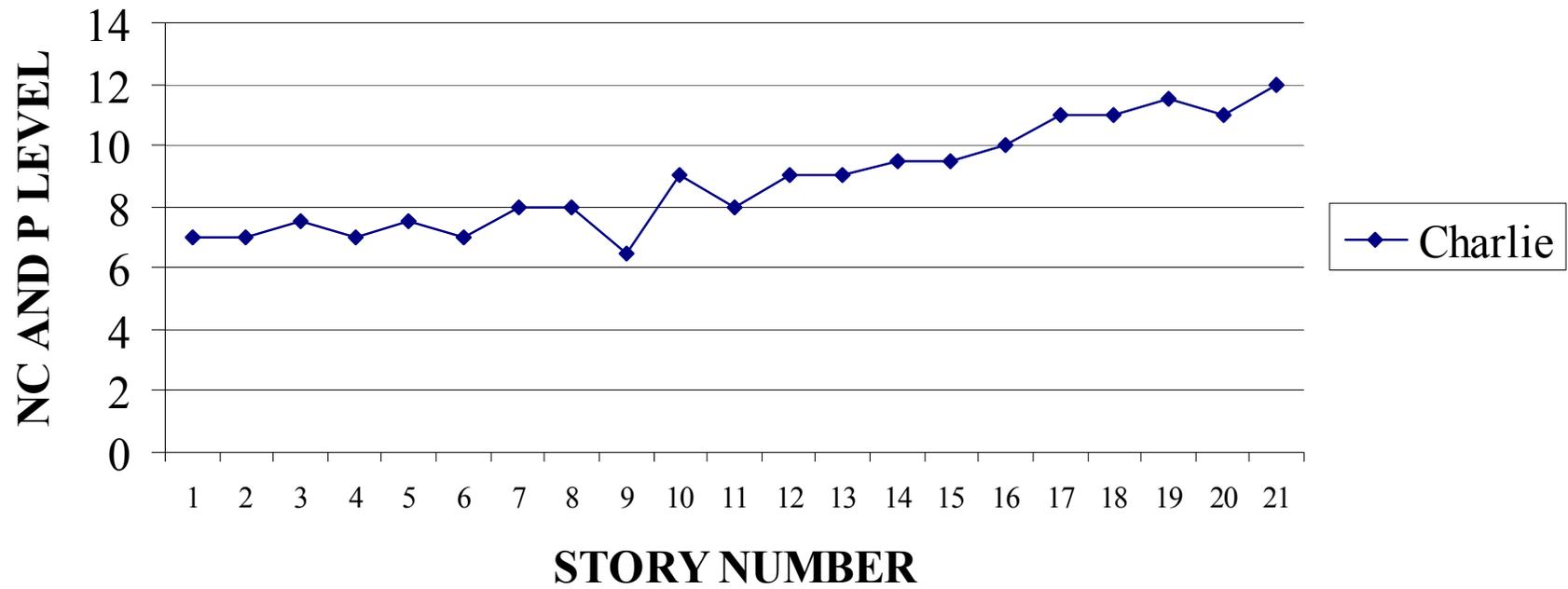
James MEAN T UNIT LENGTH



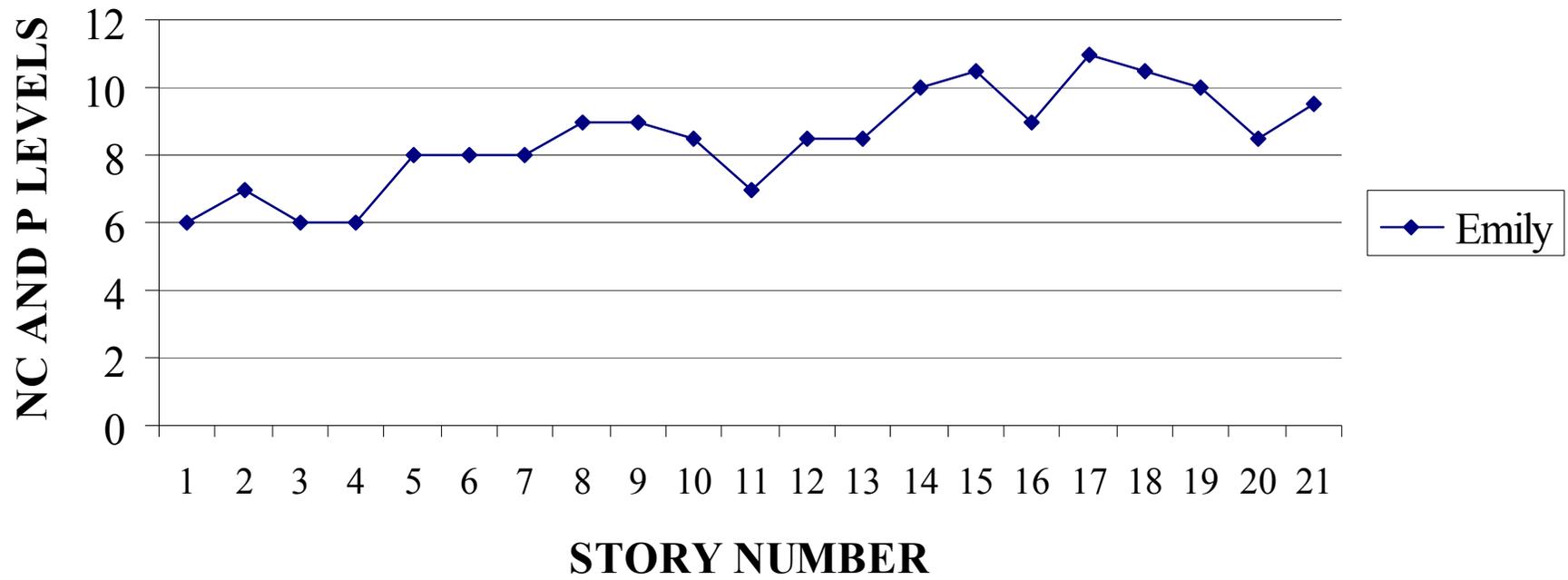
James LONGEST T UNIT LENGTH



