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Comprehension, Composition, and Collaboration: Analyses of Communication Influences in Two Classrooms

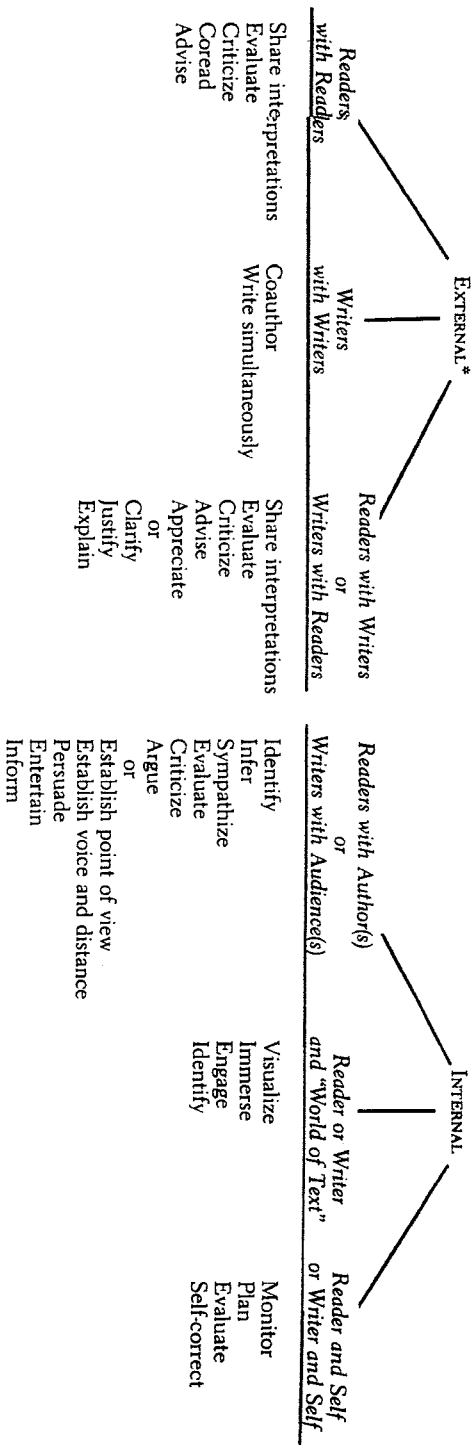
Robert J. Tierney • Margie Leys • Theresa Rogers

In this chapter we explore the collaborative nature of the reading and writing experiences of elementary school-aged children. First we describe the different types of collaborations involved in the acts of reading and writing, presenting past research and theory that relate to this topic. Then we describe analyses of the dynamics of various teacher and student interactions within two classrooms and discuss how these dynamics shape the collaborative nature of the experiences of selected readers and writers.

Our goal will be to support a thesis that emerged from these data. Namely, we need an expanded theory of reading and writing processes—a theory that yields thought processes and reading-writing outcomes to the transactions that occur as readers and writers collaborate with peers, their teachers, and themselves, as well as published authors and readers. Our claim is that the opportunities readers or writers have to engage in collaborations contribute to how they learn to evaluate their own comprehension and compositions, and to how they develop an awareness of the strategies they enlist to make meaning.

The material in this chapter was originally a paper presented at the conference on "Contexts or Literacy," Snowbird, Utah, June 29, 1984. It stems from a larger research study conducted by R. J. Tierney and M. E. Giacobbe, "Reading and Writing Relationships: Processes, Products, and Communicative Contexts." We would like to acknowledge Avon Crismore who has assisted with various aspects of the project planning and data collection.

Table 12.1 Examples of Reading-Writing Collaboration



* External collaborations can take place in the following contexts — whole class, small group, or one-on-one conferences (student to student, student to teacher, student to family, student to others).

In her reading journal entry, she enjoys as she reads as well as her different levels of involvement with ("they did an excellent job"), and could really see ghosts and stuff") aware of some aspects of the student's relationship with her teacher. In terms of external collaboration, she seeks advice from her teacher and obviously monitoring her own progress, and is aware of her reader

from these pages. We learned a great deal from this one child alone (see Fig. 1 over 300 pages of transcribed interaction and watching them write a year talking about reading-writing experience as a reader and writer. Witness, if you will, some of the progress as readers and consider what in the stories they are reading and their own internalized criteria and they have written on the basis of larger public; it may also include readers might be. This audience about what they are trying to say writing as characters or narrators with themselves. As writers, the and readers are involved in a certain revision and self-aj play a key role in contributing experience. For example, a contribution to both the process with their teacher or family. Elements (see Table 12.1). At one elementary-aged readers and w

* External collaborations can take place in the following contexts—whole class, small group, or one-on-one conferences (student to student, student to teacher, student to family, student to others).

THE COLLABORATIVE NATURE OF READING AND WRITING

Elementary-aged readers and writers may be involved in various types of collaborations (see Table 12.1). At one level, children may be involved *externally* in, for example, coauthoring, conferencing with peers, or discussing ideas or problems with their teacher or family. Each of these collaborations may make a unique contribution to both the process and the eventual product of the reading or writing experience. For example, as several educators have hypothesized, peers can play a key role in contributing to a child's developing a sense of audience and certain revision and self-appraisal strategies (Graves, 1983; Kirby & Limer, 1981; Newkirk, 1984). At a second or *internal* level of communication, writers and readers are involved in myriad social interactions with the page and with themselves. As writers, they may become involved in the stories they are writing as characters or narrators while, at the same time, they may be thinking about what they are trying to say and what the effects of their writing upon their readers might be. This audience—their readers—may include known peers or a larger public; it may also include themselves as their own readers, judging what they have written on the basis of criteria they have gleaned from past reactions and their own internalized criteria. As readers, they may find themselves absorbed in the stories they are reading while they simultaneously monitor their own progress as readers and consider who wrote the piece and why.

