After Reading Recovery: Collective Case Studies of the Writing Development of Former Reading Recovery Students in Grade Two

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Curriculum Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
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Abstract

This qualitative collective case study explored the written language development of four grade two students who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery. The focus was children writing in classrooms — the ways in which their literacy behaviours continued to develop, and the ways in which the classroom context influenced development.

The study was positioned within a sociocultural framework, acknowledging the importance of social interaction as a context for learning and development (Vygotsky, 1978). Literacy behaviours observed during the act of writing were interpreted from a literacy processing view of progress (Clay, 2001).

What emerged from the data were a number of observable behaviours which showed how each student went about communicating in written language. Analyses of the type and frequency of each behaviour revealed a menu of actions that the students drew on in individual ways. These actions were interpreted as composing, constructing and monitoring actions, which were further described as internal resources within the child’s control and external resources coming from the social context of the classroom.

Students also had unique profiles for applying directional and spatial rules, letter, word and sentence knowledge, and punctuation, with movement toward conventional forms of meaningful communication in written language.
Students also drew on external resources within the classroom environment — classroom materials, classmates, classroom volunteers or assistants, and their teacher. Teachers influenced writing development through personalized learning experiences. Interactions facilitated a next step, focused attention, and provided the student with feedback. Knowledge of case study students as developing writers and the specific expectations of the curriculum for grade two students influenced the content of teacher and student interactions.

Although not meeting all of the specific expectations for writing, the case study students were making progress in the classroom, and interviews revealed their sense of themselves as writers intertwined with their identity as learners.
Acknowledgements

I begin by thanking Marie M. Clay who suggested researching changes beyond discontinuing from Reading Recovery that inspired this research.

Thank you to my former principal Sharon Euler who posed a question that led me to put the thought of pursuing a PhD into words, and to the other coffee group friends: Karen Dance, Angie Harrison and Pat Whitehouse who stimulated my thinking from many conversations about the development of young children.

Thank you to my supervisor, Shelley Stagg Peterson, for sharing her deep knowledge of children’s writing development that influenced and inspired this research, and for the excellent feedback that shaped it. I will remain sincerely grateful for being Shelley’s student.

Thank you to my committee members, Clare Kosnik and Rhonda Martinussen for their helpful feedback and suggestions for further writing from this research.

Thank you to my OISE writing group members: Eveline Houtman, Julie Middleton, and Elizabeth Rosales who have helped me stay connected to the CTL community and for their helpful feedback on various drafts; also, Lena Glaes-Coutts and Rebecca Quintana who contributed to my writing at points along the way.

I acknowledge with love and gratitude my mother, Hedy Van Dyke, who supported my academic pursuits and would have cheered me on this journey, and my father, Sidney Van Dyke, who was there for only part of the PhD journey.

Finally, thank you, with love, to my husband Albert Wierenga for his unwavering support of this and all of my work, and to my family: Mikhail Wierenga, Becky Thomas Kahn, Maya Jane Wierenga Kahn, and Todd Wierenga for the inspiration that comes from being a mother and grandmother.
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1. Introduction to the Study

This study investigates the writing development of children in grade two who reached grade level reading and writing expectations with the support of Reading Recovery tuition. These children were the lowest achieving in literacy in their grade one year, and left Reading Recovery achieving in the average range. This chapter begins with a description of Reading Recovery. It explains how students are selected for Reading Recovery, the five possible outcomes of the intervention, and the goal of developing the foundation for a self-extending process system in subsequent years. It positions the study within a body of research on Reading Recovery, presents a review of the literature on sustained gains, and concludes with recommendations for further research in that area.

1.1. Reading Recovery: A Description

Reading Recovery is an early literacy intervention that is supplementary to grade one classroom instruction. Children meet daily and individually for 30 minutes with a Reading Recovery teacher for about 12 to 20 weeks. The intervention is offered in grade one in order to reduce the incidence of reading difficulties in subsequent years. Reading Recovery was developed by Dr. Marie M. Clay, a developmental psychologist, and first trialled in New Zealand elementary schools in 1978 (Clay, 2009). The Reading Recovery development project asked the question, “How many children given a quality intervention early in their schooling could achieve and maintain normal levels of progress?” (Clay, 2013, p. 145). Specifically, for what percentage of children having reading difficulties was it a question of never having started with appropriate learning patterns? (Clay, 2013)

Currently, Reading Recovery is implemented in schools in Australia, Bermuda, Canada, Cayman Islands, Denmark, England, Jersey, the Republic of Ireland, Malta, New Zealand, and the United States. It was designed with enough flexibility to work in schools of varying size, curricula emphasis, and community characteristics. However, good quality implementation requires a commitment by school districts to Reading Recovery standards and guidelines (Clay, 2001) and adherence to its trademark. It also requires a commitment to supporting three levels of professional expertise: teachers, teacher leaders who train teachers, and trainers who train teacher
leaders. My expertise and perspective are as a Reading Recovery trainer who has worked at all three levels of expertise in Ontario, Canada.

A quality implementation of Reading Recovery provides several dimensions of assistance for grade one children supplementary to the classroom programme.

- One-to-one instruction allowing the teacher to design a series of lessons starting from a child’s literacy knowledge, and not from where the curriculum places children of that age or grade level,

- Daily instruction increasing the power of the intervention,

- An emphasis on independent responding. Teachers never do for the child that which the child can be taught to do for him or herself (Clay, 2013).

Reading Recovery can be described as clinical because its highly trained teachers deliver a different series of lessons to different children according to their unique profile of strengths and learning needs (Clay, 2001). One assumption behind its design is that literacy difficulties arise for many different reasons. As Clay (2005a) explains, “The low level of success in older remedial programmes probably occurred because what is difficult about literacy learning differs markedly from child to child” (p. 17). Consequently, Clay (2005a) argues that an early literacy intervention that holds prevention as a central concept “must address the extremes of variability that could affect any child learning to read or write” (p. 4).

1.2. Selecting Children for Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery’s selection process is inclusive and based on achievement criteria only. Children are selected for Reading Recovery because they are the lowest achieving in their grade one cohort as identified by the classroom teacher and confirmed by their performance on the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013). The Observation Survey consists of the six tasks designed for systematic observation of young children as they learn to read and write:

1. **Concepts About Print** – A child shows what he or she knows about the way language is presented in print (e.g. orientation, directionality, and concept of letter and word) using a specially designed book;
2. Running Records – A systematic observational record of a child’s reading of continuous text using standard conventions for recording reading behaviour (e.g. substitution, insertion, and repetition);
3. Letter Identification – An alphabet task of 26 upper and lowercase letters and two common ways of writing letters a and g;
4. Word Reading – A sample of 15 words from the 45 most frequently occurring words in the Ready to Read early reading series;
5. Writing Vocabulary – A 10-minute timed task whereby a child is invited to write as many words as he or she can; and
6. Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words – A sentence dictation task calling on a child to listen to the sounds in words in sequence and find letters to represent those sounds.

The Observation Survey has the highest possible rating on all five technical standards of the National Centre for Response to Intervention, the United States Department of Education’s Office of Special Education. Those standards are classification accuracy, generalizability, reliability, validity, and disaggregated reliability, validity and accuracy for subgroups (D’Agostino, 2012). To ensure standardized administration, Reading Recovery teachers are trained in administering, scoring and interpreting the results in reliable ways (Clay, 2013). At the end of a child’s series of Reading Recovery lessons the Observation Survey is re-administered by a teacher other than the one who worked with the child.

1.3. Five Possible Outcomes

All Canadian school districts that implement Reading Recovery report annually to the Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery (CIRR) on five possible outcomes for children who receive Reading Recovery. These outcomes are 1) Accelerated Progress, 2) Substantial Progress, 3) Limited Progress, 4) Moved, and 5) Progressing but Unable to Continue (Tolentino & Matczuk, 2017). Children who had the opportunity to complete their series of lessons are categorized as having made accelerated progress if their classroom progress and reassessment results indicate that they have developed an effective reading and writing processing system. The expectation is that they will be able to benefit from classroom instruction without the need for further one-to-one tutoring. Children are categorized as having made substantial progress if they have had a
full series of lessons, have made progress, but will require some extra support in order to continue to develop an effective processing system in literacy. Children categorized as having made limited progress are recommended for further evaluation and possibly a longer term of specialist support in order to continue to make progress in literacy. Children who left a school before completing a full lesson series are categorized as moved. Children may be categorized as progressing but unable to continue for a number of different reasons. These reasons vary, but include situations where Reading Recovery may no longer have been available at their school, a Reading Recovery teacher may not have been available, a child may have been chronically absent, extreme social/emotional issues may have been a problem, or some other reason (Tolentino & Matczuk, 2017).

In the 2016 2017 school-year the CIRR reported on the outcomes for 5,285 children. From that total number 1,378 children will complete their lesson series in the 2017 2018 school year. For the remainder of the children,
• 53.8% made accelerated progress,
• 13.6% made substantial progress,
• 22.1% made limited progress,
• 5.3% moved during their series of lessons and were not able to complete the intervention, and
• 5.2% were progressing but unable continue for varying reasons. (Tolentino & Matczuk, 2017).

The short-term duration of an intervention is a characteristic that distinguishes it from remediation approaches within special education services. In Canada, a series of Reading Recovery lessons averages around 20 weeks of a school year or less. In 2016 and 2017, the average weeks of participation for grade one children who had made accelerated progress were 16.8. The average weeks of participation for children who made substantial progress were 21.2 and the average weeks of participation for children who made limited progress were 20.7 (Tolentino & Matczuk, 2017).

Reading Recovery claims that there are two positive outcomes. The first positive outcome is when children make accelerated progress, are successfully brought to grade level and individual lessons are discontinued. The expectation is that the intervention has put these children back on track for becoming silent readers and competent writers with self-extending processing systems
during the next two years at school with good classroom instruction and moderate personal motivation (Clay, 2005a). The second positive outcome is for the children who made substantial progress but still require extra support within a classroom setting, and the children who made limited progress and may be recommended for further assessment, longer-term assistance, and specialist help (Clay, 2013). Individual instruction provides information in the form of diagnostic teaching that adds to any growth plan, academic, or psychological assessment data that helps tailor a child’s educational needs.

1.4. The Foundations of a Self-Extending System

In approximately 20 weeks of one to one instruction that is supplementary to classroom literacy instruction, the goals of the intervention are to temporarily accelerate the pace of learning, to permanently lift the levels of achievement, and to build a strong foundation for subsequent literacy learning for the majority of children (Clay, 2001). This strong foundation can be conceptualized as a self-extending system. According to Clay’s theory (2005a), children on their way to proficient reading are developing this strong foundation and have continual access to new learning:

Young constructive readers and writers work at problem-solving sentences and messages, choose between alternatives, read and write sentences, work on word after word, with the flexibility to change responses rapidly at any point. As they attend to several different kinds of knowledge, they are searching, selecting, rejecting, self-monitoring, and self-correcting. (p. 3)

A self-extending system of literacy behaviours can be conceptualized as an end-point of early literacy instruction. The now competent reader learns more about reading and writing by engaging in these activities. When text is at an appropriate level, children bring their knowledge of oral and written language and their general knowledge to reading. They use a set of operations or strategic “in the head” activities to solve the new or more difficult parts. Clay (2013) uses the terms operations or strategic activities to identify the “mental activities initiated by the child to problem-solve the puzzle of getting the messages from a text, or putting messages into text” (p. 34). Children engaging in problem-solving a difficult bit while reading or writing draw on familiar information and actions. “Their processing is progressive and accumulative” (Clay, 2013, p. 34).
As children who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery enter grade two they should be able to reach out to read more complex texts and write longer and more involved messages with increasing speed and fluency on longer stretches of meaning, less familiar language, and less predictable texts. It is these children, the accelerated progress group who were the focus of this study.