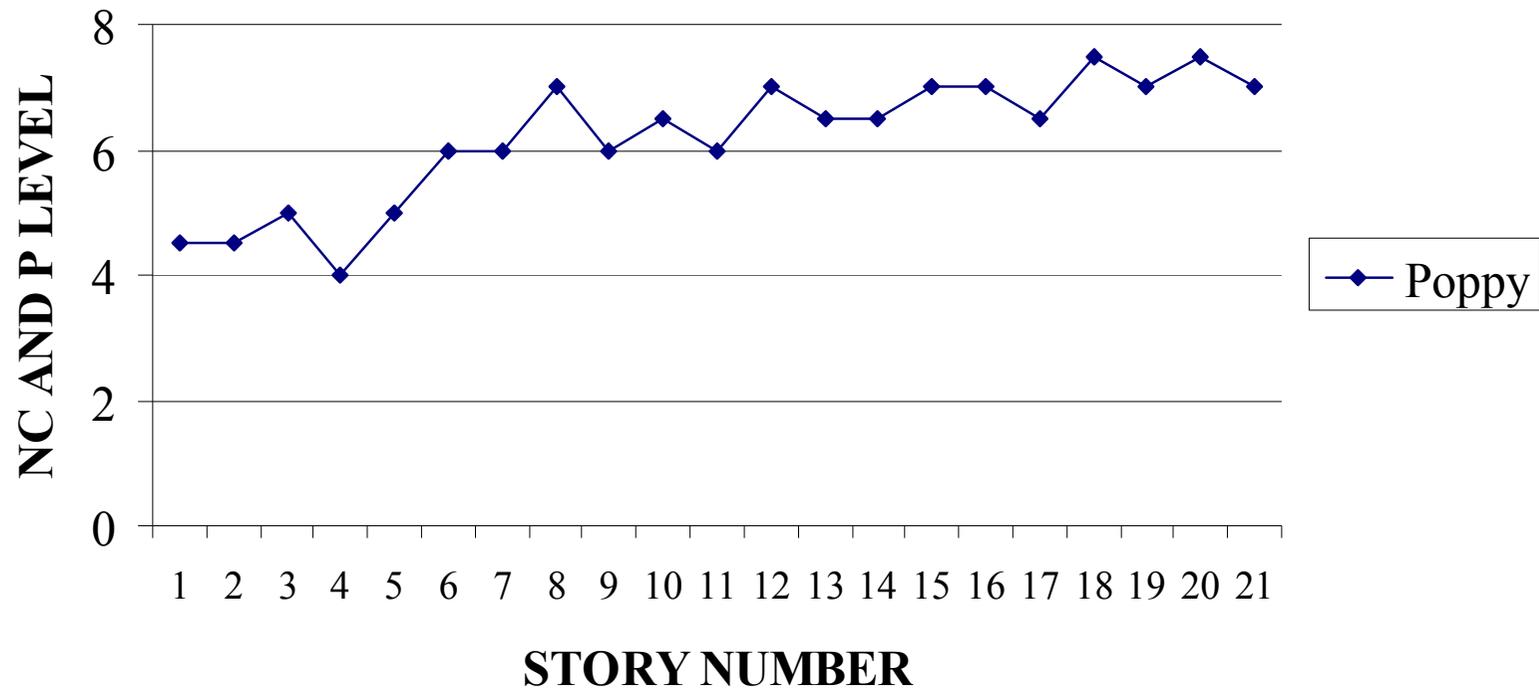
Charlie NC AND P LEVELS



Emily NC AND P LEVELS

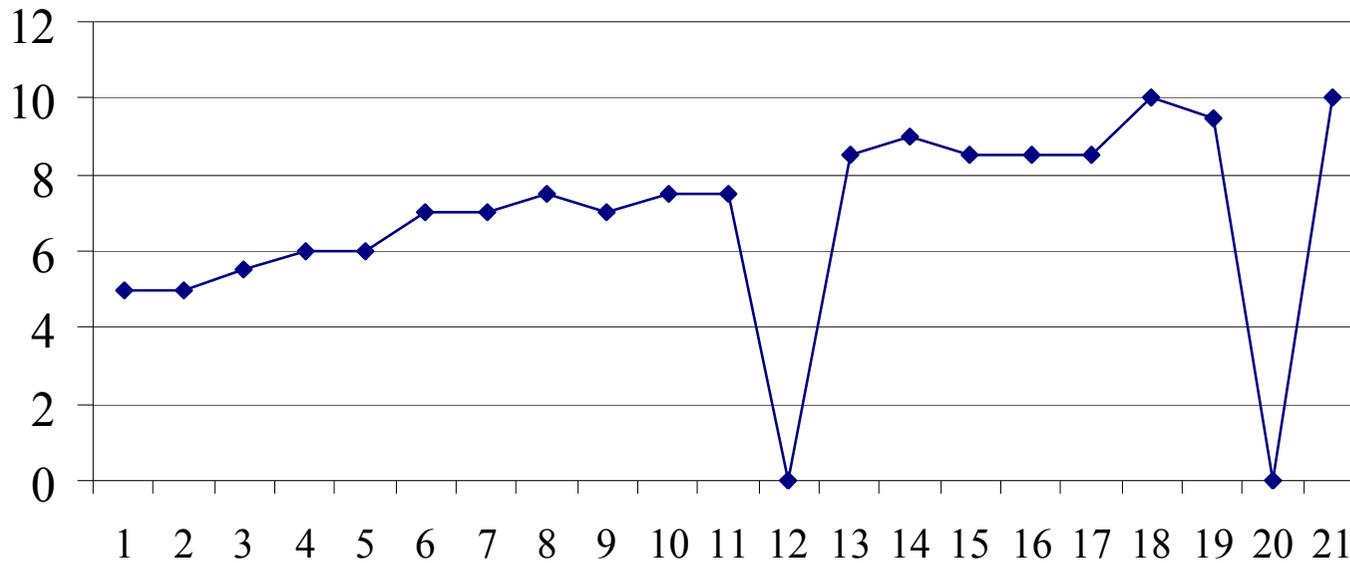


Poppy NC AND P LEVELS



Joshua NC AND P LEVELS