Witness, if you will, some of the dimensions of the following third-grader's experience as a reader and writer. This is one of 24 children with whom we spent a year talking about reading-writing relationships while examining their reading and writing and watching their classes. What we share is restricted to just 2 of over 300 pages of transcribed interviews, journal entries, and stories we gathered from this one child alone (see Figure 12.1). They include a page from her reading journal and a page from her writing journal, together with comments from her teacher. We learned a great deal about this child's reading and writing experience from these pages.

In her reading journal entry, she discusses aspects of the visual experience she enjoys as she reads as well as her sense of the author's craft. Her comments reflect different levels of involvement: with herself ("it really was neat"), with the authors ("they did an excellent job"), and the world suggested by the text ("in my head I could really see ghosts and stuff"). By examining the teacher's entry, we became aware of some aspects of the student's "external" collaborative experiences: the student's relationship with her teacher and future interaction with peer authors. A similar analysis was performed on her writing journal; her comments about her own writing reflect levels and types of involvement similar to those in her reading journal. In terms of external collaboration, she discusses coauthoring with a peer and seeks advice from her teacher. In terms of internal collaboration, she is obviously monitoring her own progress ("we have a lot but we are fixing up some"), and is aware of her reader ("so if you see it you'll know").

Jan. 11
8:30
I am writing musical instruments with
ROBIN
a lot so far
but we are fixing some so if
you see it 1/4/11
We know we are sort
of having a little
trouble because
we have to
interview MRS. PATACK
and she wasn't
there when we
went But we will
keep trying
Lisa

Congratulations on your plane trip!!
 story! so much detail and feelings!!
 As far as interviewing, perhaps you
 could put a note asking for an
 appointment in her box in the teachers' room.
 I have you and Robin written down what
 questions you plan to ask her? Also, would
 you like to borrow my tape recorder?
 Mr. Ben-trick

Figure 12.1 Reading and Writing Journal Entries (continued)

seen I
 ally see
 and stuff
 and it
 as neat.
 how they
 m up to
 didn't go
 and
 I like
 when
 kids are
 an egg
 really
 went Job
 Peace
 a
 the
 well
 to another author.
 and congratulate
 the author
 usually when
 us from the books

understanding the nature of the internal collaborations in which students engaged.

Before describing the results, we will explain what this analysis entailed. As

ethnographers define it, an event is a unit of analysis that is homogenous with respect to participants, topic, purpose, and rules of interaction (Savill-Troike, 1982). The way the rules are understood by the participants are the "norms of interpretation" for those particular rules. For instance, a typical classroom rule is that children must raise their hands if they want to speak. The interpretation of that rule by participants is that children must bid for a turn to speak. An event is made up of a sequence of acts each having an interactional function. An act can be a statement, a request, or a meaningful gesture. For example, a typical classroom event has an act sequence with a triad structure: a teacher asks a question, children raise their hands and, when chosen, answer, and the teacher evaluates the response. So, a microethnographic analysis of an event includes a description of the following elements: setting, participants, function, purpose and goals, act sequence, rules of interaction, and norms of interpretation.

Table 12.2 represents a summary of the microethnographic analysis of reading events in Prairie School and Atkinson Academy. The act sequence of the reading event in the Prairie School followed a fairly typical pattern. The teacher initiated with a question, children raised their hands to gain permission to speak, and the response from the child called upon was evaluated by the teacher. If the response was not deemed appropriate the teacher either asked for more information, asked another child for more information, or asked for another response. Almost all of the interactions (97 percent) were between the teacher and the students. One way to interpret these rules is that the teacher is the participant who knows the appropriate questions and is the judge of the "rightness" or "wrongness" of the answers.

In contrast, the act sequence described in the Atkinson school event was guided by a different set of rules and norms. Here, although there were still more interactions (57 percent) between students and the teacher than between students and the substantive questions (about the text) came from students than from the teacher. Also, the students were allowed to evaluate the questions that were asked and could choose not to answer what they deemed to be irrelevant or redundant questions. The teacher still managed the structure of the event and many typical classroom rules were in effect, but the substance of the interactions—the interpretations, evaluations, and sharings—were largely supplied by the students. What appeared to differentiate the act sequences between the two schools was the nature of the collaborations. Both teachers controlled the flow of ideas. What was different about the collaborations was the extent to which the Atkinson teacher afforded students the opportunity to interact with each other as evaluators and advisors on the substance or content of texts. The Prairie teacher, in contrast, tended to mediate not only *who* shared, but *what* was shared.

During writing, similar constraints were in effect. A writing assignment given in the Prairie School classroom followed a discussion of the basal story by Sharon

Table 12.2 Summary of Micro Sequences in Two Schools

PRAIRIE SCHOOL

The lesson analyzed below took place in a classroom at The Prairie School. The lesson is a university-affiliated laboratory school that admits students with abilities representative of the whole nation by matching test scores with norms from nationally standardized tests.

Setting

Only a section of the classroom is on the screen. There is a rectangular table with nine chairs parallel to a blackboard. Beyond the head of the table is a bulletin board with samples of the students' writing hanging diagonally in neat rows. A lesson takes place on a Tuesday morning in February.

Participants

Four third-grade students are seated on chairs along one side of the table. One is sitting at the foot, so not all children have their backs facing the blackboard. The teacher, a woman about forty years old, is seated at the head of the table. She is dressed in a suit with a scarf tied in a bow—students are dressed in jeans and shirts. This, the second reading group to meet that morning, is the mixed-ability group (in terms of ability).