1.5. Purpose Statement and Research Questions

New Zealand follow up studies show that some children who had made accelerated progress during Reading Recovery make slow progress for the first year after Reading Recovery, and then continue to make progress the following year (Clay, 2005a). Other children began to lag in progress after two years. As Clay (2001) explains,

> It is not difficult to find evidence in existing research for this conclusion: Reading Recovery children who have been successful in Reading Recovery make variable progress in the subsequent school year in classrooms and then annually show more and more consistent progress as they move up through their school programmes. The tentativeness of the early success and the consistency of the later progress are trends to be carefully documented and explained. (p. 280)

I investigated what Clay (2001) described as the tentativeness or fragility of the early success and the variable progress of the Reading Recovery students who made accelerated progress and are now in grade two classroom programmes.

Most Reading Recovery students complete their series of lessons during the middle or at the end of their grade one year. In Canada, a small percentage of children who enter Reading Recovery near the end of their grade one school year are carried over into their grade two year, completing their lessons in the fall of their grade two year. Reading Recovery teachers are expected to monitor the children who made accelerated progress through to the end of grade three. Monitoring begins with fortnightly running records on a child’s current classroom text and a review of recent writing. If the transition from Reading Recovery has gone well, the Reading Recovery teacher shifts to monthly monitoring. (New Zealand Reading Recovery 2015). The Reading Recovery school team is expected to establish a register and schedule for monitoring children who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery and a process for identifying and addressing the needs of any child whose progress has slowed. In Canada, a school team may
include the Reading Recovery teacher, the grade one and two classroom teachers, the special education teacher, and the principal. Annual monitoring in grades two and three is expected to provide information on the on-going effectiveness of Reading Recovery in the school, the support provided by the classroom programmes, and the needs of particular children (New Zealand Reading Recovery, 2010).

The monitoring of Reading Recovery children who made accelerated progress is managed at the school level in order to accommodate differences in classroom programmes. However, there is no research on what the continued progress of these students looks like, particularly in writing. Two questions guided this research:

1. In what ways do the literacy behaviours of children who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery continue to develop while creating written text in grade two classrooms?

2. In what ways does the classroom context influence the written language development of former Reading Recovery students in grade two classrooms who made accelerated progress?

In this research study the phrase written language accounts for the graphic representations of language by means of a writing system and the discourse modes and registers that characterize the written modality (Tolchinsky, 2016).

1.6. Evaluating Sustained Gains in Grade Two and Beyond

Accelerated progress during Reading Recovery and sustained progress thereafter are the expectations of most children in Reading Recovery. Therefore, it is important to know how the children are managing, or coping with, the written language expectations in grade two classrooms and if their progress is characteristic of normal development. However, requests by school districts for follow-up studies bypass these questions, calling instead for information on how former Reading Recovery students do on province or state standardized assessments.

1.6.1. The Ontario Context

Individual school districts design their own follow up studies to explore the longer-term benefits of Reading Recovery (Askew & Frasier, 1994; Schmitt, Askew, Fountas, Lyons, Pinnell, 2005).
In the Ontario context, school districts with Reading Recovery implementations commonly measure sustained progress by disaggregating former Reading Recovery students on the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments of reading and writing for end of grade three and end of grade six. EQAO reports student outcomes in four levels of achievement. Level three is achievement at provincial standard, levels one and two are below provincial standard, and level four is achievement above standard (EQAO Provincial Report, 2012/2013).

The EQAO results in reading and writing from five school districts were voluntarily reported to the Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery. Three of the five school districts reported on all of the grade three students who received Reading Recovery – those who made accelerated, substantial or limited progress. In all three districts the majority of students were below the provincial standard in reading. Further analysis shows the greatest percentage of those students in level two followed by level three. In writing, the majority of students in two districts were at or above the provincial standard.

Two school districts reported on the grade three students who made accelerated progress only. Results for these school districts also show the majority of students did not meet provincial standard. However, with this group of students, the percentage who met provincial standard is greater than in districts that reported on all students regardless of outcome. In writing, the majority of students were at or above the provincial standard.

Three school districts also reported on grade six EQAO results in reading and writing – two districts on all students who received Reading Recovery and one district on only students who made accelerated progress. In all three districts the majority of students met or exceeded the provincial standard in reading and writing with the most noticeable improvement in reading. Although there are many variables contributing to student achievement beyond Reading Recovery, the EQAO results indicate that over time the majority of students are benefitting from regular classroom instruction, which is the intent of the intervention. EQAO results also show that former Reading Recovery students tend to lag in the first two years after Reading Recovery. This warrants closer study.
1.6.2. The International Context

In published research studies on sustained gains in the international context, data on former Reading Recovery students draws from state and national assessments (D’Agostino & Murphy, 2004; Gapp, Zalud, & Pietrzak, 2009; Hurry & Holliman, 2009; Jesson & Limbrick, 2014; May, Sirinides, Gray, & Goldsworthy, 2016; Rowe, 1995) and an international assessment (Chapman & Tunmer, 2015; Tunmer, Chapman, Greaney, Prochnow, & Arrow, 2011). Other methods of data collection include teacher administered standardized assessments such as the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Level Four (Briggs & Young 2003), Clay’s (2013) Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, and DeFord’s Dictation and Spelling Task (Askew & Frasier, 1994).

In American studies investigating sustained gains, accountability for the financial investment in Reading Recovery (Briggs & Young, 2003; Gapp, Zalud, & Pietrzak, 2009) and the impact on student learning (May, et al., 2016) provide a rationale for the research. In other international implementations, the focus is on the longer-term effects of early intervention (Chapman & Tunmer, 2015; Hurry & Holliman, 2009), maintenance of reading achievement (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014; Rowe, 1995), and school-based factors associated with sustainability (Jesson & Limbrick, 2014).

All of the studies reviewed used a comparison group design. In studies comparing former Reading Recovery students with the same year lowest achieving students in schools that did not implement Reading Recovery, results show a significant difference between the former Reading Recovery students and the comparison group on all measures (Briggs & Young, 2003; D’Agostino & Murphy, 2004; Hurry & Holliman, 2009). A study using a randomized control trial design revealed the immediate impact to be medium to large across all measures (May, et al., 2016). From a regression discontinuity study of the long-term effects of Reading Recovery, the authors concluded that the data were too sparse to produce a conclusive finding (May, et al., 2016). In studies comparing former Reading Recovery students with their total grade cohort, the findings are mixed. Askew and Frasier (1994) found that successfully discontinued students (those who made accelerated progress) performed as well as their grade two peers, while Jesson and Limbrick (2014) reported that only 60% of successfully discontinued students in grades three to five were within average mean reading achievement range. Rowe (1995) and Chapman
& Tunmer (2015) compare similar grade level cohorts of former Reading Recovery students with their non-Reading Recovery peers. Results for the majority of former Reading Recovery students on the Victoria (Australia) Reading Profiles Band were within the average band although slightly lower than their peers (Rowe, 1995). When three cohorts of former Reading Recovery students are compared, the largest range in the achievement distribution is found in the grade two group. Former New Zealand Reading Recovery students (identified by parent questionnaire) in all outcome categories, are compared with students who had not received any early literacy intervention on the 2011 Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) for nine-year-old children (Chapman & Tunmer, 2015; Tunmer et al., 2011). A 75-point difference between the mean scores of the two groups is equal to a negative effect size of -0.94. The actual effect size is -0.34, slightly below the national average, when the former Reading Recovery group is compared with the overall group (Schwartz, 2015).

In summary, findings on studies of the sustained gains of Reading Recovery students who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery are mixed. Most studies show that literacy gains are sustained at least a year or more after receiving Reading Recovery (Askew & Frasier, 1994; Briggs & Young, 2003; D’Agostino & Murphy, 2004; Gapp et al., 2009; Hurry & Holliman, 2009; May, et al., 2016; Rowe, 1995). Jesson & Limbrick (2014) conclude that although Reading Recovery’s impact in the short term is unequivocal, for some students who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery, the early intervention alone may not have been sufficient in subsequent years. The authors recommend that careful, meticulous and on-going monitoring of students after Reading Recovery would identify problems with text-processing strategies, motivation and engagement. This could be the basis for further support, whatever the cause of difficulty.

1.7. Recommendations or Further Research

Recommendations for further research from other reviewed studies align with those of Jesson & Limbrick (2014). Gapp et al. (2009) suggest that “additional research may be needed to identify classroom actions following end of intervention decisions that promote or hinder reading achievement” (p. 17). Askew and Frasier (1994) note that individual data provide insights that are lost in aggregated data. They recommend further research that includes some standardized
measures as well as some classroom observation of case studies to explore the behaviour of children who made accelerated progress during Reading Recovery. It was the intent of this study to investigate the written language development of these students in grade two classroom literacy programmes and what can be learned about how gains are sustained from classroom observation.
2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the questions that guide this study:

1. In what ways does the literacy behaviour of former Reading Recovery students who made accelerated progress continue to develop while creating written text in grade two classrooms?

2. In what ways does the classroom context influence the written language development of former Reading Recovery students in grade two classrooms who made accelerated progress?

The chapter consists of four sections and a summary. Section one places a study of children’s written language development within a sociocultural theoretical framework. Section two reviews the emergent literacy research on crucial foundational learning about written language. Section three describes the transition that children need to make from a literacy processing theoretical perspective when Reading Recovery support is withdrawn. Section four provides a synthesis of studies of children’s writing in Reading Recovery settings and in grade two classrooms.

2.2. A Sociocultural Framework for Written Language Development

A sociocultural framework provides a way of explaining the development of written language. A sociocultural view on learning and development refers to the specific and original theoretical views of Vygotsky (1978) and elaboration of those views (Bazerman, 2016; Beach, Newell, & VanDerHeide, 2016; Cole & Scribner, 1978; Damianova & Sullivan, 2011; John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978; Elsasser & John-Steiner, 1977; John-Steiner, Panofsky, & Smith, 1994; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Unrau & Alvermann, 2013) on the importance of social interaction as a context for learning and development.