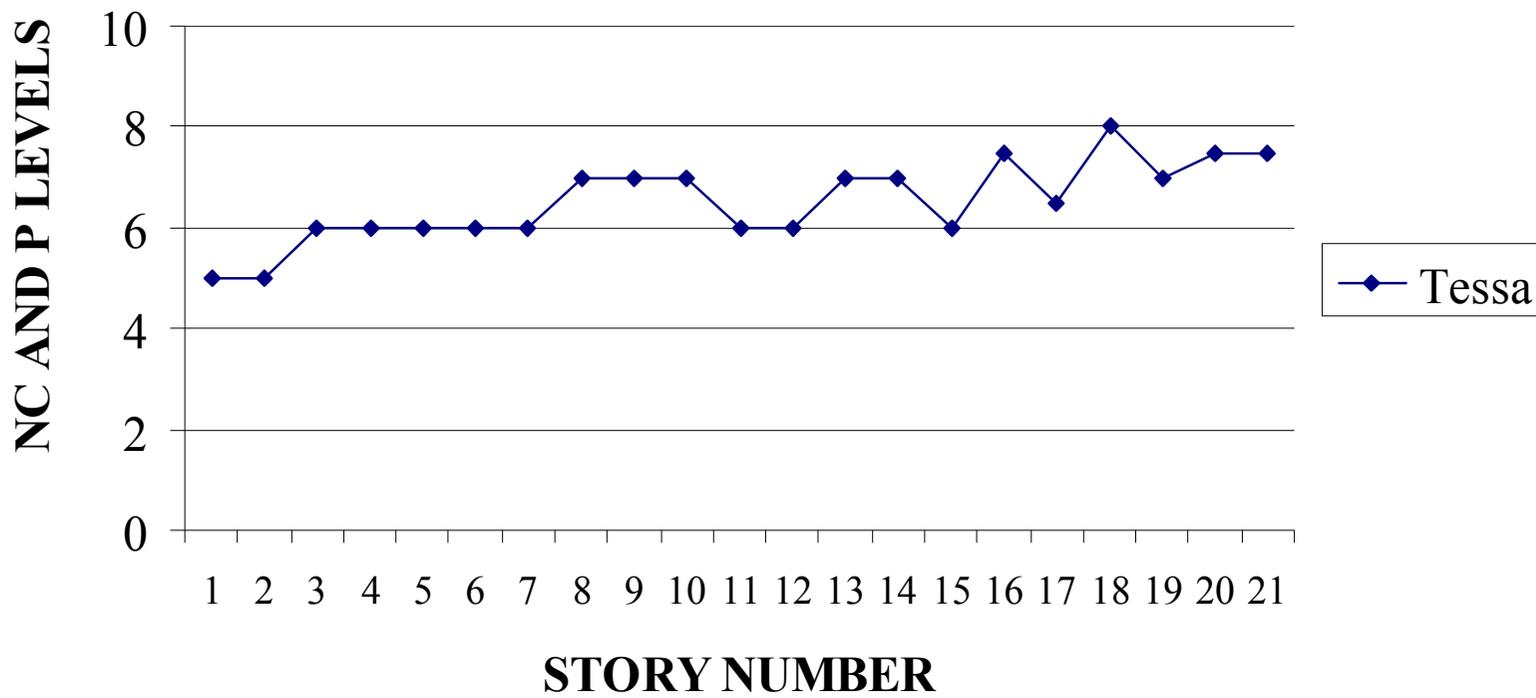
NC AND P LEVELS



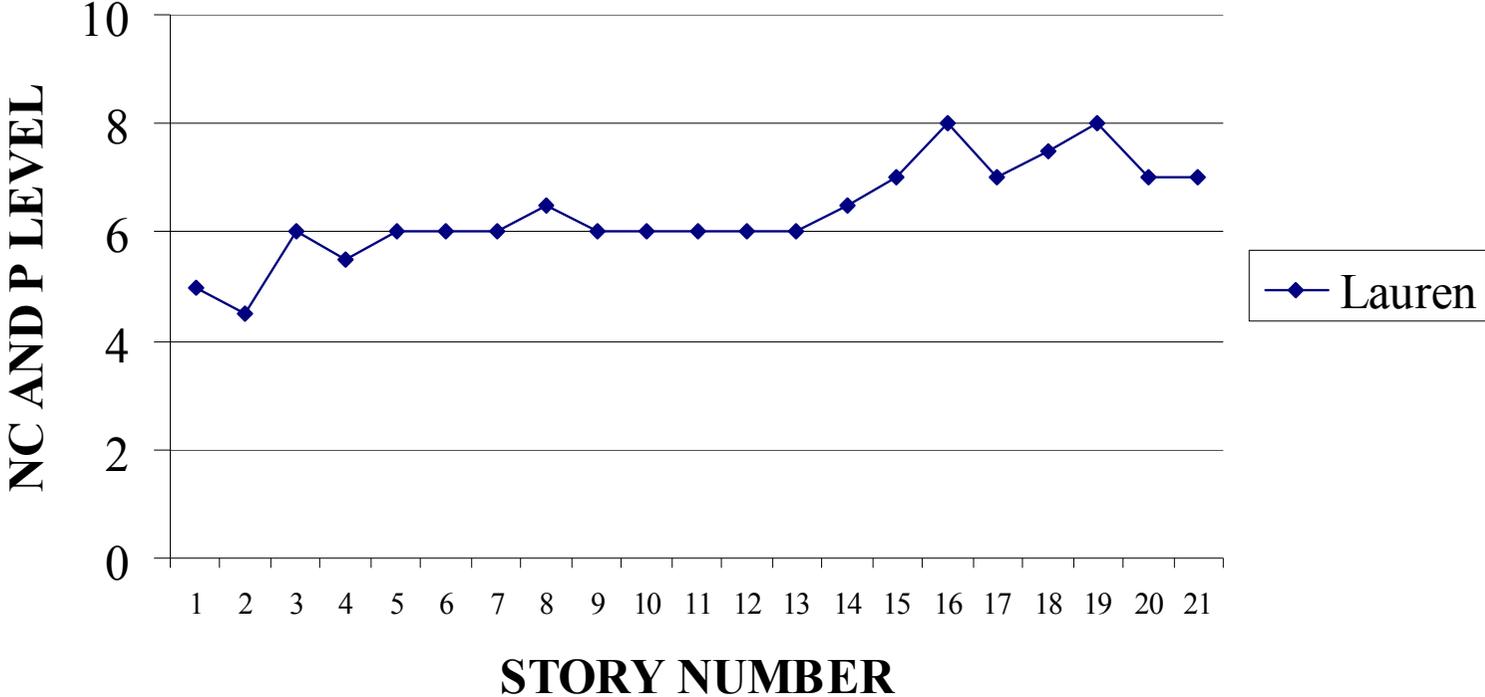
—◆— Joshua

STORY NUMBER