Function, Purpose, Goal

The purpose of this lesson is to assess the students' understanding of a basal story that the students recently finished reading. The teacher is assessing their understanding of a particular story and teaching th

Table 12.2 Summary of Microethnographic Analyses of Reading Event Sequences in Two Schools

ATKINSON ACADEMY	PRAIRIE SCHOOL
<p>The lesson analyzed below took place in a classroom at The Prairie School. Prairie is a university-affiliated laboratory school that admits students with abilities representative of the whole nation by matching test scores to norms from nationally standardized tests.</p>	<p>The lesson analyzed below took place in a classroom at The Prairie School. Prairie is a university-affiliated laboratory school that admits students with abilities representative of the whole nation by matching test scores to norms from nationally standardized tests.</p>
<p>Atkinson is a small school in New Hampshire, housed in a traditional, white clapboard building. The classroom has a workshop atmosphere with low trapezoid tables, makeshift cinder-block bookshelves filled with books, an old sink, and coats hanging from hooks in the wall. In one corner is a 9' x 12' rug, where the students and teacher gather for share meetings.</p>	<p>Only a section of the classroom is visible on the screen. There is a rectangular table with nine chairs situated parallel to a blackboard. Beyond the head of the table is a bulletin board with samples of the students' writing hanging diagonally in neat rows. The lesson takes place on a Tuesday morning in February.</p>

Setting

Atkinson is a small school in New Hampshire, housed in a traditional, white clapboard building. The classroom has a workshop atmosphere with low trapezoid tables, makeshift cinder-block bookshelves filled with books, an old sink, and coats hanging from hooks in the wall. In one corner is a 9' x 12' rug, where the students and teacher gather for share meetings.

Participants

Twenty third-grade students in jeans and tee shirts are sitting in a circle around the rug; some are leaning against a wall, some against a bookcase, and one or two are in easy chairs. The teacher, a woman in her thirties dressed in corduroy jeans and a sweater with long hair pulled back in a clip, is also sitting in the circle on the floor.

Function, Purpose, Goals

The event is a share meeting in which a few students tell other students and the teacher about a book they are reading. The purpose of the share meetings is to give students an opportunity to share

Setting

Only a section of the classroom is visible on the screen. There is a rectangular table with nine chairs situated parallel to a blackboard. Beyond the head of the table is a bulletin board with samples of the students' writing hanging diagonally in neat rows. The lesson takes place on a Tuesday morning in February.

Participants

Four third-grade students are seated in chairs along one side of the table and one is sitting at the foot, so none of the children have their backs facing the blackboard. The teacher, a woman about forty years old, is seated at the head of the table. She is dressed in a suit with a scarf tied in a bow—the students are dressed in jeans and tee shirts. This, the second reading group to meet that morning, is the middle group (in terms of ability).

Function, Purpose, Goals

The purpose of this lesson is to discuss a basal story that the students have recently finished reading. The teacher is assessing their understanding of this particular story and teaching them

collaborations in which students

in what this analysis entailed. An analysis that is homogenous with Savill-Troike (1982) "norms of interaction" are the "norms of distance, a typical classroom rule of interaction. The interpretation of it to speak. An event is analyzed for a turn to speak. An interactional function. An act can be. For example, a typical classroom: a teacher asks a question, answer, and the teacher evaluates an event includes a description of function, purpose and goals, act interpretation.

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the Atkinson school event was, although there were still more teacher than between students, ers to respond. As a result, more ne from students than from the te the questions that were asked ed to be irrelevant or redundant e of the event and many typical f the interactions—the interpretation by the students. ences between the two schools ers controlled the flow of ideas he extent to which the Atkinson rict with each other as evaluators The Prairie teacher, in contrast, was shared. A writing assignment given on of the basal story by Sharon

Table 12.2 Summary of Microethnographic Analyses of Reading Event Sequences in Two Schools (continued)

Table 12.2 Summary of Micro Sequences in Two Schools (cont.)

2 are corrections (e.g., "No, it was [2?])

149 interactions are between the teacher and a student:

148 are teacher questions or a student response to the teacher's question; 1 is a directive from the teacher

Total: 153 interactions

ATKINSON ACADEMY

PRAIRIE SCHOOL

their appreciation for or problems they are having with a book.

general principles of interpretation. (For example, she stops periodically to explain generic terms and to make comments such as, "We don't all interpret stories the same way.) She is specifically focusing her lesson on characters.

"The children come together as a group a couple times a week and share what they have been reading, problems they come across, and kids respond to them. When they [the children who are sharing] are having trouble, others will sort of support them and they are real patient with that person [who is] explaining what they are doing." [Excerpt from teacher interview.]

As the tape begins, the children are already seated and still. The act sequence goes as follows:

The teacher gives students permission to begin.

Children raise their hands. Teacher scans group to see who has their hand raised.

Act Sequence

Act Sequence

The tape begins when all the participants are seated. The act sequence goes as follows:

Teacher asks a question. Teacher scans group to see who has their hand raised.

The chosen children [the actor(s)] stand up and give some background and discuss "good parts" or problems.

More children may raise their hands. Teacher turns her body toward a child and calls on him or her. Child gives an answer.

Other children or the teacher may raise their hands.

Child gives an answer. Nods in agreement.

The actor calls on the teacher or on a child.

Turns toward another child for additional information. Adds information herself or asks another child for a different response.

The teacher or the child either asks a question or makes a statement.

Occasionally the teacher goes to the board to record students' responses and following that, will praise the whole group.

The actor answers the question or responds to the statement.

4 interactions with other students: 2 are disagreements (e.g., "I don't think she was nice!)

The last four acts are repeated. (The teacher requests that only one more question be asked.

Occasionally the teacher goes to the board to record students' responses and following that, will praise the whole group.

(The same four acts are repeated once or twice.)

Actors respond. The teacher asks if the actors are finished.

The teacher says, "Thank you."

The whole cycle is repeated (in this case, once)

The actors sit down.

4 interactions with other students: 2 are disagreements (e.g., "I don't think she was nice!)

The whole cycle is repeated (in this case, once)

4 interactions with other students: 2 are disagreements (e.g., "I don't think she was nice!)

Rules for Interaction

1. The teacher leads the discussion; the participants follow a fairly regular turn-taking sequence. (Some are called on frequently and others at all.)
2. Children must raise their hand bid for a turn from the teacher.
3. Only one person may speak at a time.
4. Turn taking is interrupted only one participant substantively disagrees with another participant response.
- (Example: When the first child finished, another immediately explained that both responses were very different answers. The teacher accepted and did not reprimand children must attend to whoever speaking within the group; they not turn to look at or comment with the rest of the class. (If this is broken the teacher gazes at the guilty child until he or she is satisfied.)

phic Analyses of Reading Event

ATKINSON ACADEMY

their appreciation for or problems they are having with a book. "The children come together as a group a couple times a week and share what they have been reading, problems they come across, and kids respond to them. When they [the children who are sharing] are having trouble, others will sort of support them and they are real patient with that person [who is] explaining what they are doing." [Excerpt: from teacher interview.]