2.2.1. A General Explanation of Sociocultural Theory

A sociocultural approach to development focuses on the historically shaped and culturally transmitted psychology of human beings (Cole et al., 1978; Vygotsky, 1978). A foundational hypothesis is that higher mental functions, such as language, do not come about from maturation...
alone. Rather, they are formed through social interaction and transmitted through culture (Cole, et al., 1978; Damianova & Sullivan, 2011). Although sociocultural theory sees children as active participants in their own learning, that learning occurs within the social contexts of family and community. (Cole, et al., 1978; Karpov, 2003). Therefore, to understand a child’s cognitive development one must understand the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the child’s experiences (Beach, et al., 2016; Unrau & Alvermann, 2013). If higher order functions develop out of social interaction, then they are best studied in a child’s social world. For this study, the development of written language in individual children is best understood by studying the social interaction of teaching and learning in the context of the classroom (Bazerman, 2016; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

Sociocultural theorists conceptualize the development of human behaviour as a dialectical rather than a linear process of change over time, whereby previously separate and rudimentary functions are integrated into new and more complex learning systems (Beach, et al., 2016; Cole, et al., 1978; Damianova & Sullivan, 2011). To use a metaphor, “higher psychological functions are not superimposed as a second story over elementary processes; they represent new psychological systems” (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978, p. 124). Vygotsky (1978) explains this view of development as follows:

Our concept of development implies a rejection of the frequently held view that cognitive development results in the gradual accumulation of separate changes. We believe that child development is a complex dialectical process characterized by periodicity, unevenness in the development of different functions, metamorphosis or qualitative transformations of one form into another, intertwining of external and internal factors, and adaptive processes which overcome impediments that the child encounters. (p. 73)

In addition, if one holds the view that development takes place in socially and culturally patterned contexts, then context becomes an important research variable (Bazerman, 2016; John-Steiner et al., 1994).
2.2.2. A Sociocultural Explanation of the Relationship Between Learning and Development

A sociocultural explanation of the relationship between learning and development has its origins in Vygotsky’s (1978) theory on two developmental levels: the zone of proximal development and the zone of actual development. Neo-Vygotskian discussions of this relationship propose a theory of assisted performance in which learning and development occur in interactional contexts (Karpov, 2003; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Wood, 1998).

Vygotsky (1978) describes the zone of actual development as, “the level of development of a child’s mental functions that has been established as a result of certain already completed developmental cycles” (p. 85). This level of mental development relates to what children can do independently. Vygotsky (1978) describes the zone of proximal development as, “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined by problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). A further proposition is that the creation of a zone of proximal development (ZPD) is an essential feature of learning. This recognizes instruction to be at the heart of development, where a child’s potential is often realized through interactions with more knowledgeable others:

Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized they become part of the child’s independent developmental achievement. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90)

2.2.3. Four Stages of the Zone of Proximal Development

In neo-Vygotskian discussions of the zone of proximal development there is no single zone for each individual. Rather, for any domain or skill, such as written language, a zone of proximal development can be created. These discussions also distinguish the proximal zone from the actual zone by contrasting assisted and unassisted performance with four stages of the ZPD (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

1. Performance is assisted by more capable others
In this stage, a child may have a very limited understanding of a situation or task or how the parts of a task relate to the whole. Expert assistance supports engaging with the task in all its complexity rather than with isolated parts. For this type of assistance, the metaphor of *scaffolding* (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), describes the type of teacher and student interactions around text reading and message writing that occur in Reading Recovery lessons. The developmental goal of the first stage is to move from other-regulated to self-regulated performance.

2. *Performance is assisted by the self*

At this stage of performance, although a child carries out a task without assistance, performance is neither fully developed nor automatized. Within neo-Vygotskian theory, this stage relates to the microgenesis of a particular performance capacity, such as writing a message. Control of a task or function passes from expert to novice, but control of the task or function requires self-directed speech, which in turn provides self-guidance that has its origins in earlier social experiences. For example, a child might verbalize to put a space between words when starting a new word.

3. *Performance is developed, automatized and fossilized*

When performance is developed there is no evidence of overt self-directing guidance. For example, in writing a message there is no overt self-prompting, and production is fluent. Expert assistance at this stage is unnecessary and may even disrupt or interfere with the smooth operation of performance.

4. *De-automatization of performance leads to recursion back through the zone of proximal development*

De-automatization is when something under independent control is no longer so. This may be due to changes in the conditions of learning, (e.g., environmental changes, stress or trauma). There is also a normal aspect to de-automatization when “enhancement, improvement, and maintenance of performance provide a recurrent cycle of self-assistance to other assistance” (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, p. 39). For example, a child may be introduced to a new genre in reading or writing.

From a sociocultural perspective, learning and development are interrelated with learning preceding development (Vygotsky, 1978; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Learning results in mental development, triggering developmental processes that would not have occurred without learning.
experiences. By implication, if learning experiences are to be matched with a child’s developmental level, then effective learning experiences begin at the frontier of a child’s development where expert assistance is required. Furthermore, children’s development reflects their cultural experiences and accessibility to the more expert members in their social and cultural world who already practise specific areas of knowledge (Bazerman, 2016; Wood, 1998).

2.2.4. Processes of Internalization

Within a sociocultural framework for explaining changes in written language development, the construct of internalization links the external (the social and cultural aspects of learning and development) with the internal (the psychological aspects) through a series of transformations (Beach, et al., 2016; Damianova & Sullivan, 2011; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978). This series of transformations begin socially on an external plane in what Vygotsky (1978) calls an interpersonal process. More capable others assist and regulate a child’s performance, assuming as many of the strategic functions as are necessary to carry on (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988), and make it possible for the child to engage in levels of the activity that could not be managed alone. Thus, the means toward internalization are social interaction and cooperative activity.

As what occurred on an external plane is internalized, its structure and function are transformed into intrapersonal processes, that being the unique thought processes of the individual (Damianova & Sullivan, 2011; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; van Oers, 2011). From this conceptualization of development, a child is not a passive recipient of adult assistance. One neo-Vygotskian explanation of the concept of internalization uses the term guided reinvention, capturing both the social and the cognitive aspects of learning and emphasizing that until internalization occurs, performance must be assisted (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Applying processes of internalization to written language development, if knowledge is not internalized for individual use, it cannot contribute to subsequent mental development in the absence of expert assistance (Unrau & Alderman, 2013). In relation to children who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery but whose progress may lag in grade two classrooms, conceptualizing prerequisites to internalization is helpful. A possible explanation could be that Reading Recovery
teacher assistance was withdrawn before crucial processes were internalized, thereby stalling progress once the assistance was withdrawn.

2.2.5. Language Learning and Development

A sociocultural view on how and why children learn language begins with a focus on how language is learned in the natural environment of home, community and culture. The zone of proximal development is in operation as language is usually not taught intentionally in these natural speech communities. Instead, caregivers are most concerned with understanding a child and tailoring their responses to the child’s level so that dialogue is maintained. Adults collaborate with children to help them communicate, taking major responsibility for working out what a young child aims to communicate (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Wood, 1998). Social interactions, such as talking to, informing, explaining, being talked to, being informed, and having things explained, structure a child’s immediate activities and help form the very processes of reasoning and learning (Wood, 1998). What occurs on a social plane in dialogue with others moves over time to become mental activity in which the child engages in dialogue with him or herself. Furthermore, the child learns how to regulate his or her own mental activities by internalizing the instructional process itself (Wood, 1998). For example, a child might ask herself a series of prompting questions to direct her search for a missing item, an internal process which in earlier days would have been externally guided by the prompting questions of a caregiver.

Consideration of a child’s perspective on being a language user highlights the functional aspects of language within a sociocultural framework for language development. For the child, vocabulary learning is not about accumulating words but about acquiring concepts for which the words stand. For example, when a child sees his or her shadow for the first time the caregiver will offer not only the word shadow but rich information around that word (Harris, Golinkoff, Hirsch-Pasek, 2011). Language, therefore, occurs when there is something to communicate, and adult-child interactions take place in goal-directed activities in which word learning is not the goal. Rather, the child learns language as a means to an end (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). From this perspective, context, or setting, is important with implications for how language development continues in settings outside of the home, such as the school.
A basic element in the link between language and learning is understanding. The development of understanding concepts goes hand-in-hand with the ability to understand language. Vygotsky (1978) uses *word meaning* to denote the basic unit of analysis of consciousness: “the stuff of verbal thinking” (p. 94). This is a sociocultural concept if one considers how word meanings are constructed within communities of language users. In neo-Vygotskian discussions, word meaning is conceptualized as both vocabulary and discourse competencies developed through joint activities (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). In the social context of school, for children to acquire knowledge they must be able to understand and use the “network of word meanings” (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, p. 104) that operate within a school and classroom setting.

### 2.2.6. Language Development in the Context of School

The language of school is simply not an extension of the language of home, but has its own unique features. A body of research points out the differences between the everyday conversational experiences of home and community and the use of language at school (Gee, 2008; Lindfors, 1991). Studies of early language experience and fluency of understanding suggest a link between caregiver talk and children’s vocabulary development and processing efficiency (Fernald & Weisleder, 2011). Frequent experiences engaging in rich and varied language from an attentive caregiver provide preschool children with models for language learning and crucial opportunities for practice interpreting language in real time. These interactions tune and strengthen processing skills used for comprehension. Conversely, when children have limited vocabulary and difficulty with comprehension of word and sentence meanings, they are at risk of experiencing difficulties with the demands on language use in schools (Kaiser, Roberts & McLeod, 2011). Children need specific kinds of communicative experiences and some external support from teachers and more competent peers to develop a level of communicative competency that meets the demands of language use in new contexts, such as school (Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Kaiser et al., 2011; Wood, 1998).

Harris et al., (2011) and Clay (2005b) suggest guiding principles for organizing the kinds of communicative experiences that expand and build on children’s language within kindergarten and early primary classroom settings:
1. **Frequency matters.** Frequency of exposure has been found to be an important factor in word learning studies in classrooms using book readings to build vocabulary. Some evidence suggests that multiple readings of a favourite book benefit young children by providing repeated exposure to words the children might not encounter in other contexts (Clay, 2005b).

2. **Make it interesting.** Children learn words for things and events that interest them. Playful activities are “ripe contexts” (Harris et al., 2011, p. 54) for children to pick up new vocabulary.

3. **Make it responsive.** Interactive and responsive contexts favour vocabulary learning with research suggesting that high quality conversations and exposure to rich vocabulary during free play and group book reading relate to children’s language competency, comprehension, and print skills at the end of kindergarten (Harris et al., 2011).

4. **Focus on meaning.** Children learn words best in meaningful contexts. Research on memory supports the conclusion that people learn best when information is presented in integrated contexts rather than as isolated facts. Research on language and play converge with research on memory to suggest that vocabulary taught in meaningful contexts enriches children’s background knowledge and vocabulary (Harris et al., 2011). In play, children engage in an activity that is meaningful and pleasurable, and the language of play is instrumental in achieving the goals of play (Vygotsky, 1978).

5. **Be clear.** Children need clear information about word meaning. They begin with a limited understanding of how to use a word and require repeated exposures in different contexts to develop deeper understanding and flexibility in use (Clay, 1991, 2014; Harris et al., 2011).

6. **Context matters:** Children learn vocabulary through grammar and learn grammar through vocabulary. They are reciprocal processes (Harris et al., 2011). Building vocabulary is about hearing words. By noting the linguistic context in which a word appears, children gain information about a word’s function as a part of speech. Once a word is known, children detect nuances in word meanings by observing the diverse linguistic contexts in which words are used (Harris et al., 2011).

In summary, an important aspect of language learning is a child’s current language abilities, and the more we understand the processes that contribute to language development the more effective our teaching interactions.
2.2.7. The History and Nature of Written Language Development

As with the development of other forms of human behaviour, from a sociocultural perspective, changes in the development of written language are “complex, qualitative transformations of one form of behaviour into another” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 19). For example, children’s use of a written symbol system builds on their experiences with other symbolic tools, such as playing, drawing, talking, hearing stories and telling stories (Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Kenner, 2000; Kress, 1994). Therefore, social relations and symbolic play are critical resources in explaining children’s early experiences with written language.