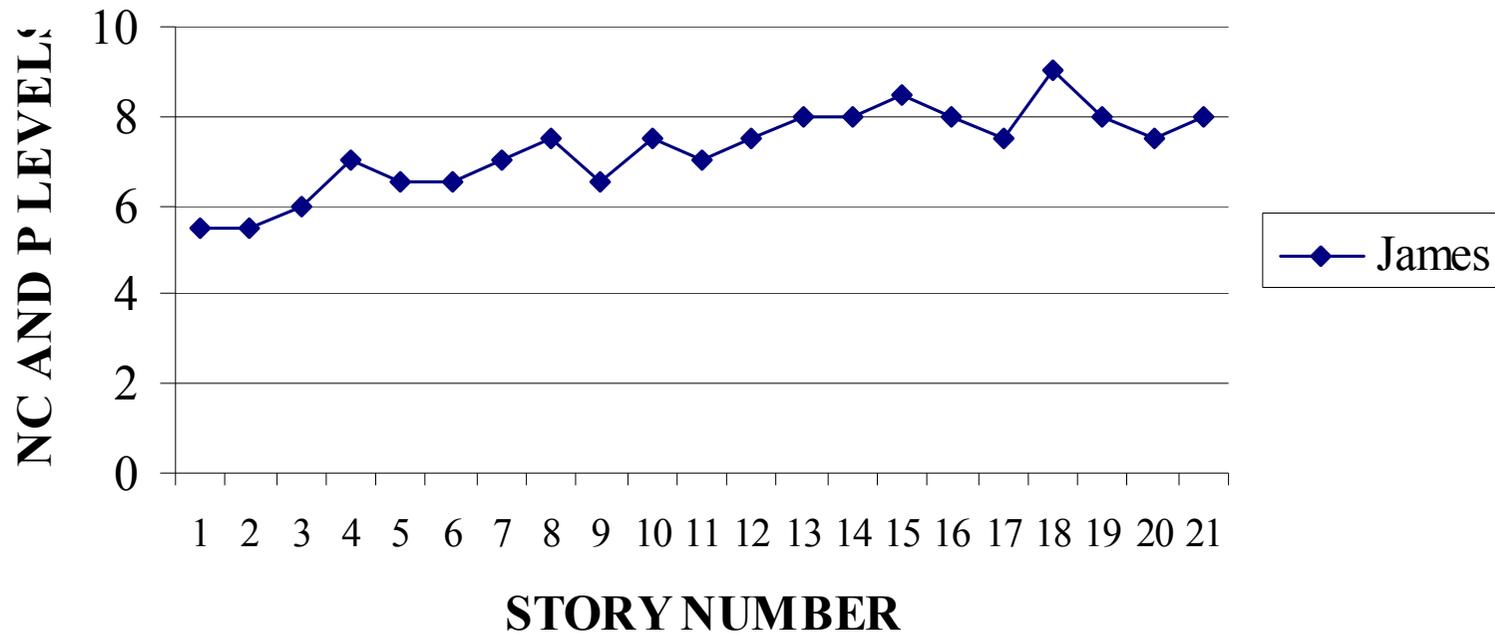
Tessa NC AND P LEVELS



Lauren NC AND P LEVELS



James NC AND P LEVELS



Appendix 7:

Results for the “Story of Informed Hearts”