Act Sequence

The tape begins when all the participants are seated. The act sequence goes as follows:

- The teacher gives students permission to begin.
- The chosen children [the actor(s)] stand up and give some background and discuss "good parts" or problems.
- Other children or the teacher may raise their hands.
- The actor calls on the teacher or on a child.
- The teacher or the child either asks a question or makes a statement.
- The actor answers the question or responds to the statement.
- The last four acts are repeated.
- The teacher requests that only one more question be asked.
- The same four acts are repeated once or twice.
- The teacher asks if the actors are finished.
- Actors respond.
- The teacher says, "Thank you."
- The actors sit down.
- The whole cycle is repeated (in this case, once)

Table 12.2 Summary of Microethnographic Analyses of Reading Event Sequences in Two Schools (continued)

PRAIRIE SCHOOL

2 are corrections (e.g., "No, it was 7 [not 12]")

!49 interactions are between the teacher and a student:

!48 are teacher questions or a student response to the teacher's question

!1 is a directive from the teacher

TOTAL: 153 interactions

!3 interactions are with the teacher:

4 are comments or questions about the actors' reading

9 are teacher directives addressed to the actors

TOTAL: 23 interactions

Rules for Interaction

1. The teacher chooses the actors who will share.
2. The students are not supposed to ask questions until the actor is done with the initial presentation (when this happened, the teacher told the actor to continue with his presentation).
3. The teacher has first priority in speaking when she raises her hand, and she can tell the actor(s) who to call on.
4. If the teacher's hand is not raised, the actor(s) can call on any child he or she chooses, and may choose not to answer a particular question if a good reason is supplied (e.g., That is like Tom's question [which was already answered]).
5. The teacher decides when enough questions have been asked.
6. When the teacher says, "One more question" and then asks if the actor is done, she expects him or her to say, "Yes."
7. When the teacher says, "Thank you" the actor is supposed to sit down.

1. The teacher leads the discussion and the participants follow a fairly strict turn-taking sequence. (Some are called on frequently and others not at all.)
2. Children must raise their hands to bid for a turn from the teacher.
3. Only one person may speak at a time.
4. Turn taking is interrupted only when one participant substantially disagrees with another participant's response.
- (Example: When the first child was finished, another immediately gave a very different answer. The teacher explained that both responses were acceptable and did not reprimand.)
5. Children must attend to whoever is speaking within the group; they may not turn to look at or communicate with the rest of the class. (If this rule is broken the teacher gazes at the guilty child until he or she is still.)

Table 12.2 Summary of Microethnographic Analyses of Reading Event Sequences in Two Schools (continued)

ATKINSON ACADEMY	PRAIRIE SCHOOL
<i>Norms of Interpretation</i>	<i>Norms of Interpretation</i>

The students seem to understand that "normal" classroom rules are still in operation during these meetings—the teacher still guides and sometimes controls the interactions. The teacher has encouraged individually with students and knows who is ready to present and so calls on those students. It is considered impolite and counterproductive to interrupt the actor's presentation. The teacher contributes to and controls the question asking so that those who have something substantial to say will get a chance. Actors may not answer a question that is not considered substantial or at least different. The teacher decides when enough time has been given to actors, because they have a certain amount of time to hear what seems to be a predestinated number of presentations. The actors are expected to conform to this by listening and paying attention to signals such as "One more question" and "Thank you."

The teacher is the judge of "rightness" or "wrongness" of answers. Hand raising is a signal that a participant knows the answer and is evaluated by the teacher as an act in itself whether or not a response is given. Children are expected to remain attentive throughout a lesson. If the teacher turns bodily toward a student who does not have his or her hand raised, the student is being reprimanded. A child may never be called upon even though he or she raises a hand. Perhaps the student has not read the story or, in the past, has not given appropriate responses.

The assignment in the Atkinson classroom followed a discussion of a book called *Soup* by Robert Peck. During the discussion, the students were asked to talk about how Robert Peck let his readers know about the characters—particularly Soup, an autobiographical character. The teacher then moved into a discussion of a piece written by one of the students in the class (line 24) and asked how Lisa let them know about the character named Natasha. After some discussion, the assignment (given on line 37) was to analyze how it is they as authors have let their readers come to know their characters. They are then asked to write about this in their journals.

Bell Mathis called "A Sidewalk Story." Parts of the lessons are transcribed in Table 12.3 to give you a sense of the whole lesson. The discussion centered around the main characters, and the children were asked to describe each character as the teacher wrote their answers on the board. The actual writing assignment begins on line 57. The students were asked to write a biography of one of the characters, presumably using lists already on the board to describe these characters.

The assignment in the Atkinson classroom followed a discussion of a book called *Soup* by Robert Peck. During the discussion, the students were asked to talk about how Robert Peck let his readers know about the characters—particularly Soup, an autobiographical character. The teacher then moved into a discussion of a piece written by one of the students in the class (line 24) and asked how Lisa let them know about the character named Natasha. After some discussion, the assignment (given on line 37) was to analyze how it is they as authors have let their readers come to know their characters. They are then asked to write about this in their journals.

These lessons with very similar two teachers support various types of classrooms students were encouraged to think about themselves as encourage such an immediate sense of what is interesting to note about encouraged to move in and out of thinking about how a relatively unidirectional readers and readers with writers (readers with writers), to how (writers and world of text), to write obvious and deliberate attempt by experience with published authors writing.