Written language development, and mastery of its system of symbols and signs, is part of the social and cultural development of a child (Kress, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978). Written language comprises a system of signs standing for sounds and words of spoken language which, in turn, stand for concrete objects and situations. Spoken language, therefore, serves as a link between a system of signs and their intended meaning, as explained by Vygotsky (1978):

Written symbols function as designations for verbal ones. Understanding of written language is first effected through spoken language, but gradually this path is curtailed and spoken language disappears as an intermediate link… Written language becomes direct symbolism that is perceived the same way as spoken language. (p. 116).

Research on children at play demonstrates the origin of sign development from birth in children’s gestures, drawing, and imaginary play, (e.g., when a stick stands for a horse), all of which are purposeful in a child’s world (Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Kress, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978). Sign development as mean-making in action is representational and contextualized in the social structures and cultural systems in which children act (Kress, 1997), using the resources around them: textual, aural, linguistic, semiotic and visual (Kress, 1994; 1997; Rowsell, Kress, Pahl, & Street, 2013). Children come to literacy as experienced makers of meaning and makers of sign in any medium at their disposal (Kress, 1997). It follows then, that written language learning is best organized in ways that build on the many experiences with purposeful activity in children’s worlds and their developing awareness of the abstract relationship between written symbols and other symbols (Clay, 1975; Halliday, 1993; Kress, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978).
It is problematic to think of written language only in practical terms, as a technical skill focused on the mechanics of using letters to make words (Kress, 1994; Wolhwend, 2008; Tolchinsky, 2016). A broader conception includes a variety of ways children make sense of the world that is normal to them (Kress, 1997) some of which “flicker across the screens of home” (Rowsell, et al., p. 1193). As children enter school, if writing printed texts is to become something purposeful in their world, then it must become something they need to do. That is, it must be necessary and relevant for something, a meaningful response to a task at hand and relevant in the child’s world (Dyson, 1994).

Many kinds of symbolic and social experiences nourish written language growth and account for the diversity in developmental paths. The nature of its individual development is best described as both a child’s construction of forms within a particular functional task and the child’s socialization into literacy practices within a community (Dyson, 1994; Kress, 1994). Differences in the social contexts in which children encounter and use a written system imply differences in knowledge and use. Research on early writing shows how young children focus on key symbols in their culture. This finding lends support to the idea that context and social relationships have a significant influence on the appropriation of particular letters and numerals as children “enter the world of writing” (Kenner, 2000, p. 253). Such individual differences point to children taking different paths to written language development (Clay, 2001; 2014). It also suggests that written language development in the contemporary era involves social literacy practices and different semiotic skills learned in the world of play that teachers “could and should build on…in their classroom practice” (Rowsell, et al., 2013, p. 1204).

Research on the relationship between oral and written language in young children’s speech and written representations reveals that writing and reading activities are meaningful to young children well before formal schooling (Clay, 2010; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Kress, 1994; Sulzby, 1986; Tolchinsky, 2016). This research suggests that written language develops in social contexts in which young children learn from interactions with adults and more capable peers directly and from what they see others do (Vygotsky, 1978). From the first years of life children are constantly making sense of the purposeful demonstrations of written language in use around them, observing others doing things through written language in printed text and text on-screen (Lindfors, 1991; McNaughton, 1995; Rowsell, et al., 2013; Sulzby, 1986). It is by participating
in meaningful written language activities that children come to understand the functioning parts and the relations among them and what they can do with print (Kress, 1994; Lindfors, 1991). Children engage in reading and writing messages, using language in ways that it is used by the people around them (Lindfors, 1991; Smith, 2004; Sulzby, 1986). In so doing, they develop an understanding of what can be done with written language as a mode of representation and that it can be used for worthwhile purposes with available resources (Kress, 1994; Kress & Bezemer, 2009; Smith, 2004).

In summary, sociocultural theorists use the notion of meaning and purpose within a supportive context to explain written language development. This view of written language development is much broader in scope and complexity than the development of writing’s mechanics or the accumulation of alphabet knowledge. It includes descriptions of a child’s current functioning in ways that account for the development of complex processes. From this perspective, descriptions of change in written language development should not be limited to the number of letters or words a child can write. Instead, writing is described as transformations from simple processes to more complex ones: going from ideas to compositions, to ways of recording and monitoring the record of those ideas (Clay, 2005b). Children arrive at similar places to other members of their cultural group, but not identically. Their paths may be quite different (Clay; 2014; Kress, 1997). Applied to this study, changes in the written language development of former Reading Recovery students who made accelerated progress were documented as changes in the complexity of a writing process for a particular child in the particular social context of a grade two classroom.

2.3. The Beginnings of Written Language Development

This section reviews research on the beginnings of written language development. It opens with a summary of key findings from research on emergent literacy and continues with research on crucial foundational aspects of written language development that children must master, often overlooked in theories and models of literacy development.

2.3.1. Emergent Literacy

A body of research on emergent literacy shows that the beginning of written language development occurs before formal schooling (Clay, 1975; 2010; Halliday, 1993; Harris et al.,
2011; Paris, 2011; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Tolchinsky, 2016). As with spoken language, written language learning begins in the social contexts of home and community where young children observe others engaging in reading and writing activities (Clay, 1975; 2010; 2013; Lindfors, 1991). Emergent literacy research reveals the creative ways in which young children explore the conventions of written language. It provides an explanation for the nature of these activities, the contexts in which they arise, and their significance for literacy development (Razfar & Yang, 2010; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Its focuses on change in individuals, advocating for instructional approaches that build on a child’s developing knowledge (Clay, 1975; 2010; Lindfors, 2008; Stubbs, 1987; Wohlwend, 2008). As well, it recognizes young children’s thinking to be different from - although growing toward - adult modes, and reveals the necessary foundational learning upon which written language develops.

Findings from emergent literacy research challenge theories that see written language development as a series of prerequisite skills acquired in a series of stages. The research from emergent literacy (Teale & Sulzby, 1986) proposes:

- Literacy development begins in the informal settings of home and community.
- Literacy develops in real-life settings through real-life activities, and therefore the purpose and context are an integral part of learning about written language.
- From birth to around age six children are engaged in critical cognitive work in literacy development.
- Children learn written language through active engagement in social interactions with adults in reading and writing situations.
- Listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities develop concurrently and interrelatedly rather than sequentially (Clay, 1982).

There is no evidence of a developmental sequence to written language learning, nor is there one sequence through which all children pass (Clay, 1982). Therefore, curriculum developers who attempt to scope and sequence literacy instruction must be mindful that children pass through phases of learning about written language in a variety of ways and at different ages.
2.3.2. What Children Need to Learn About Written Language

Emergent literacy research suggests that comprehension and production competencies develop simultaneously and over a lifetime (Sulzby, 1986). Research on developmental differences in early literacy skills supports this view, challenging the idea that literacy skills develop in a sequential manner. (Paris, 2011; Tolchinsky, 2016). In one study, literacy skills are categorized as constrained and unconstrained (Paris, 2005; 2011). Constrained skills are those with a finite set of knowledge, such as alphabet knowledge and concepts about print. These skills are generally mastered before eight years of age (Clay, 2013; Paris, 2005). Unconstrained skills develop continuously into adulthood and beyond, such as skills related to vocabulary and comprehension (Paris, 2011). This research suggests that constrained skills are necessary for written language development and should be taught to young children, but not exclusively. Instruction in the early grades must also include important experiences with oral language, writing messages, speaking, vocabulary development, and comprehension (Clay, 2001; MacArthur & Graham, 2016; Paris, 2011).

2.3.2.1. Conventions and Concepts About Print

There are distinctive conventions and concepts that relate exclusively to written language, such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and page layout. Navigating written language requires learning its necessary movements patterns and knowledge of how the written code works, including the direction, order, orientation, and sequence in which one picks up the information from the printed page (Clay, 2010). Mastery of these ways of inspecting print is essential, and, along with a child’s knowledge related to the subject matter, supports prediction of what comes next (Smith, 2004). Yet, it is an aspect of written language learning that is overlooked or assumed to be in place in models of literacy development (Clay, 2001).

Research on concepts about print found that children enter school with unique stores of knowledge, understandings, and preferences on how one engages with written language (Clay, 2013). Through opportunities to read and write messages, young children learn how to coordinate body, hand, and eye movements needed for processing printed text and how to direct their visual attention to the print. There are standard movement patterns and specific concepts
related to a written code that all children must learn for processing English written language (Clay, 2010). Movement patterns to be mastered are:

- attending to the left page before the right page,
- tracking the print from the top of the page downwards,
- moving from left to right across a line of print,
- on multiple lines, following the print by returning to the left of the next line,
- using spaces to control attention to words,
- inspecting words from left to right, and
- knowing where and how to find the first letter and the last letter, and scan every letter rapidly in sequence from first to last without lapses (Clay, 2010, p. 39).

Important concepts children must learn about the written code are:

- what is a letter,
- some marks are letters, but not all marks are letters,
- one letter may be linked to more than one sound,
- one sound may be linked to more than one letter,
- there are several letters in a word, like one’s name,
- what a word is in one’s own speech, and
- the orientation of a letter is very important, which is not necessary for objects such as toys (Clay, 2010, p. 38).

Research shows that foundational learning about the written code and how to inspect print according to the directional rules for written language begins before schooling, and what a child knows depends on pre-school experiences with written language. The concepts that are known prior to formal instruction will differ from child to child, and this learning continues over a period of time before mastery by most children in late grade two (Clay, 1982; 2013).

2.3.2.2. Meaningful and Purposeful Communication

Conceptualizing written language as meaningful and purposeful communication is a strong theme in early literacy theory and research (Goodman, 1986; Kenner, 2000; Lindfors, 1991, 2008; Raban, 1999; Smith, 2004). As Lindfors (1991) explains, “In a child’s literacy development as in her oral language development, her primary concern is to communicate and
interpret messages” (p. 235). Learning about written language includes learning another expression system for the meanings a child has already constructed for oral communication (Lindfors, 1991; 2008).

Written language instruction in the early grades that builds on emergent literacy theory takes a meaning-motivated approach to formal instruction. It capitalizes on children’s meaning-making through written language. By participating in meaningful activities through written language children come to understand the functioning of the parts and relations among them (Goodman, 1986; Lindfors, 1991; MacArthur & Graham, 2016).

The balance between learning the technical and purposeful aspects of written language is illustrated through research examining teacher and student interactions in literacy activities in the early grades. Interactions were categorized as code-focused and meaning-focused (Connor, 2011). Code-focused interactions target skills that support mastery of the alphabetic principle, such as phonological awareness, phonics, and letter and word fluency. Meaning-focused interactions support children’s construction of meaning in text reading and writing, and targets vocabulary learning, comprehension, discussion, and book reading. The findings of one study indicated that the greatest gains for grade one students in word reading and passage comprehension were made when teachers tailored instruction to suit individual student’s strengths and needs. The findings also showed that by grade two, code-focused instruction generally decreased. Together these findings suggest that meaning-focused activities may provide an effective context for improving comprehension, and points to the importance on-going development of comprehension and language skills, particularly vocabulary development (Connor, 2011). Findings from another study showed that when the introduction to written language was strictly code-focused, for some children the code became the whole focus and the link to meaning was lost (Lindfors, 2008).