Part 1: Summary of the Range Scores of Emotions

Part 2: Summary of Evaluative Devices

PART 1: SUMMARY OF THE RANGE SCORES OF EMOTIONS

CHARLIE

Story Number	Range Score	Adjectives/adverbs	Actions/dialogue
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	1 (friendship)	0	Plays in the tea-house (friendship)
5	0	0	0
6	2 (dislike ,physical discomfort)	Had a bad head	Jumped on T's head...eat his pencil case (dislike)
7	0	0	0
8	1 (anger)	Bad-tempered...nasty	0
9	2 (anger/dislike, friendship)	0	Fighting...biting...going to kill (anger/dislike)...all comed and were friends (friendship)
10	2 (happiness, anger)	0	Safe and went back home (happiness)...kicks...have a battle (anger)
11	1 (fear)	Scary	0
12	1 (dislike)	0	He doesn't like the polar bear (dislike)
13	1 (fear)	0	Ow!...shouts very loudly (fear)
14	1 (dislike/anger)	0	Try to eat each other...hits snake hard (dislike/anger)
15	3 (fear, friendship, anger)	Scared...nice	Chop him in half (anger)...play football (friendship)
16	1 (anger)	0	"Go away!"...hit his brother (anger)
17	3 (dislike/anger, friendship, happiness)	Happily	Knocked him over (dislike/anger)...saved him (friendship)
18	3 (fear, happiness, guilt)	Happy	"Throw sharp metal knives (fear)...say sorry (guilt)
19	1 (dislike/fear?)	0	All kick him and run away (dislike/fear?)
20	1 (happiness/friendship)	0	Scores a goal...all played football again (happiness/friendship)
21	3 (physical discomfort, fear, anger/dislike)	Too fierce...injured	Shoot arrows...all fight (anger/dislike)

Highest range score in one story:	3 (in 4 stories)
Total range score:	27
Total number of emotions:	6
Frequency of occurrence of each emotion:	Happiness: 4 Anger/dislike: 10 (maybe 11) Fear: 5 (maybe 6) Friendship: 5 Physical discomfort: 2 Guilt: 1

EMILY

Story Number	Range Score	Adjectives/adverbs	Actions/dialogue
1	3 (happiness, fear, physical discomfort)	Happily	"Go away!" (fear)... "ouch!" (physical discomfort)
2	0	0	0
3	1 (friendship)	0	Played (friendship)
4	1 (friendship)	0	Rescuing people (friendship)
5	0	0	0
6	3 (physical discomfort, fear, anger/dislike)	0	hurt my knee (physical discomfort)... frightened me (fear)...kicked...struggled (anger/dislike)
7	0	0	0
8	3 (friendship, physical discomfort, happiness)	Hungry, friendly, happy	Shared ham sandwiches (friendship)
9	2 (dislike/anger, happiness)	0	Gobbled up...chopped tummy up (dislike/anger)...sing a song (happiness)
10	1 (friendship)	0	Have tea together (friendship)
11	0	0	0
12	4 (sadness, happiness, friendship, dislike)	Kind, sad	Had a party for friends (friendship)...did not invite (dislike)... made him laugh...danced (happiness)
13	2 (anger, fear)	0	"Off with her head!" (anger)... ran away (fear)
14	2 (happiness, friendship)	Happy	Dances, sings (happiness) ...has party for all her friends (friendship)
15	5 (sadness, happiness, love, friendship, dislike/anger)	Upset, always smiles a lot, happy	Whacks the pig...smacks him (anger/dislike)... "Don't cry. I will play with you" (friendship) "I love you" (love)

16	2 (anger, guilt)	0	Shouting, stropy (anger)...sorry (guilt)
17	2 (happiness, love)	Happily	Falled in love...got married (love)
18	2 (happiness, sadness)	Sad, upset	Skipping..play..playing (happiness)
19	2 (fear, happiness)	Scary	Playing (happiness)
20	4 (friendship, anger, love, happiness)	So cross	Playing sword fighting...(friendship)both laughed (happiness)...hit each other...banged the table really hard..."Stop it!" (anger)...kissed.. "I love you" (love)
21	0	0	0

Highest range score in one story:	5
Total range score:	39
Total number of emotions:	8
Frequency of occurrence of each emotion:	Happiness: 10 Sadness: 3 Anger/dislike: 7 Fear: 4 Love: 3 Friendship: 8 Physical discomfort: 3 Guilt: 1

Poppy

Story Number	Range Score	Adjectives/adverbs	Actions/dialogue
1	0	0	0
2	1 (dislike/anger)	Nasty	Pushed over (dislike/anger)
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	1 (physical discomfort)	Hot	0
6	2 (anger/dislike, friendship)	0	smacked me (anger/dislike)...looked after me (friendship)
7	0	0	0
8	2 (happiness, friendship)	Happy	Playing/played (friendship)
9	2 (friendship, love)	Loving	Played with my friend (friendship)
10	0	0	0
11	1 (fear)	Scary	0

12	1 (friendship)	0	Play ball (friendship)
13	1 (happiness)	Happy	0
14	0	0	0
15	1 (friendship)	0	Played with each other (friendship)
16	3 (fear, anger/hate(?), love)	Scary	Smacking...punching (anger/hate?).. "I love you" (love)
17	2 (happiness, love)	Lived happily ever after	Kissed her (love)
18	4 (fear, happiness, sadness, physical discomfort)	Scared, happy, pleased, sad, hungry	0
19	2 (friendship, love)	0	Playing (friendship)...cuddled and kissed (love)
20	0	0	0
21	2 (physical discomfort, friendship)	Cold	Don't eat each other (friendship)

Highest range score in one story:	4
Total range score:	25
Total number of emotions:	8
Frequency of occurrence of each emotion:	Happiness: 4 Sadness: 1 Anger/dislike: 2 Fear: 3 Love: 4 Friendship: 7 Hate: 1(?) Physical discomfort: 3