Table 12.3 Prairie School and Atkinson School

1. T: There were lots of different people story. Yours was what was the most interesting part of the story.
2. C: How about... (inaudible)
3. T: Oh, yeah, she was another interesting person.
4. C: Mrs. Brown.
5. T: All right. Let's put Mrs. Brown's name on the board.
6. C: Lily.
7. T: Good, we'll write her name up on the board.
8. C: How about... (inaudible)
9. T: Oh, yeah, she was another interesting person.
10. C: Peter?
11. C: Mrs. Brown.
12. T: All right. Let's put Mrs. Brown's name on the board.
13. C: here.
14. T: Who else was in the story? Cathy?
15. T: We would call them, these were the people first. I want you to write about one of these. Something that you like about it.
16. C: Nice.

These lessons with very similar objectives represent a rich display of how the two teachers support various types of collaborations in their classrooms. In both classrooms students were encouraged to consider their perceptions of the characters in stories. Both teachers highlighted the author—Mathis and Peck—and both encouraged the students to consider their peers' ideas. But there are some key differences in the two teachers' approaches. The Atkinson teacher urged the students to think about themselves as writers and readers; the Prairie teacher did not encourage such an immediate sense of authorship and readership in the students. What is interesting to note about the Atkinson School is that the students were encouraged to move in and out of various collaborations. They progressed from thinking about how a relatively unknown author developed his characters (readers with readers and readers with writers), to how a classmate developed her characters (readers with writers), to how they, as writers, develop their own characters (writers and world of text), to writing about that (writer and self). There was an obvious and deliberate attempt by the Atkinson teacher to interface the students' experience with published authors, their peers' work, and their own reading and writing.

Table 12.3 Prairie School and Atkinson Academy Writing Assignments

PRAIRIE SCHOOL WRITING ASSIGNMENT

1. T: There were lots of different characters in your story, this one was the complete story. Yours was what we would say is the abbreviated form or the condensed version of the story. I'm going to write on the board the names of the different people, the important characters in the story. All right—Chris, can you think of one of the names.
6. C: Lily.
7. T: Good, we'll write her name up here. Another name—Cathy?
8. C: How about . . . (inaudible)
9. T: Oh, yeah, she was another important person in the story, wasn't she? Good.
10. Peter?
11. C: Mrs. Brown.
12. T: All right. Let's put Mrs. Brown up here also. And somebody that was in here.
13. here.
14. T: Who else was in the story? Chris?
15. T: We would call them, these would be called the key or major characters and then we would have some minor characters. Well, let's just go along with these people first. I want you to think of words that would tell about each one of these. Something that you could say about each one of them.
19. Cathy.
20. C: Nice.

ATKINSON ACADEMY
Norms of Interpretation

The students seem to understand that "normal" classroom rules are still in operation during these meetings—the teacher still guides and sometimes controls the interactions. The teacher has conferred individually with students and knows who is ready to present and so calls on those students. It is considered impolite and counterproductive to interrupt the actor's presentation. The teacher contributes to and controls the question asking so that those who save something substantial to say will get a chance. Actors may not answer a question that is not considered substantial or at least different. The teacher decides when enough time has been given to actors, because they have a certain amount of time to hear what seems to be a predesignated number of representations. The actors are expected to conform to this by listening and paying attention to signals such as "One more question" and "Thank you."

orm followed a discussion of a book on the board to describe these. The students were asked to talk about the characters—particularly Lisa (line 24) and asked how Lisa let her then moved into a discussion of the characters—particular how it is they as authors have let them are then asked to write about

Table 12.3 Prairie School and Atkinson

- 74. they say—what's written be there just exactly sentence
- 75. ing things that we say some
- 76. just written there, you have
- 77. job.
- 78. All right, go back to your de
- 79. of the major characters in t
- 80. almost as though you were
- 81. graphies about famous peop
- 82. make it very long, but tell a
- 83. and you select which ever e
- 84. about what you're supposed
- 85. back to your desks, you've b
- 86. ATKINSON Ac
- 1. T: —Yesterday we talked about
- 2. was. I would like to talk to y
- 3. described himself as a child.
- 4. did he do it with Soup?
- 5. c: He picked out all the bad th
- 6. T: Okay. A lot of his adventure
- 7. what did he tell us about So
- 8. c: Well, first he had . . . (Inau
- 9. T: Okay, so first he was using I
- 10. always using people?
- 11. c: No.
- 12. T: Okay, what else do we know
- 13. c: He always wanted Rob to d
- 14. T: Okay, he was using Rob to
- 15. playing it safe. What about
- 16. How did Soup feel then?
- 17. c: Funny.
- 18. T: Well, why did he feel funny
- 19. c: Bad (Inaudible)
- 20. T: Okay, so both he and Rob k
- 21. know what Soup was like, a
- 22. about Rob and their friends
- 23. wrote them. Okay, what abo
- 24. what about Natasha, Lisa's
- 25. Away Imagination. How did

Table 12.3 Prairie School and Atkinson Academy Writing Assignment (continued)

- 21. t: Nice.
- 22. c: Fresh; friendly.
- 23. t: Friendly. Those are good words to use. Chris.
- 24. t: Okay. How could you describe Mrs. Brown?
- 25. c: (Inaudible)
- 26. T: All right, well, Chris might have a little different idea—we always don't
- 27. interpret stories the same way. And what did you think—you thought
- 28. she was She was a little bit, wasn't she, so what word do want to
- 29. use?
- 30. c: Have we said *grumpy*?
- 31. t: Grumpy, okay. Another one that you can think of. Marcie?
- 32. c: This one's for Frazier.
- 33. t: For Frazier—good.
- 34. c: Kind to others.
- 35. t: Kind to others—good, Marcie.
- 36. c: Because he bought Lilly the earrings.
- 37. t: That's right. All right. Kind to others.
- 38. t: She was a very caring person. She did—good, Marcie. All right now, if you're
- 39. really thinking about her feelings so what would you say—
- 40. c: Caring.
- 41. t: Excellent. You gave a very good example, Marcie, why she was caring.
- 42. Steve?
- 43. c: She thought that she could do the same as Mrs. Ruth did because she was
- 44. poor and had to get her house back
- 45. t: We have things under each person. Some, I think you can see, are more
- 46. important than others. Who was the most important person in the story?
- 47. c: Lilly and Tanya.
- 48. t: You feel they both were very important?
- 49. c: Lilly, because she did most of the stuff.
- 50. t: Okay. Chris?
- 51. c: Lilly.
- 52. t: You feel that also? What about you, Cathy?
- 53. t: I love the way you're really picking up the feelings and what—sometimes