Learning how to communicate through print occurs through engagement in familiar communicative practices from which children construct new possible uses. As explained by Genishi and Dyson (2009):

> From diverse experiences with print in families and communities, young children may accumulate idiosyncratic and varied bits of knowledge — letter forms, written
names, perhaps a sense of how certain kinds of print sounds when read. In response to literacy tasks at school, individual children rely on their own sense of what would sound ‘right’ in the situation at hand; and that sense guides their efforts to appropriate, orchestrate, and adapt their diverse experiential and symbolic resources. (p. 9)

By engaging in reading and writing messages that are meaningful to them, children try to understand written language, generating and testing their personal hypotheses, which become more conventional and specific (Smith, 2004; Wells Rowe, 2018). This learning is supported when they are in situations where communication through written language makes sense to them.

Making sense includes the notion of voice, which is the individual distinctiveness of the writing. Just as in conversation, young writers bring their individual selves to writing. We can hear “the speaking personality” (Lindfors, 2008, p. 82) and read the links to peer culture and play (Wells Rowe, 2018). Children’s access to technology and digital media means that their voice and identity are influenced by a “dynamic, fluid, multilayered, and multimodal” learning environment (Razfar & Yang, 2010, p. 117). Studies show how young children appropriate and re-contextualize popular digital and media characters into their writing (Compton-Lilly, 2006; Dyson, 2003). The implications are that teachers of young children should pay attention to the various genres and media in their students’ world in order to “make the link to school text viable” (Razfar & Yang, 2010 p. 120). As well, knowledge of video games and superheroes are cultural resources that children can be encouraged to draw on and give voice in writing (Compton-Lilly, 2006).

2.3.2.3 How Oral Language Differs from Written Language

One can think of children as constructing their experiences with language in two different but complementary modes of expression: talk and print. Both modes create meaning with different intellectual and social purposes (Goodman, 1986; Halliday, 1993; Lindfors, 2008). In literate societies, a child’s earliest encounters with language are primarily with oral channels of expression. Consequently, development of an oral expression system for meaning precedes the development of a written expression system (Lindfors, 1991, 2008). Although the construction of a complex meaning system through oral language can be applied to written expression, there are still differences:
• Oral communication occurs here and now, while written communication is able to transcend time and space.
• Speakers and listeners process non-verbal information that supports meaning, and speakers can modify what they are saying by picking up information from the listener. Writers need to be clear, putting all the information into the text.
• Writers cannot make assumptions about their readers who are often in a different time and place.
• Speaking and listening are characterized by give and take with opportunities for input and interruption. In contrast, reading and writing are uninterrupted and unrelieved.
• Unlike speaking, the final organization of written material may bear little relationship to the writer’s initial thinking process (Raban, 1999).

From a learner’s perspective the written system is an arbitrary and conventional system of expression. To communicate meanings in written form, its users must represent those meanings in conventional ways. Therefore, written language is standard, formal, planned, edited, and public (Kress, 1994; Stubbs, 1987). A child learns that there is an infinite set of meaning-expression possibilities to be conveyed with a finite system of principles for written language expression (Lindfors, 1991). This is complex learning. Written symbols do not link directly to referential meaning. Rather, written language’s arrangement of letters into words separated by spaces link in a systematic way to spoken language. Consequently, in the act of writing a child learns how to engage in a process of converting a message from one system of communication (spoken) to another (written) - from causal to formal, spontaneous to planned, private to public, and non-standard to standard (Stubbs, 1987).

Although both oral language and written language are rooted in language with common vocabulary and grammatical structures, there are different conventions for using vocabulary and grammar and they have different purposes (Smith, 2004). As well, written language may rely more heavily on memory than oral language:

> For verification, for disambiguation, and to avoid error, a difficult and possibly unfamiliar kind of ability is required [of written language]. That is the ability to pursue a line of thought, looking for internal consistencies, and evaluating arguments. Both the source and the test of many predictions that are necessary
for the comprehension of written language must lie in the text itself, informed by the more general expectations that readers bring from their prior knowledge. The text determines what the actual alternatives might be and whether they have been successfully predicted. (Smith, 2004, p. 42)

Smith’s (2004) conclusions fit with the findings on executive functions of the brain and early literacy development (Blair, Protzko, & Ursache, 2011). Here, executive function refers to “cognitive processing associated with holding information in working memory, inhibiting automatic responses to stimulation, and flexibly shifting attention between distinct but related pieces of information or aspects of a given task” (Blair et al., 2011, p. 22). A focus on executive function in processing written language is particularly relevant when the information is novel and potentially confusing.

To communicate through written language, children need to be able to cope with abstractness. Examples are, knowing abstract concepts such as what is a letter, what is a word, and what is spelling. In the process of acquiring written language children learn how to reconstitute language into a mode that is more abstract than spoken language. To be able to communicate through written language children need to master a new form of knowledge: written educational knowledge as compared with the spoken language of common sense (Halliday, 1993). Therefore, part of a child’s written language learning involves learning how to interpret their experiences in the grammar of written language (Halliday, 1993).

Mastery of the concept of sentence as a linguistic unit of written language is described as a major part of learning to write (Kress, 1994, 1997). Oral language (speech) and written language (text) are two modes of language with “distinct forms of syntactic and textual organization” (Kress, 1994, p. 32). In speech, topics are developed through intonation, the ordering of clauses, repetition, elaboration and restatement (Kress, 1994). Investigations of the influences of the syntax of speech on early writing suggest that oral proficiency provides a linguistic foundation on which children build when they begin writing. Over time, children need to learn what is meant by “a complete thought” and meet the demands of an adult conceptualization of sentence (Kress, 1994, p. 28).
In summary, research on emergent literacy shows that written language development begins before formal schooling in home and community settings. Consequently, children begin formal schooling with socially constructed knowledge bases from their lived experiences. Emergent literacy research also shows that there is no one path that all children follow. And yet, there is essential foundational learning that all children must master in order to successfully navigate print, and there are aspects of communication unique to written language that they must come to understand.

2.4. A Literacy Processing Perspective on the Transition from Reading Recovery

This section explains the transition that students who successfully discontinue from Reading Recovery need to make from a literacy processing theoretical perspective on progress (Clay, 2001, 2005a; Doyle, 2013). It begins with an explanation of literacy processing and highlights from supporting theories, followed by characteristics of effective processing at the end of Reading Recovery with a particular focus on writing.

2.4.1. A Literacy Processing View of Progress

Literacy processing theory is a way to explain how early literacy responses which are simple, slow and separate change over time to responses that are complex, fast and interactive (Clay, 2001). Here literacy refers to either reading or writing activities considered separately or together (Clay, 2001). The focus is on text processing: how a child reads or writes continuous text, and the observable literacy behaviours during the act of reading or writing text which signal changes in psychological processes, such as perceiving, linking, and decision-making.

Literacy processing involves “many working systems in the brain which search for and pick up verbal and perceptual information governed by directional rules; other systems which work on that information and make decisions; other systems which monitor and verify those decisions; and systems which produce responses” (Clay, 2001, p. 1). It refers to the reader or writer’s decision-making about what a text says, and it accounts for attention to all levels of language while reading or writing (Clay, 2005b) including:
• a feature of a letter,
• the letter level,
• the cluster or letter sequence level,
• the word level,
• the phrase level,
• the sentence level,
• the gist of the passage (p. 126).

From a literacy processing perspective, an end goal for the acquisition phase of literacy learning is for children to become efficient readers and writers of text who know how to operate effectively on all levels of language. Letter and word knowledge are not enough. By grade two, classroom literacy activities place heavy demands on children’s knowledge of sentence structure and the nuances of meaning. Therefore, it is helpful to a child who initially struggles with literacy learning to have literacy experiences organized so that literacy knowledge and oral language processing develop together, “linked and patterned from the start” (Clay, 2001, p. 95).

Taking a literacy processing view of change over time, it is necessary to systematically observe how children work on the texts they read and write. It is also necessary to have a way of interpreting observable literacy behaviours, such as how children problem solve increasingly difficult text and the ways they make use of information in an integrated way as they read and write. To that end, literacy processing theory brings together conceptualizations of in-the-head activity during acts of literacy processing by drawing from Rumelhart’s (1994) interactive theory of multiple knowledge sources and Singer’s (1994) substrata-factor theory of tentative and flexible mobilization of systems for particular literacy tasks.

2.4.2. Highlights of Supporting Theories

Interactive theory (Rumelhart, 1994) proposes that the act of text reading is both a perceptual and cognitive process requiring hypothesis generating and evaluating across different knowledge sources on all levels of language: the letter feature, letter, letter cluster, word, syntactic, semantic and discourse levels. These knowledge sources are conceptualized as decision-taking activities rather than as knowledge stores. The reader operates multiple scanning systems at different
levels of printed text (Rumelhart, 1994), which for the beginning reader are limited and still accumulating.

Although interactive theory is helpful in thinking about the multiple knowledge sources that are available to a reader, this theory does not explain how the reader draws upon those knowledge sources and how those knowledge sources interact while dealing with the task at hand. Furthermore, it does not account for writing development.

Substrata factor theory (Singer, 1994) offers an explanation on how the brain makes decisions during reading or writing that can be applied to young learners. As a child learns to read and write, he or she constructs complex mental structures for problem solving. These structures can be thought of as working systems for:

- interrelated input (sensation and perception of stimuli),
- mediation (interpreting, inferring, and integrating), and
- output (response formulation) (Clay, 2001; Singer, 1994).

While reading or writing, working systems are mobilized, organized, and reorganized according to the child’s purpose and the demands of the task. Over time, changes in speed and in the variety and integration of the working systems make the processing of text more efficient.

Taking a view of development as being linked to learning opportunities, one can then argue that literacy processing systems constructed by young children are heavily influenced by the expectations and opportunities of the curriculum and teaching practices of a classroom (Clay, 2001). More specifically, teachers who are alert to the different knowledge sources in text reading available to the child may look for evidence of the knowledge sources a child appears to be using or neglecting. Supported by the teacher, the child comes to know how and when information from different knowledge sources can help in decision-making (Clay, 2001). Therefore, since the goal of early intervention for children who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery is to prevent subsequent learning difficulties in grade two and beyond, Reading Recovery lessons must be focused on helping children develop effective and flexible working systems for processing written language in books read and messages written.
2.4.3. The Transition from Reading Recovery

A child who successfully discontinues from Reading Recovery has to make two transitions. The first transition is from the support of daily individual lessons to the classroom literacy program. This transition is obvious and managed by the classroom and Reading Recovery teachers. The second is a transition from a child’s current literacy processing system towards the self-extending system of a silent reader “whose processing activity is flexible and tentative enough to work with more and more complexities of language from all kinds of reading and writing experiences” (Clay, 2005a, p. 61). Since Reading Recovery is for the lowest achieving children in grade one who are around six years old, it cannot aim to bring children to proficient silent reading. That level of proficiency is generally achieved after grade one around eight or nine years of age (Clay, 2001). Still, Reading Recovery aims to put children on a trajectory toward a self-extending processing system (Clay, 2016), and at the end of a series of lessons a child who is well on their way should be able to:

- monitor his or her own reading and writing,
- anticipate a possible syntactic structure,
- search for different kinds of information in word sequences, in meaning, and in sound-letter sequences,
- discover new things independently,
- cross-check information from one source with another,
- repeat or reread to confirm the reading and writing thus far,
- self-correct, taking the initiative for decision-making, and
- solve new words by these means (Clay, 2016, p. 187).