TESSA

Story Number	Range Score	Adjectives/adverbs	Actions/dialogue
1	1 (anger/dislike)	0	Punched (anger/dislike)
2	3 (anger, fear, happiness)	Warm and cross, scary	Danced (happiness).. "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?" (anger)
3	1 (love/friendship?)	0	Cuddled Tessa (love/friendship?)
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	1 (love)	0	Cuddles mum...kisses her (love)
7	2 (friendship, happiness)	Happy	Liked her...mends her head (friendship)
8	4 (anger, happiness,	Angry, happy	Punching (anger)...cried

	sadness, love)		(sadness)...cuddles and kissed (love)...smacked...punched (anger)
9	1 (friendship)	0	Played (friendship)
10	0	0	0
11	1 (fear))	Scary	0
12	1 (friendship)	0	Friend (friendship)
13	5 (sadness, happiness, love, physical discomfort, friendship)	Sad, happy	Kissed each other (love)...cried (sadness)... "Ow" (physical discomfort)...kissed it better (friendship)
14	2 (friendship, sadness)	0	Everybody played (friendship)... "Boo Hoo!" (sadness)
15	3 (happiness, sadness, anger, friendship)	Happy, sad, angry	Hits him (anger/dislike)...comes to help (friendship)
16	4 (happiness, anger, guilt, love)	Happy	Punching and kicking (anger)... "I'm sorry" (guilt)... "I love you" (love)
17	2 (happiness, anger/hate?)	Happily	Pushed him in the fire (anger/hate?)
18	4 (friendship, fear, happiness, love)	Friendly, spikes that hurt you	Eat him...lock him up (fear)...likes it (happiness)...kisses mummy (love)
19	5 (fear, sadness, anger, happiness, guilt)	Scary, sad, cross, happily	Biting... "You're naughty" (anger/dislike)...all say sorry (guilt)
20	0	0	0
21	2 (happiness, friendship)	Happily	Play games (friendship)

Highest range score in one story:	5
Total range score:	43
Total number of emotions:	9
Frequency of occurrence of each emotion:	Happiness: 10 Sadness: 5 Anger/dislike: 6 Fear: 4 Love: 6 Friendship: 8 Hate: 1 Physical discomfort: 1 Guilt: 2

LAUREN

Story Number	Range Score	Adjectives/adverbs	Actions/dialogue
1	1 (anger/dislike)	0	Bite him...killed (anger/dislike)
2	0	0	0
3	2 (fear, anger/dislike)	0	Ran away (fear)...punched (anger/dislike)
4	1 (sadness)	0	People die (sadness)
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	1 (fear)	0	She will bite you (fear)
8	0	0	0
9	2 (friendship, dislike)	Nice ant, nasty ant	0
10	1 (anger)	Grumpy	0
11	1 (friendship)	0	plays
12	3 (happiness, dislike, friendship)	Bad king...happy	Helps the unicorn (friendship)
13	0	0	0
14	0	0	0
15	3 (fear, happiness, friendship)	Frightened... happy... smily, friendly monster	0
16	1 (anger/dislike)	0	Kicked..."I'll hit you" (anger/dislike)
17	5 (friendship, love, happiness, anger ,hate)	Happily	Plays (friendship) ...slammed the door (anger)...want to kill them... (hate)...kissed (love)
18	2 (anger/dislike, happiness)	Happy	"Chop his head off" (anger/dislike)
19	3 (anger, fear, friendship)	Angry spider...friends	"Quick hide!" (fear)
20	1 (friendship)	0	Poppy put him back together
21	2 (happiness, friendship)	Happy and singing	"says hello" (friendship)

Highest range score in one story:	5
Total range score:	29
Total number of emotions:	7
Frequency of occurrence of each emotion:	Happiness: 5 Sadness: 1 Anger/dislike: 9 Fear: 4 Love: 1 Friendship: 8 Hate:1

JOSHUA

Story Number	Range Score	Adjectives/adverbs	Actions/dialogue
1	1 (anger/dislike)	0	Knocked him over...shot him...stabbed (anger/dislike)
2	1 (sadness)	sad	0
3	1 (anger/dislike)	0	Wrestling move...hit by arrows (anger/dislike)
4	1 (physical discomfort)	Hungry	0
5	0	0	0
6	2 (anger/dislike, fear)	0	Poured fire over his feet...bit (anger/dislike)...hid (fear)
7	2 (anger/dislike, fear)	Scary...nasty	0
8	2 (anger/dislike, fear)	Nasty...happy	Had a fight...stung "Go away nasty wasp" (anger/dislike)
9	1 (anger/dislike)	0	Eats him...shoots...stabs (anger/dislike)
10	1 (anger/dislike)	0	Fighting...shoots all the dinosaurs (anger/dislike)
11	2 (fear, happiness)	0	"Somebody's coming!" (fear)...had a disco (happiness)
12	0	0	0
13	0	0	0
14	2 (fear, anger/dislike)	0	Hitting the snake (anger/dislike)...escape (fear)
15	5 (happiness, sadness, fear, anger/dislike, friendship)	Happy, sad , too scared	Have a fight (anger/dislike)...stops to rescue (friendship)
16	1 (anger/dislike)	0	Swearing, punching, kicking (anger/dislike)
17	3 (happiness, friendship, anger/dislike)	Happily	Playing with his friends...(friendship)...chopped all his friends (anger)
18	4 (fear, anger/dislike, sadness)	Sad	Shark attacks...pushes him away (fear)..throw stones...shoot (anger/dislike)...have a disco (friendship)
19	2 (fear, anger/dislike)	0	"The evil one's coming!" (fear)... pushed...scratched (anger/dislike)
20	2 (fear, anger/dislike)	0	fight (anger/dislike)...run away (fear)
21	1 (hate)	0	Kill them ... destroy it all (hate)

Highest range score in one story:	5
Total range score:	33

Total number of emotions:	8
Frequency of occurrence of each emotion:	Happiness: 3 Sadness: 3 Anger/dislike: 14 Fear: 9 Friendship: 2 Hate: 1 Physical discomfort: 1