Table 12.3 Prairie School and Atkinson Academy Writing Assignment (continued)

54. they say—what's written between the lines of the story. It might not be there just exactly sentence by sentence but you're also discovering things that we say sometimes are written *between the lines*, they're not just written there, you have to think about them, you're doing a good job.
55. 58.
56. 59. r: All right, go back to your desks. I want you to select one of these people—one almost as though you were writing a biography. We've read lots of biographies about famous people and written about them. You don't have to make it very long, but tell as much about the one of those people as you can and you select which ever one you would like to. Do you have any questions about what you're supposed to do? Any questions, Marcie? Steve? Okay, go back to your desks, you've been a good group

ATKINSON ACADEMY WRITING ASSIGNMENT

1. r: —Yesterday we talked about how he used Rob and what his relationship was. I would like to talk to you about how he did that—How Robert Peck described himself as a child, how did he develop his own character and how did he do it with Soup?
2. c: He picked out all the bad things—where he got in trouble.
3. r: Okay. A lot of his adventures and a lot of them went wrong, right? And what did he tell us about Soup as a person—
4. c: Well, first he had (Inaudible)
5. r: Okay, so first he was using Rob and then they became friends. Was Soup always using people?
6. c: No.
7. r: Okay, what else do we know about Soup?
8. c: He always wanted Rob to do certain things.
9. r: Okay, he was using Rob to do the kinds of things he liked to do but he was playing it safe. What about the time with the junkman? (Explains episode)
10. c: Funny.
11. r: Well, why did he feel funny?
12. c: Bad (Inaudible)
13. r: Okay, so both he and Rob felt bad. So, Robert Peck, in doing that, let us know what Soup was like, as a person. Both sides of him, and he let us know about Rob and their friendship. He developed those characters the way he wrote them. Okay, what about the character that you're developing. Well, what about Natasha, Lisa's [a student] Natasha. In *Natasha and her Run Away Imagination*. How did we get to know her?

my Writing Assignment (continued)

different idea—we always don't think of. Marcie?

good, Marcie. All right now, if you're would you say—

as Mrs. Ruth did because she was

as Mrs. Ruth did because she was

feelings and what—sometimes

Internal Collaborations

In terms of the internal collaborations of readers and authors, both the Atkinson and Prairie teachers emphasized the importance of thinking about the authors and their intentions. The Atkinson teacher said:

I emphasize inferential comprehension—where the author is taking us—also to think about what they are reading, to kind of critically analyze it, and to figure out “well, this might be what the author says but maybe that isn’t really the way I see it.”

Questions the Prairie teacher asked her students included: Why do you think the author wrote the book? What was his purpose? and Do you think the author liked children?

Comments that reflected the Atkinson teacher’s perceptions of the writer-audience collaborations of her students included, “All the time they are doing their writing, they will be conferencing and talking to other kids about it. This helps them get it the way they want it.” The Prairie teacher said, “If they can pretend they are talking as they are writing, just saying something to me only putting it on paper, because most of them can talk a lot.”

Both teachers encouraged character identification, or collaboration, between the reader and the world of the text. The Prairie teacher asks the students what-do-you-think and evaluating questions—“Would you have done this?” or “Would you let [the character] have another turn?” The Atkinson teacher said, “The students really become part of the characters, acting out parts to figure out how a character felt.”

In terms of writer and world-of-text collaborations, the Atkinson teacher said, “They are writing things that are meaningful to them, things they care about, things that are important to them.” She compared writing to thinking out loud—how things fit in, how are they meaningful to you and where do you see them going? The Prairie teacher talked about familiarity of content (“I think they have to have something they are familiar with”); clarity (“Look over your work and reread it and see if there is something that doesn’t make sense”); and neatness (“Often when they are writing they are scratching out and they want [their writing] to look nice”).

Finally, in terms of reader-self and writer-self collaborations, the Atkinson teacher stressed the development of strategies and encouraged self-reflection on their reading and writing processes in conferences and in journals.

When I am conferencing with each child, especially the ones that don’t have many strategies, I can help them and introduce some. . . . When the student finishes reading, I ask, “What did you do differently in reading this book?” Before they start writing, they brainstorm what they are going to do. . . . Some will write different leads, some will think about it over and over in their heads. . . . They decide through conferences or share meetings how they want it. They are constantly rereading it. Eventually they have gone through the process of really evaluating it themselves, getting it the way they want it.

The Prairie teacher gave her students you might ask yourself when you at these questions and be more critical important to “gather their thoughts” need to do a little thinking before writing. It is interesting that whereas the rooms both teachers were concerned with this chapter. What differentiates the related to these collaborations. Then which the classrooms vary: support on process, and sense of students as students are encouraged to make choices their peers while they read and write the product; and consider themselves Prairie classroom children had less books, less interaction with peers, and (neatness, grammar, punctuation) thations or interpretations were mediated next section will enable us to observe terms of student reading and writing

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR CO

In the first two sections of this chapter of reading and writing in two dimensions present a third perspective, that of the To determine how the children read the transcripts of the parallel reading with individual students. Each interaction two sections: (1) an unstructured conversation with us their writing, their peers’ writing, and their basal and, (2) specific each of the aforementioned collaborations. For the Atkinson children we observed their reading and writing journals as children wrote in their journals on a question posed by the teacher, such as “How are reading and writing the same author?” Sometimes they talked about their reaction to a book or piece of writing were having with a piece of writing. Figure 12.2 provides an example of listed all the books they had read or

The Prairie teacher gave her students "suggestions for different kinds of questions you might ask yourself when you are reading a book. They are going to look at these questions and be more critical." She also felt that for some students it was important to "gather their thoughts" before they started to write: "Sometimes we need to do a little thinking before we start writing."