Independent actions are the goal; that is, actions that the child initiates and carries out independently whether or not the result is correct or accurate.

Collaboration and consultation between the Reading Recovery and classroom teacher are expected to be ongoing throughout a child’s series of Reading Recovery lessons. However, near the end of individual lessons the Reading Recovery and classroom teachers find it helpful to consider the following factors that support the transition from daily individual lessons:
• Setting - This may include deciding on an appropriate small group for reading or writing instruction, book level for instruction, and how well a child manages the classroom teacher’s approach, routines and practices.

• Survival - The child needs to know when and how to seek help within the classroom environment and how to work independently or in a group on assigned tasks. The expectation is that the child is able to actively engage in reading and writing tasks.

• Running Record Analysis - For continued progress, the child needs to read increasingly difficult text at 90 percent accuracy (instructional level) or above. Text at just the right level of difficulty supports learning from his or her own efforts. In addition, the child needs to have access to a large number of books that he or she can read fluently to provide volume of reading and many opportunities for successful processing.

• Writing Process Analysis - Evidence of an effective writing process at the end of Reading Recovery includes independence in composing messages, flexible ways of solving unknown words, monitoring message production, using classroom resources, or seeking help from others (Clay, 2005a; Clay, 2016).

2.4.4. A Focus on Writing Development

Writing is an important part of Reading Recovery’s focus on prevention of literacy difficulties. Each day Reading Recovery teachers engage their students in composing a message of one or two sentences. The inclusion of writing in Reading Recovery comes from the position that:

• it is an important part of becoming literate;

• it helps children who find it hard to learn about written language to attend to print in a detailed way;

• in the acquisition phase, both reading and writing contribute to learning about print; and

• when children have very limited knowledge of written language they learn how to search for information in memories of either reading or writing, thereby establishing reciprocity between them (Clay, 2001, 2005a, 2014).

When concluding Reading Recovery lessons, a child who makes accelerated progress is more likely to manage the transition to classroom learning without supplementary help if he or she performs well in both reading and writing. Longitudinal research shows that this prediction is at risk when writing is neglected (Clay, 2009). From a literacy processing perspective, some of the
changes in writing that indicate progress are: knowing how to work from an idea and compose a message, how to search for ways to record it, and how to monitor the message production. (Clay, 2001, 2016) This requires changes in:

- the length and complexity of messages a child composes;
- the number of words written independently and fluently;
- the ease in articulating unknown words slowly and hearing and recording letters with increasing attention to orthographic patterns as well as phonology;
- the amount of teacher prompting to use a known word or word part to get to a new word,
- initiating action for themselves.

As explained above in Chapter One, a key concept in literacy processing theory is the idea of a self-extending system, whereby reading and writing improve when children engage in reading and writing activities (Clay, 2001; 2005a; 2005b; Doyle, 2013). Extensive research on the literacy behaviours of proficient readers and writers (Clay, 1982; 1991; 2001) points to similar expectations for supporting early literacy progress for all children who initially struggle with literacy learning. Reading Recovery places a high value on independent responding while viewing the role of the teacher as one of scaffolding a child’s learning in response to careful analysis of observable behaviours. Such careful observation and contingent teaching are not possible in a busy classroom of 20 or more children. Therefore, it is imperative that the transition from Reading Recovery is carefully orchestrated by the Reading Recovery and classroom teachers. This study focuses on the transition with particular attention to writing development in grade two. What follows is a review of studies on children’s writing in Reading Recovery lessons and in grade two classrooms that take a sociocultural perspective on learning and development and a literacy processing view on progress.

2.5. Writing Development in Reading Recovery Settings and in Grade Two Classrooms

This section presents a synthesis of the findings from studies on the writing development of grade one children in Reading Recovery settings. It includes studies focusing on word solving in message construction and the composing aspect of message writing. Together they reveal what is considered essential to the development of a writing process from a literacy processing
perspective. This is followed by a review of the findings from studies that take a literacy processing view of progress and studies of transcription within a complex process with a focus on the primary grades. The section finishes with some of the related research on teacher feedback on student writing as a form of scaffolded instruction.

2.5.1. Writing Messages in Reading Recovery Settings: The Development of Processes and Concepts

Measurement of change over time within Reading Recovery is directed toward the development of processes and concepts involved in getting meaningful messages into written form (Askew & Frasier, 1999; Hobsbaum, Peters & Sylva, 1996). The accumulation of a writing vocabulary is evaluated alongside evidence of change in the application of phonological and orthographic principles (Askew & Frasier, 1999; DeFord, 1994; Hobsbaum et al., 1996; Matczuk, & Straw, 2005). Research findings point to the importance of acquiring a wide variety of known writing words as a means to solving new words by analogy — linking known words and features of words to something new, rather than as an end in itself. Data from one study (Askew & Frasier, 1999), aggregated across all subjects, offers compelling evidence of numerous opportunities for children to learn about written language by writing many different messages. Over a series of lessons, the children in this study were able to use:

- more than 25 different initial consonant blends, numerous digraphs and clusters;
- at least 26 different vowel combinations;
- inflectional endings and more than 25 different morphological derivational endings,
- more than 200 different rimes;
- abbreviations, compound words, contractions, possessives, and silent letters;
- more than 4,764 multi-syllable words.

The same study found an increase in independent use of letter-sound relationships in writing from 38% at the beginning of Reading Recovery to more than 80% by the end of lessons.

Compositions in Reading Recovery are not predetermined. Consequently, there is no control on what children explore while recording a message that they compose. One study examines the process of going from an idea to composition in message writing (Peirce, 2006). Key to learning how to compose is the importance of creating a shared context for conversation between teacher
and child early in Reading Recovery lessons. A shared context appears to support change in the
length and complexity of a message. Using one of a child’s previously read stories as a shared
experience is particularly powerful in moving children away from sentence frames, such as I like
or I am to using more complex and varied language found in books for early readers. This fits
with a more general finding that knowledge networks between reading and writing are more
effectively organized in higher outcome students (DeFord, 1994). An analysis of common known
words across reading and writing suggest that children are developing links between reading and
writing (Askew & Frasier, 1999; DeFord, 1994), which, in turn, supports their ability to search
for known information across both reading and writing when solving words in writing.

Studies focusing on word solving suggest that the ability to draw on knowledge in reading and
writing aids in the construction of analogies (Askew & Frasier, 1999; DeFord, 1994; Hobsbaum
et al., 1996; Matczuk & Straw, 2005), that is, how to use what is the known (e.g. come) as a
source of information in solving something new (e.g. some). Children need to know how to build
a basic writing vocabulary and develop strategic activities for recording unknown words
(Matczuk & Straw, 2005). As they learn how to use words they know in the construction of their
messages, children need to become flexible with that knowledge, manipulating known words
generatively to write other words. This way of thinking about how words work is supported by
the concurrent development of phonological and orthographic awareness (Matczuk & Straw,
2005).

The ways of solving words that children in Reading Recovery develop and the networks of
knowledge they draw on are powerful sources of personal knowledge for their continued
learning in classroom settings. Studies suggest that through the writing activity of a Reading
Recovery lesson the children who make accelerated progress learn how to construct generative
rules to aid them in text reading and writing (DeFord, 1994). The items of knowledge: letters,
sounds and words, that children draw on at first feed into the development of powerful strategic
activities for processing written language. In the end, they should be able move forward with
relative independence into any of the writing tasks an education system demands, with reading
and writing activities continuing to enrich each other (Clay, 2001).
2.5.1.1. Co-constructive Interactions

An assumption to any review of children’s writing development in Reading Recovery is that written messages are co-constructed within the one-to-one context of a Reading Recovery lesson. Consequently, studies of writing development commonly include teacher and child interactions during writing and how these interactions change over time (Clay & Cazden, 1990; Hobsbaum et al., 1996; Matczuk & Straw, 2005; Peirce, 2006; McBane, L., Schnug, J. R., & Slinger, C., 2017). A key premise related to the nature of the activity and the theory that underpins it is that the tasks established for learning are not simplified. Rather, the difficulty of the message-writing task remains constant while the role of the child in solving an aspect of the task varies (DeFord, 1994; Hobsbaum et al., 1996). Studies that compare high and low progress students note the importance of the teacher’s ability to keep the level of challenge at the cutting edge of new learning (DeFord, 1994), and to select words for solving co-constructively that are within a child’s zone of proximal development, rather than words he or she can already write or that are too unique and difficult for advancing current competencies (Matczuk & Straw, 2005). In one study, children who made the best progress in Reading Recovery had many opportunities to make unassisted moves to solve unknown words in writing. This independent action appears to follow from teachers presenting children with a combination of word solving approaches in the teaching of words that require teacher assistance (Matczuk & Straw, 2005).

When children continue to compose messages of greater complexity, the scaffolds that a teacher provides during message construction changes. However, the scaffold of teacher support continues (Clay & Cazden 1990; Rodgers, 2004). There is no relaxation in the challenges posed and teachers in Reading Recovery are constantly moving to what can be considered the outer limits of the zone of proximal development (Hobsbaum et al., 1996; Matczuk & Straw, 2005; Peirce, 2006; McBane et al., 2017). These findings illustrate the difference between scaffolding learning as it applies to mastering one specific task and scaffolding the development of processes for communicating in written language with increasing curricular demands. The scaffolding process is integral to co-constructive interactions around writing messages in Reading Recovery. However, writing development in the classroom is a very different context and therefore the scaffolding process cannot be assumed to apply in the same way (Hobsbaum et al., 1996; Rodgers, 2004).
2.5.2. Writing Activities in Grade Two Classroom Settings: The Further Development of Processes and Concepts

Studies of the writing development of grade two children that take a literacy processing view of progress focus on their actions while engaged in writing activities and how those actions change over time (Boocock, McNaughton & Parr, 2003; Gibson, 2008; Wade & Moore, 1997). These studies contribute to research on intra-individual change over time as novice writers become more competent; that is, how children develop strategic behaviour and orchestrate their attention across word, sentence, paragraph and text levels during writing (Gibson, 2008; McNaughton & Parr, 1992). Indicators of change include observable behaviours for word solving, such as articulating words slowly to make phoneme-grapheme links, monitoring and editing by rereading what has been written, and searching for ways to solve an unknown word by using classroom resources or analogies with something that is known (Boocock, et al., 2003; Gibson, 2008; McNaughton & Parr, 1992).

Research findings point to significant changes in word writing ability, and in how children used rereading, editing, classroom resources, and oral responses (oral utterances and lip movements) during classroom writing. Most notable is a sharp increase in word writing and a decrease in overt self-monitoring behaviours (Boocock et al., 2003). A possible explanation for a significant increase in word writing in grade two classrooms relates to the development of a self-extending system in writing. Such an increase appears to confirm the existence of processing mechanisms that enable children, who previously may have established control of only a small number of words, to develop ways of expanding their vocabularies (Boocock et al., 2003). Learning how to write a bank of words accurately may have led to the development of generative strategic activities that enable the processing system to become self-extending.