JAMES

Story Number	Range Score	Adjectives/adverbs	Actions/dialogue
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	1 (friendship)	0	"Do you want a picnic? That's a great idea!" (friendship)
5	2 (anger/dislike, physical discomfort)	0	Jumped on Charlie's head (anger/dislike)...cracked head open (physical discomfort)
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	1 (anger/hate?)	Nasty	Kicked...stung...killed (anger/hate?)
9	0	0	0
10	2 (anger/dislike, friendship)	0	Trying to crash (anger/dislike)...saves him...helps (friendship)
11	0	0	0
12	2 (friendship, anger/dislike)	0	Play rugby together (friendship)... "Kill the unicorn" (anger/dislike)
13	0	0	0
14	2 (anger/hate?, fear)	0	Fights...strangles (anger/hate?)... run away (fear)
15	3 (friendship, happiness, sadness)	Happy...sad	Play football with my friends (friendship)
16	1 (anger/dislike)	0	Swearing...punching ..."I'll push you!" (anger/dislike)
17	3 (anger/hate ? happiness)	Happily	Chopped wolf open...stabbed witch hard (anger/hate?)
18	3 (fear, friendship, sadness)	Sad	Punch him...lasso him (fear)... "Do you want to be on our team?" (friendship)

19	2 (happiness, anger/dislike)	0	Jumps on him (anger/dislike)... plays forever (happiness)
20	1 (anger/dislike)	0	Shot a mouse....dog chased players away (anger/dislike)
21	3 (physical discomfort, courage, friendship)	0	Burns himself...hurts himself...blood runs out of him (physical discomfort)...throws stuff at the volcano (courage)...go into the house and have gangster chocolate (friendship)

Highest range score in one story:	3
Total range score:	25
Total number of emotions:	8
Frequency of occurrence of each emotion:	Happiness: 3 Sadness: 2 Anger/dislike: 8 Fear: 2 Friendship: 6 Physical discomfort: 2 Courage: 1 Hate: 1

PART 2: SUMMARY OF EVALUATIVE DEVICES IN THE CHILDREN'S STORIES

Emotional states or frames of mind: emotion-signalling actions
"knocked him over...stabbed him" (Joshua:1)
"He shouted" (Joshua:13)
"Incredible Hulk crashed in the sand...snake squeezed him until he was dead...all the animals were hitting the snake" (Joshua:14)
"Joshua was punching, kicking, jumping out the window" (Joshua:16)
"frog wrecked everything" (James:9)
"He was swearing, messing his room up and punching his brother on the nose" (James:16)
"chopped the wolf open....stabbed the witch hard" (James:17)
"He bites him...he killed it" (Lauren:1)
"He kicked...hit his sister" (Lauren:16)
"Spider eat giraffe...hippo saved giraffe" (Lauren:19)
"Ghost ...frightened me...I struggled and kicked" (Emily:6)
"that made him laugh" (Emily:12)
"Emily ran away" (Emily:13)
"magic queen...dances...sings...has parties ...everyone laughs" (Emily:14)
"smacks him...whacks him...runs off...smiles a lot" (Emily:15)
"They danced together...they falled in love" (Emily:17)
"Monster crept behind them to scare them...ran away" (Emily:19)
"They keep on hitting...I really banged the table...laughed" (Emily:20)
"Nasty pushed over" (Poppy:2)
"witch smacked me.....Emily chased the witch away" (Poppy:6)
"Emily is smiling" (Poppy:15)
"smacking and punching" (Poppy:16)
"He kissed her" (Poppy:17)
"punched the monster...punched the monster over" (Tessa:1)
"Tessa was happy" (Tessa:6)
"punching ...smacked...swimmed and swimmed...fell down dead" (Tessa:8)
"kissing and cuddling mummy" (Tessa:10)

<p>“punching and kicking” (Tessa:16)</p> <p>“fox blowed...pig pushed him” (Tessa:17)</p> <p>“He kisses mummy” (Tessa:19)</p> <p>“polar bear makes the penguin die” (Charlie:12)</p> <p>“little skeleton goes back to his house because he’s scared” (Charlie:15)</p> <p>“rip paper up” (Charlie:16)</p>
<p>Cognitive and perceptual states</p>
<p>“Charlie thought he was safe” (James:6)</p> <p>“snake pretended to be dead to make him sad” (Emily:12)</p> <p>“lion was getting ready to eat them” (Charlie:10)</p> <p>“unicorn never came back because he didn’t like the polar bear” (Charlie:12)</p>
<p>Speech of participants</p>
<p>“ I want to eat you...Go away you nasty wasp” (Joshua:8)</p> <p>“Don’t shout like that at me” (Joshua:16)</p> <p>“ Can I go the moon?...Shall we have a picnic?...That’s a great idea....I have to go and have my bath now” (James: 4)</p> <p>“King says “Kill the unicorn with a fork and a knife”</p> <p>“massive (x4)” (James:16)</p> <p>“Where do you live?” (James:17)</p> <p>“The fairy said “Take turns!” (Lauren:14)</p> <p>“Will you come on the Bouncy Castle with me?... Mum said “Yes!” (Lauren:16)</p> <p>“Quick hide! Spider coming!”(Lauren:19)</p> <p>“Go away!....Ow!” (Emily:1)</p> <p>“Hello” Have you got any food?...Yes would you like to share it with me?” (Emily:8)</p> <p>“Little girl, little girl where are you going?...Open the latch my darling!”...(Grandmother)...”Open the latch” (wolf).....What big eyes you have etc” (Emily:9)</p> <p>“Queen said “Off with her head!” (Emily:13)</p> <p>“Rainbow man said “Don’t cry” I will play with you” (Emily:15)</p>

"I love you!" (Emily:15)
"Sorry mum" (Emily:16)
"Stop it....Come back or I will hit you!...Brother please can we stop fighting....I love you" (Emily:20)
"Do you want to play basketball and dance all around to the music and drum all the way home?"
(Poppy:8)
"Giddy up!" (Poppy:12)
"Mirror, mirror on the wall" (Poppy:17)
"What have you done?" (Tessa:2)
"Don't blow bubbles in the bed" (Tessa:8)
"Will you help me out of the tree please?" (Tessa:13)
"I want to come! I want to go shopping!" (Tessa:15)
"Can you see the dark, the dark?" (Tessa:17)
"What are doing biting me for?....Ow!" (Tessa:19)
"Can I play?...Yes!" (Tessa:21)
"Go in the kitchen and wash up" (Tessa:13)