It is interesting that whereas there are marked differences in the two classrooms both teachers were concerned with each of the collaborations discussed in this chapter. What differentiates the two classrooms are some of the dimensions related to these collaborations. There appear to be at least four dimensions upon which the classrooms vary: support for self-initiation, peer interaction, emphasis on process, and sense of students as writers and readers. In the Atkinson School students are encouraged to make choices, seek support from, and offer support to their peers while they read and write; appreciate the process of writing as much as the product; and consider themselves authors and interpreters of texts. In the Prairie classroom children had less opportunity to choose their own topics and books, less interaction with peers, and more emphasis on the product of writing (neatness, grammar, punctuation) than the process. Also, most of their compositions or interpretations were mediated and evaluated only by the teacher. The next section will enable us to observe rather than infer what this might entail in terms of student reading and writing behavior.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE NATURE OF THEIR COLLABORATIONS

In the first two sections of this chapter, we have discussed the collaborative nature of reading and writing in two third-grade classrooms from our perspective as researchers and from the perspective of the classroom teachers. In this section we present a third perspective, that of the students.

To determine how the children perceived these collaborations, we examined the transcripts of the parallel reading and writing interviews we had conducted with individual students. Each interview, one for reading and one for writing, had two sections: (1) an unstructured conversation with the students where they shared with us their writing, their peers' writing, their favorite books, their content-area texts, and their basal and, (2) specific questions on a range of topics including each of the aforementioned collaborations.

For the Atkinson children we had two additional sources of information: (1) their reading and writing journals and (2) their reading and writing folders. Most children wrote in their journals on a daily basis; sometimes it was in response to a question posed by the teacher, such as, "How are you doing on the report?" or "How are reading and writing the same to you?" or "How do you get to be a good author?" Sometimes they talked about who they had worked with, problems they were having with a piece of writing or understanding a book, or they described their reaction to a book or piece that they were writing. The teacher read these and from time to time made comments in the form of a dialogue with the child. Figure 12.2 provides an example of such entries. In their folders, the children listed all the books they had read or pieces they had written, when a piece was

and authors, both the Atkinson

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started and finished, and whether or not they had abandoned it. They also listed problems they had had, new things they had learned, who they had collaborated with (such as coreading and coauthoring), and who they had conferred with about their reading or their writing.

In analyzing the children's perception, we first determined what constituted reliable evidence for the existence of a collaboration. To determine if a child was involved in an internal collaboration (e.g., projection into the world of the text) we considered their responses during the unstructured conversation in conjunction with their answers to specific questions. For the Atkinson children we also searched through their journals and folders for corroborating comments. For example, one child answered "yes, always," to the question, "As I read, I feel as if I am one of the characters or people in the story," but this behavior was not supported by her answers to other pertinent questions or by her general comments. Therefore, we did not consider her answer as evidence that she was involved in this internal collaboration. We felt that if children had truly acquired a strategy their use of it would be selective and evidence for the existence of it would appear in several areas of the interviews. Another child responded "sometimes" to this same question. But in one journal entry he wrote, "The book I'm reading, *The Lions, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, has a lot of feelings in it. I could see things. It's like I was in it." Also, in the interview he discussed books where he did project and ones where he did not. For this particular child we decided that there was quite strong evidence that he was involved in an internal collaboration with the world of the text as he read.

It should also be noted that we have only included the comments from one of the four groups of students interviewed in each school—those students identified as good readers and good writers. We have studied these children first to establish what the most developed level of children's collaborations are in these classes. It should also be noted that there were no differences among schools in the performance of these students on the same standardized reading achievement tests.

Our discussion of the students' perceptions are presented in terms of the previously discussed external internal collaborations. We included comments from four children: Shelley and Mike, who are students at Prairie School and Lisa and Chris, who are students at Atkinson.

External Collaborations

At Prairie School, while there were fewer formalized opportunities for readers and writers to share their work than there were at Atkinson, the children did share. Furthermore, they said that they enjoyed doing it and that it was helpful to them. As Shelley, one of the students at Prairie School, stated, "I like to ask people to read my writing; I ask them if they like it—I want to get their opinion. I usually give it to Jennifer, because she sits next to me." Or, as Mike, who liked to share but was quite selective, stated, "Sometimes I give it to my family or someone, [sometimes] I keep it a secret—some friends might not like it."

While writing is the su-
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While writing is the subject of most of the Prairie students' comments about sharing, some remarks were offered about their interactions with others about reading. As Shelly suggested, she liked to talk to other people about books that she reads, but she did not do it very often. She also talked to peers when she was selecting a book: "I like to read what my best friend reads—especially Judy Blume." Using peers to advise on topic or book selection was more prevalent in reading than writing. The teacher usually gave the writing assignments and also most of the feedback students received. Shelley and Mike both mentioned the teacher as the primary person who provided feedback on their writing. This was usually in the form of an overall reaction, evaluative comment (such as "very good work") or comments about spelling and punctuation.

At Atkinson the class day was organized so that the children had time set aside for both large- and small-group meetings. The children also had more freedom of choice of assignments in both reading and writing. This structuring of class time had a direct effect on the external communicative context for these children. For example, Chris thoroughly enjoyed these share and conference times, for both reading and writing. He liked the sense of satisfaction—the entertainment value—as well as the feedback his peers give him. In the interview he said, "You know how we were talking about changing this part down here about the minisub? Well, I wouldn't have noticed that if they hadn't told me at share. I would have just went on with the book. They ask a lot of questions." He also said, "When I have a problem—it's that I mostly get stuck I don't know what to put next—so I go conference with somebody to see what they think; we try it out." Similarly, Lisa said that "sharing always helps me improve my writing. There are lots of people there asking questions and telling me if it's good or not . . . if they don't understand a part I can change it."

As at Prairie, the children at Atkinson acted as advisors for each other when they were selecting books to read and also topics to write about. They publish a book four times a year called *Room 5 Celebrates Reading*, which contains book reviews they have written. During the interviews several children talked about reading their friends' reviews and using this information when choosing a book to read. Sometimes the children asked the teacher for advice about a book or topic, and the teacher sometimes gave them suggestions in her comments to them in their journals.