Other changes are noted in grade two students’ responses to guided writing lessons focused on informational text (Gibson, 2008). The changes include a greater repertoire of control structures and resources for the production of this genre. To illustrate, one change was in how the children used rereading. Early in the study children reread to regulate attention to the writing task. By the end of the study rereading appears to be an indicator of more sophisticated processes for monitoring and evaluating the clarity of ideas, sentence structure and word choice. Additional change over time occurs in the use of self-talk for articulating the phonemes of an unknown word
to verbalizing a word while writing, particularly after problem-solving a word (Gibson, 2008). As strategic processes become more fully integrated into in-the-moment writing production, children appear to utilize these processes to communicate clearly by attending to different levels of language — from the word level to the phrase, sentence or paragraph level. With regards to writing informational text, over time children improved in their use of features specific to this genre alongside their improved strategic behaviour.

2.5.2.1. Transcription Development and the Orchestration of Language Processes

While the previous section reviewed studies of change over time in student action while writing, this section focuses specifically on transcribing and the orchestration of language processes. For students who struggle with communicating in written language, it is helpful to think of the processes and connections that may create writing challenges. Phonological awareness and verbal reasoning utilize language by ear and mouth; rapid automatic naming utilizes language by mouth and eye; and orthographic knowledge utilizes language by eye (Berninger, Abbott, Abbott, Graham, & Richards, 2002). In studies that looked at the writing and reading connection for children in the early grades, spelling skill was most likely to constrain how much and how well a student composed (Berninger et al., 2002). As well, in typically developing writers, word recognition exerted a significantly direct influence on handwriting and spelling. This finding led the authors to conclude that the ability to read words correctly may facilitate writing them correctly, increasing the probability that children will learn to represent letter forms correctly in memory and develop routines for automatic retrieval from memory (Berninger et al., 2002). The authors also found that the relationship between handwriting and spelling was significant with implications for teaching. “Teaching handwriting and spelling may transfer more to word recognition than teaching word recognition transfers to handwriting and spelling” (Berninger et al., 2002, p. 44).

In this study I use Berninger’s (2012) definition of handwriting: “the use of the hand to produce units of written language – single letters, written words, sentences, and texts – to express ideas and thinking (p. 28). Handwriting is not simply a motor skill. It is also a written language skill involving:

- working memory – the temporary storage and processing of letter forms;
• naming letters – which helps find the letter form in longer term memory and then write it;
• planning to form letters before the motor system writes them;
• incoming visual and touch (sensory) information – as letters produced are viewed and hands and fingers move;
• the orthographic loop – “which integrates the letters and written words in the mind’s eye with the sequential hand and finger movements during writing” (Berninger, 2012, p. 28).

Learning to write and perceive letters during early childhood may affect learning to spell and read words in middle childhood. Findings from brain research show the value of forming letters (handwriting) over pressing letters (key boarding) in learning to perceive letters (James, Jao, & Berninger, 2016). From this research the implications for writing development are clear. Handwriting instruction is necessary for literacy, beginning in early childhood and continuing through middle childhood, “with attention to both the motor and letter coding processes involved, and integrating handwriting with reading, spelling and composing” (James et al., 2016, p. 124). For some children intervention is necessary. Conscious attention to transcription skills taxes processing memory interfering with content generation and planning (Graham & Harris, 2005). Furthermore, developing writers need to learn how to integrate the phonological coding of spoken words, the orthographic coding of written words, and morphology in order to create word-specific spellings (James et al., 2016). This has implications for the design of instruction that keeps in mind how information is stored and processed, and how a functional writing system includes letter production, word spelling, sentence construction and text generation (James et al., 2016).

2.5.2.2. Teacher and Student Interactions During Writing
Research also finds teacher and student interactions at the point of problem solving supports active strategic behaviour for writing messages in small group instruction (Gibson, 2008; Sipe, 1998). In-the-moment instructional scaffolding supports students in knowing how to put composing and word solving processes into action. This type of teacher help may be more powerful in supporting a self-extending system than praise and correction of already written segments (Gibson, 2008). Children who have learned how to write messages with the support of a Reading Recovery teacher are accustomed to help that includes a focus on audience or purpose
for writing and on how to solve unknown words in flexible ways in meaningful contexts (Wade & Moore, 1997).

Research on improving the writing performance of young struggling writers that assumes learning is a complex process dependent on changes in a learner’s skills, strategic knowledge, domain-specific knowledge, and motivation concludes that treatment should be multifaceted (Graham & Harris, 2005). It should address foundational writing skills, transcription skills, sentence construction skills, and genre-specific vocabulary. It should also address strategies for drafting, planning, revising, editing, and visualizing ideas (Graham, Harris, & Chambers, 2016). During the acquisition phase of learning teachers should provide considerable scaffolding, which is gradually withdrawn. Subsequent writing sessions are frequent, designed to promote mastery, and students are able to practice in order to gain fluency and generalization (Graham & Harris, 2005).

In the classroom context, teacher feedback on student writing has the potential to act as a form of scaffolding (Glasswell, Parr, & McNaughton, 2003; Parr, Jesson, & McNaughton, 2009; Peterson & Portier, 2014) with “the right kind of assistance, at the right time for the right period” (Glasswell, et al., 2003, p. 292). Simply giving children opportunities to write in the classroom may not be sufficient to move them beyond what they can already do independently toward fuller communication of their ideas (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999). In an “idealized description” (Parr et al., 2009, p.13) of effective writing conferences, the teacher displays the following knowledge:

- a deep understanding of the writer,
- knowledge of writing, and
- awareness of the nature and purpose of instructional talk.

As well, the teacher sets up opportunities for the child to:

- interact with the reader of their writing,
- craft meaning for someone else,
- develop metacognitive awareness in relation to writing, and
- develop self-regulatory practices required for reflecting on their writing (Parr et al., 2009).
Providing effective feedback on student writing is a highly skilled task. In this context, written feedback may not be as effective as oral feedback where ideas and language can be discussed (MacArthur, 2009). When teachers ask questions and draw out ideas they provide a reader’s perspective on the clarity of the writing and help the child to gradually internalize the demands of written communication. Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1999) explain that: “Because their impact is so powerful, teachers must monitor how their scaffolding shapes children’s responses and work to provide guidance that will help children express their ideas more fully” (p. 606).

Research on teacher feedback reveals that within a supportive classroom environment in which students feel comfortable making errors, feedback provides specific information that scaffolds the student’s understanding and ability to complete the writing task (Peterson & Portier, 2014). Types of teacher feedback are categorized as content-oriented and convention-oriented (Peterson & Portier, 2014), also referred to in the literature as surface level oriented (Matsumara, Patthey-Chavez, Valdés, & Garnier, 2002). In surface level feedback the teacher’s edits and comments focuses the student on the mechanics, word usage, grammar, spelling, sentence structure or format (Matsumara et al., 2002). Through content feedback the student is directed to think about the concepts in and structure of their writing. The teacher may ask questions that challenge the student’s thinking or request more information (Matsumara et al., 2002). With clarification level feedback the teacher directs the student to clarify or elaborate, for example use a character’s name rather than use a pronoun (Matsumara et al., 2002).

Research that examines what actually happens during writing conferences is revealing. In one study the teacher gave slightly more surface level feedback on spelling, punctuation and spacing than content feedback (Peterson & Portier, 2014). In another study teachers provided almost four times as much surface level and clarification level feedback than feedback on ideas and students’ skill in conveying their ideas (Matsumara et al., 2002). One possible explanation is that teachers are sensitive to the importance of standardizing their students’ written language for which they are held more accountable than the development of ideas (Matsumara et al., 2002). Specific feedback on strategy use, where strategy application was the goal, resulted in higher writing self-efficacy than when students received feedback on product or general feedback (McArthur, 2009).
Teachers work in accordance with curriculum documents. This may impact the type of feedback that struggling writers receive and influence a teacher’s belief about a student’s needs and capabilities (Glasswell, et al., 2003). Consequently, in addition to receiving a greater percentage of surface level feedback than other forms of feedback, struggling writers may experience more teacher control of the conference, and develop a dependence on the teacher to do the proofreading and correcting (Glasswell, et al., 2003). In a meta-analysis of the process writing approach, a hybrid of process writing and writing skills instruction was recommended for struggling writers. Process writing alone was found to be less effective for struggling writers than for general classroom writers (Graham & Sandmel, 2011).

The research acknowledges the impact of teacher feedback on student writing in a safe and positive environment where the teacher acts as a consultant rather than a manager or critic, guiding students to find their own voices and give meaning to their thoughts. Teacher feedback is characterized as a form of differentiated instruction. It provides personalized support and caters to individual needs (Ricks, Morrison, Wilcox, & Catri, 2017).

In summary, there is a complex relationship between teachers’ aims for their classroom writing programmes, their goals for particular activities, and their reported teaching foci (Glasswell, 2001) in which children who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery need to function. Therefore, adequate preparation for classroom learning is essential if these children are to meet the classroom teacher’s priorities for writing activities. For good writers, research finds that classroom activity settings (McNaughton, 1995) work well, resulting in continuous improvement. For poor writers whose systems are limited, there are fewer opportunities to develop into self-regulating and self-improving learners (McNaughton & Parr, 1992). As Glasswell (2001) notes, “ideas, actions and interactions within and across classroom writing activities set up mutual, reciprocal, and cumulative patterns of influence on engagement in activity and on development” (p. 349). These findings point to the need for extended observation and procedures for effectively recording the full-range of former Reading Recovery students’ writing behaviours in their natural classroom environment (Graves, 1975) including their interactions with others.
3. Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology for investigating the written language development of children in grade two classrooms who in their grade one year made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery. The two questions that guided this study are:

1. In what ways does the literacy behaviour of former Reading Recovery students who made accelerated progress continue to develop while creating written text in grade two classrooms?
2. In what ways does the classroom context influence the written language development of former Reading Recovery students in grade two classrooms who made accelerated progress?

The chapter begins with an overview of the research design related to the purpose for the study. It follows with a description of the research participants, the classroom context, and the data collection process. The chapter continues with a description of the data sources, and it finishes with a description of how the data was analysed.

As noted in Chapter One, the recommendations that call for further research on Reading Recovery students who made accelerated progress point to the need for research that looks carefully at individual progress within a classroom setting (Askew & Frasier, 1994; Gapp, et al., 2009; Jesson & Limerick, 2014). Research on the sustained gains of Reading Recovery students who made accelerated progress (also called discontinued) report findings using standard measures to show performance averages within grade level or age group and percentages of students reaching grade level in reading. Such methods of measuring progress do not provide information on individual progress. This investigation used collective case study as a qualitative research method of examining and interpreting individual progress in a classroom setting around the two research questions.

3.1. Qualitative Study

Qualitative research is characterized by its purpose, which relates to understanding some aspect of social life. Qualitative research methods generally report descriptive analyses rather than numerical forms (Patton & Cochran 2002). Qualitative study is a situated activity that locates the researcher in the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It attempts to reveal all the complexity within
a setting to gain a depth of understanding not possible with quantitative research methods (Merriam 1998; Patton & Cochran, 2002).