Hedges

Negation and other comparators

"And then this person got knocked over. This one didn't" (Joshua:1)
"Somehow the fish didn't get stabbed" (Joshua:10)
"coin so big he couldn't lift it" (Joshua:13)
Aliens live on fire lake but "they don't burn" (Joshua:21)
"Bat fell and couldn't fly anymore" (James:1)
"Shall we have a picnic?" (James:4)
"He went on it and its not his age" (James:9)
"then he don't fight" (James:10)

"The unicorn dies but the zebra doesn't because he's too fast" (James:12)

"He don't see the Incredible Hulk. He's hiding" (James:14)
"I couldn't get him away" (James:15)
"She will bite you" (Lauren:7)
"A giant never came ever again" (Lauren: 17)
"He might eat people" (Lauren:18)
"He might watch telly?" (Emily:4)
"He might jump on your head" (Emily:7)
"did not invite" (Emily:12)
"don't cry" (Emily:15)
"Cinderella didn't have an invitation" (Emily:17)
"He did not come back" (Emily:20)
"That's different" (Poppy:4)
"You will meet her on the bus and she will run away with you" (Poppy:7)
"and the animals don't bite" (Poppy:14)
"Don't swallow it!" (Poppy: 16)
"They don't eat each other" (Poppy:21)
"It will pinch you" (Tessa:7)
"baby lizard doesn't like the monster" (Tessa:15)
"snow not melt" (Tessa:21)
"knights never come back" (Charlie:9)
"walks away and never comes back" (Charlie:12)
"and they don't change anymore" (Charlie:14)
"the dinosaurs hide behind him so he can't see then" (Charlie:19)
"dragons can't swim...he doesn't die" (Charlie:21)

Intensifiers, gratuitous terms or qualifiers

“snake was biggest of all” (Joshua:14)

“much much more massive” (Joshua:21)

“really, really fast” (James:13)

“chopped tummy all up” (Emily:9)

“so big” (Emily:13)

“all the animals and flowers are magic too” (Emily:14)

“Tiny pig is very small...rainbow man smiles a lot” (Emily:15)

“whole world shook” (Emily:18)

“still at the hospital...kept on hitting...so cross...really banged” (Emily:20)

“whizzes...really, really fast...very fast” (Poppy:14)

“really swim in the sea...long way away” (Poppy:18)

“all his blue teeth” (Tessa:11)

“so big” (Tessa:13)

“really fast...all the magic animals” (Tessa:14)

“great big CRASH” (Tessa:19)

“lots of fire” (Tessa:21)

“really, nasty horrid ant” (Charlie:8)

“shouts very very very very loudly” (Charlie:13)

“very big” (Charlie:14)

“big massive cake” (Charlie: 16)

Onomatopoeia or sound effects

“Whee!” (Joshua:1)
“He screamed Aaaaaagh!” (Joshua:18)
“Wheee!” (James:13)
“Boom! Boom!” (James:21)
“Bang!” (Lauren:2)
“Ssssss.....bang!” (Lauren:11)
“Ribbit!” (Lauren:14)
“Ssss” (Emily:11)
“Quack” (or was that speech) (Emily: 12)
“Aaaaah!” (Poppy:11)
“Ribbit!” (Tessa:4)
“Ow!..Boo Hoo!” (Tessa:13)
“Boo Hoo! “ (Tessa:14)
“It goes eeeeeeah!” (Tessa:15)
“crrrrm....” (Tessa:18)
“Creeeeeak!” (Charlie:11)

Repetition of words

“knocked him over ...knocked...knocked over” (Joshua:1)
“Shark eats...eats...is going to eat” (Joshua:1)
“Nasty (x4)...stung him with his stinger” (James:8)
“squeezes and squeezes” (James:14)
“...fierce (x3...but T-Rex is the fiercest” (James:14)
“jumped/jumping” (x5) (James:19)
“angry spider...very angry eyes” (Lauren:19)
“struggled and struggled” (Emily:6)
“Snip! Snip! Snip!” (Tessa:7)
“cried and cried” (Tessa:13)
“nasty...horrid” (Charlie:8)
“hot (x3)” (Charlie:5)
“poisonous (x2)” (Charlie:15)

Ideas repetition

“frog’s alive...frog’s still alive again...it’s raining...raining...raining again” (Joshua:2)

“eats him up” (Joshua:10)

“chopped the ball in half...chopped the house down...good one chopped the evil one in half”
(Joshua:17)

“policeman (4x across 2 stories:3/8) (Lauren)

“It dropped off (x3)” (Lauren:20)

“It was a long, long time ago” (Lauren:21)

“hungry ant...have you got any food?...sandwiches” (Emily:8)

“eats some chips...have tea with me...they have tea” (Emily:10)

“broke off... whole body broke off...breaks again” (Emily:18)

“possums and snakes...just possums and snakes....there was a possum...two possums” (Emily:21)

“The sun came out...the sunshine” (Poppy:2)

“He saw (x4)” (Poppy:5)

“Plays/played (x7)...swim(X3)” (Poppy:9)

“flies...flying...flying-act” (Poppy:10)

“playing...play...played (x7)” (Poppy:15)

“fire (x3)...burns” (Tessa:21)

“He’s gonna hit me now...he’s gonna get hit” (Charlie:2)

“It eats...eat...eating” (Charlie:14)

“We won...we would always win” (Charlie:18)

“hid...dodging..tricked him” (Charlie:19)

“scores a goal (x3)” (Charlie:20)

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