The children at Atkinson saw themselves as authors—not quite as skilled as published authors—their term for commercial authors—but authors nonetheless. Readers in this classroom talked to the author of a book and asked questions or gave comments. Chris mentioned that he had read a friend's book at home "and it [said] both my grandmothers came for Christmas Eve. . . . I asked her [fill, the author] on the phone." Lisa also commented that she will go talk to class authors, "sometimes" I think about why he or she wanted to write the book . . . sometimes, if the author is in the room, I ask why." The Prairie school children did not talk about being authors talking to authors. Shelley mentioned once in her reading interview that she really liked reading her best friend's story about friends and she told her so. She also said,

they had abandoned it. They also listed and who they had collaborated with

we first determined what constituted laboration. To determine if a child was projection into the world of the text) we structured conversation in conjunction. For the Atkinson children we also letters for corroborating comments. For to the question, "As I read, I feel as if I story," but this behavior was not supported as evidence that she was involved in children had truly acquired a strategy for the existence of it would appear a child responded "sometimes" to this he wrote, "The book I'm reading, *The* lot of feelings in it. I could see things. we discussed books where he did project regular child we decided that there was in an internal collaboration with the

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children at both schools talked about being able to "make pictures in their heads" while reading or writing and often feeling like one of the characters. Also, they said at times they felt like observers as if they were there in the story, able to see what was happening, but not actually part of it.

Shelley, from Prairie, commented:

Sometimes when I read a page I can picture, get a picture in my mind and figure out what they are doing, and what is going to happen. I can't do it when I am reading my science or reading book [her basal], only in library books.

Mike, from Prairie, said, "When I am writing a story I feel that I am the main character and I am doing a lot of the things—especially in mysteries." Chris made a very similar comment and then discussed how he tried to make it easier for his readers to be able to picture:

Well, on the second page it says, "Brad Wilson was walking down a dirt road," and they have a dirt road in their mind, but when I say "which is really a mud road because of a good day's rain," they have a clue and they keep it in their heads. [This is from his mystery, *Brad Wilson, Undercover Detective*.]

Lisa said that it is important in "both reading and writing . . . to make pictures in my mind." With her writing she used this to monitor her work to see if it was good or not. If she can't picture it, then she feels it was not well written. It is interesting that all of the children mentioned that sometimes the pictures in a book got in their way—they preferred to create their own. Lisa said, "Sometimes I think about why they did a picture that doesn't match with the words."

A third type of internal collaboration is when readers or writers interact with themselves, to monitor or plan or evaluate; that is, to serve as their own audience. Shelley talked about being her own audience: "Sometimes I imagine that I am the one who is going to read it, and I think about what other people would think." When it came to monitoring her writing she said that she can find some problems, but she also said that she expects her teacher to "pick up" on her problems and then, point them out to her. "If I don't catch it Mrs. Black will, and then she'll tell me to figure out how to fix it."

Mike discussed being able to monitor his reading without any problems, "Most of the time [I can tell when something I've read doesn't make sense]. Sometimes when I read a book, I [find] a sentence I think doesn't make sense and then if I read it a couple of times more I can figure out how it makes sense." Nevertheless, he often had either his mother or his teacher, and occasionally both, go over his written work to look for mistakes.

The Atkinson children also discussed monitoring and evaluating their reading and writing. But it is very interesting to see how they also used their peers and teachers during conferences and share meetings as monitors and evaluators (e.g., Chris's and Lisa's earlier comments about share meetings in the external section illustrate how peers ask questions, tell them where more information is needed,

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etc). In reading, Chris commented that "if you are in a confusing part of a book and rereading doesn't help, I would go talk to someone who already read it and liked it."

These children also talked about serving as their own audience for their writing; for example, Lisa says, "I read my work as another person, I like to have a hint of what the other people may say about it."

Taken together the comments from the four students show that they are involved in a variety of reader-writer collaborations. Their statements serve as validation that the collaborations we have defined are not just figments of researchers' or teachers' imaginations, but that they do exist in varying degrees in the two third-grades that we studied. If you recall, these children were all considered good readers and good writers; it will be interesting to see, as we continue examining our data, the levels of involvement for children with less well-developed abilities. The children's comments also suggest that although our categories are useful labels, they must not be thought of as discrete. The collaborations within which readers and writers engage are highly interrelated.

We are also tempted to posit support for the suggestion that differences in the two classrooms influence the nature of the collaborations within which these young readers and writers reside. For example, at Atkinson the large- and small-group situations provide opportunities for interactions between actual authors and readers that are not present at Prairie School. What appears to emerge in conjunction with these collaborations are opportunities for children to share their ideas, strategies, and understandings; and to develop, fine-tune, and expand selected monitoring abilities, including a fuller sense of audience.

FINAL DISCUSSION

Our argument throughout this chapter has been that we need an expanded theory of reading-writing relationships—a theory which welds thought processes and reading-writing outcomes to the transactions that occur as readers and writers collaborate. Our data clearly establish this collaborative phenomena and take us a step closer to appreciating how social negotiations pervade reading-writing strategies. We have suggested, for example, that young readers' or writers' external collaborations (e.g., with peers) may contribute to how they evaluate their own comprehension and compositions, including their involvement with the text, strategic behavior, and sense of relationship to a counterpart—the author or reader. We believe our data supports this argument.

We have also tried to illustrate the ways in which different classroom structures and rules constrain or allow for various collaborative experiences of the participants.

From a broader perspective, we would like our data to be interpreted as contributing to the rudiments of a sociocognitive theory of reading and writing—a theory that would have at its core the premise that reading and writing are activities of both cognition and social negotiation. Such a theory, borrowing from such

disparate fields as literary theory, instructional theory would have

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disparate fields as literary theory, social psychology, cognitive development, and instructional theory would have as its goal ways of assessing the relationships between social interaction, learning, and performance.

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