Qualitative research provides a way of investigating how people make sense of the experiences in their world, particularly when little is known of a situation (Patton & Cochran, 2002). Its focus is on processes rather than products (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982), and it is suited to answering how, why, and what questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Patton & Cochran, 2002). Qualitative methods are generally supported by an interpretivist paradigm, portraying a world in which reality is socially constructed, ever-changing, and complex (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Its methods deal with multiple, socially constructed realities, or qualities, which illustrate a complexity that cannot be divided into separate variables. The researcher’s task, therefore, is to understand and interpret how the participants in a social setting construct their world (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). This makes the researcher the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998), adding his or her insights to the analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explain:

The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on the processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. (p. 10)

Qualitative researchers assume that human behaviour is significantly influenced by the context in which it occurs, and therefore where possible they observe behaviour in context (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Merriam, 1998). Data are collected on the premise that context is important. This fits with a key assumption of qualitative methodology: what is under investigation is best understood through observation in its natural setting.

The qualitative researcher employs an inductive research strategy (Merriam, 1998), not assuming that enough is known about a phenomenon to recognize important concerns and build hypotheses before undertaking the research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Rather, data analysis constructs a picture by putting together evidence from a number of sources including field notes, interviews,
conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to self (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A funnel metaphor applies to the research process: things are open at the beginning and more directed and specific at the end (Bodgen & Biklen, 1982).

A rich descriptive study is the desired outcome of the research process (Merriam, 1998). Descriptive means that the data are in the form of words or images. Its methods demand that what is being studied is approached with the belief that nothing is trivial; that everything has the potential of being a clue which might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). While quantitative techniques are able to show by pre and post testing that changes occurred, qualitative techniques lead to descriptions of how change occurs through the study and analysis of activities, procedures, and interactions (Bogden & Biklen, 1982).

A qualitative research method was best suited to this study examining children’s written language development in the natural setting of a classroom (Merriam, 1998). It fits well within the sociocultural framework for this study based on a view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting in their social worlds (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998). The openness of qualitative inquiry made it possible for me to gain an understanding of a complex social situation, and allowed for exploration of a range of behaviour without the need to simplify the phenomena. My aim was to reveal some of the complexity of classroom learning (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

### 3.2. Case Study

Case study research is a way to do qualitative inquiry (Stake, 2005). It is defined as both the process of conducting a type of research and its end product (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005). As process, it is an empirical, non-experimental inquiry investigating a phenomenon within its context. As product, it is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit (Merriam, 1998). More recently, case study research has been characterized by delimiting the object of study as a bounded system (Barone, 2011; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005). The case is a single unit. The phenomenon that occurs or acts in a bounded context can be graphically presented as a heart inside a circle. The heart is the focus of the study while the circle gives a limit to what will and will not be studied (Merriam,
1998). The prime referent in case study is the case, not the methods by which the case operates. This distinction helps to define the boundedness of the case. Certain features are within the boundaries of the system and other features are outside of it. For example, a child’s written language development in a classroom may be a case. The written language development of a larger population of Ontario children lacks the specificity to be a case.

Case studies are interpretive and analytical. They help in understanding processes of events, projects, and programs, and in discovering context characteristics that enlighten the reader on an issue (Merriam, 1998). Case study is further defined by the following features which make it well suited to the questions asked in this study:

1. **Particularistic**, in that the study is centred on a particular situation, event, phenomenon, or person;
2. **Descriptive**, in that the researcher gathers rich description of the object of study;
3. **Heuristic**, as the study endeavours to enrich the reader’s understanding;
4. **Inductive**, as the data drive the understandings that emerge from the study;
5. **Instrumental**, as the researcher looks for insight into an issue, and the case becomes the instrument used to understand something else (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994).

The term *instrumental* applies to case study if a particular case is examined primarily to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest. It plays a supportive role in facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is looked at in-depth, its context scrutinized and its activities detailed, all because it helps pursue an external interest (Stake, 2005).

Case study is a suitable research design for studies asking “how” questions and setting out to investigate processes rather than outcomes (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 1998). Here the meaning of process is two-fold. The first is monitoring, through rich description of context and program, which provides formative feedback. The second meaning of process is explanation, such as discovering the processes by which a child’s written language development continues in a classroom setting.

Qualitative case study research was particularly appropriate for an investigation of the written language development in a grade two classroom setting of a student who made accelerated
progress in Reading Recovery. In the context of this research study, the case was studied to achieve as full an understanding as possible of the continued written language development of the student and the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the circumstances of the classroom (Merriam, 1998).

3.3. Collective Case Study

Collective case study is a refinement on instrumental case study, the difference being that the researcher studies multiple cases (Barone, 2011; Stake, 2005). A number of terms are used to characterize the study of more than one case (Merriam 1998; Stake, 1994). For this study, the term collective case study is used. In collective case studies a researcher investigates a number of cases to study a phenomenon. The researcher expects that the collective cases will build a stronger understanding and a more compelling argument for the significance of the work (Barone, 2011). A collective case study enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases. Individual cases in a collection may or may not be known to have common characteristics. They may be similar or dissimilar, with redundancy and variety of common importance. The cases are chosen “because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases” (Stake, 2005, p. 446).

Where descriptive research is an appropriate method, collective case study is open to multiple variables of potential importance and subsequent insights not possible with a quantitative experimental design. Using multiple perceptions may help in clarifying meaning, in verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation, and in identifying different ways a phenomenon can be seen (Stake, 1994). Furthermore, collective case study research is useful in studying the impact of an educational innovation, such as Reading Recovery, and how it may affect student behaviour beyond the intervention (Merriam, 1998).

Qualitative collective case study research carried out over half of a school-year supports the potential credibility of the research (Barone, 2011; Gall et al., 1999). Gathering data over a period of time through repeated observations makes it more likely that what is found represents a pattern rather than an aberration (Barone, 2011), and the issue of applicability is supported by the opportunity for cross-case analysis.
Collective case study has limitations. Several cases will produce a large amount of data and the potential for a large amount of descriptive analysis. This requires integrity on the part of the researcher and adherence to systematic observation and rigorous practices for data analysis in order to control for potential bias (Merriam, 1998). Although there may be a large amount of data, there remains a small number of cases, resulting in limitations to the applicability of the findings beyond contexts that are similar to those of the cases. Therefore, the value of collective case study may be in refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation.

3.4. The Participants and Classroom Setting
The study focused on the written language development of children in grade two who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery in grade one. Using collective case study methodology, four students were selected according to the following criteria:

- made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery;
- were currently in their grade two year;
- were in a regular classroom setting;
- were English speaking.

The students were recruited from one school in a school district in Ontario that implements Reading Recovery. I approached the principal who consented to the research (see Appendix 3). Next, I met with the grade two classroom teachers, Mrs. Zee and Mrs. Kit (all names are pseudonyms), at the school. They agreed to participate in the study (see Appendix 2 and 5) and, along with the Reading Recovery teacher, contacted the parents of the students who gave their consent (see Appendix 1). Eligible students were identified by the Reading Recovery teacher in the school and their names were checked with the school district’s Coordinator of Reading Recovery as having made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery. Once I received the letter of consent from the parents, I met with the students and obtained their verbal consent (see Appendix 4) before the data collection began.

For the first four months of the study, Mrs. Zee and Mrs. Kit’s grade two classrooms were organized so that the students had their own desk space arranged in groups of four and six. Desks were positioned so that the students had a clear view of a large whiteboard which spanned most of one side of the room. Chart work was generally displayed on an easel located next to the class
gathering space. The charts were used in classroom writing lessons as a tool to support instruction and made thinking visible for later reference. In both classrooms charts and whiteboard displays provided a record of student ideas, an example of a type of writing, a list of the expectations for a specific piece of writing, a way to start a message, or a record of a constructed piece of writing.

Both rooms had a desktop computer, teacher’s desk, a horseshoe-shaped table for small-group instruction, an area for classroom supplies, and a quiet corner with the class library. Desk groupings were organized so that the children could move easily around the room and have direct access to materials, such as paper, and common spaces. During the last month of the study the teachers made a significant change in how the students used the classroom space. Desks were arranged for small groupings, in pairs, and individually with no assigned seating. During writing activities, the students could choose the workspace they wanted. A round table without chairs was made available for those who wanted to stand while they wrote. All other classroom furniture and spaces, such as the meeting area and quiet corner, remained the same.

Mrs. Zee and Mrs. Kit’s classrooms were next to each other. The teachers planned together, and I observed how they interacted together, sharing resources and conversing. Appendices 17 and 18 show the commonalities between writing activities across the two classrooms. In Mrs. Zee’s class there was a support staff member who was routinely present in the classroom during the first part of the morning, which was often independent writing time. Mrs. Kit’s class had a regular classroom volunteer whose time in the classroom coincided with my observations on several occasions.

3.5. Data Sources and Analysis

Using a collective case study approach, the end goal of the research was a rich description of how the four students who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery continued to develop as writers in a grade two classroom. The hallmark of case study research is the use of multiple sources of data to enhance data credibility (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The focus was on learning what the selected cases did: their activities and functioning. This required observing the cases,
asking the classroom teachers and the students for their perspectives, and gathering artifacts from the activity under study. Describing and interpreting the activities made up a large part of the study (Stake, 2005). Triangulation of data sources is generally considered a process of using multiple perspectives to clarify meaning and identify different ways a case can be seen (Stake, 2005). It also functions to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation. To this end, several types of data were collected over five months of a school year.

3.5.1. Data Sources
To investigate the ways written language developed for the case study students in their grade two year and conditions for learning, assessment data were collected at the beginning and end of the study and at regular intervals. Other data were collected in the classroom throughout the course of the study.

3.5.1.1. Data Collected at the Beginning and End of the Data Collection Period
The Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) was administered at the beginning and end of the data collection period. It provided an assessment of the students’ reading and writing behaviour on observation tasks. As described in detail in Chapter One, the Observation Survey is comprised of six tasks, and is a form of systematic observation with a standard administration. It assesses various aspects of literacy development in reading and writing at the text, word and letter levels of written language (Clay, 2013).

The Burt Word Reading Test (New Zealand Council of Educational Research, 1981), provided a standardized word reading assessment additional to the Clay Word Reading task in the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013). The Burt Word Reading Test (NZCR, 1981) ranks students on knowledge of words read in isolation and places them within an age band. This test provided three kinds of information:

- a sample of the case study students’ competence with reading words in isolation,
- a comparison with the normative performance of the students’ age group (Clay, 2013).

It also provided information on a student’s word reading knowledge as a potential source of information for problem solving words in writing.

Student Interview: Interviews at the beginning and end of the data collection period provided the students’ perspective, their developing identities as writers, and how they saw themselves as
writers within the social community of classroom writers. These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed in full (see Appendix 14). Case study students’ perceptions provided important contextual information to enrich the assessment results.

*Teacher Interview:* The classroom teachers were interviewed at the beginning and the end of the study. Appendix 16 lists the questions asked. These interviews brought in the teacher’s perspective on the students’ written language development in the classroom and in relation to the curriculum expectations for grade two. The teachers received the questions prior to the interviews, which were audiotaped and transcribed. Transcriptions of the interviews were sent to the teachers for their review prior to analysis.

3.5.1.2. Data Collected in Regular Intervals

*Running Records of Classroom Text:* In order to obtain information on how the case study students’ reading was developing in relation to their writing, I took a Running Record (Clay, 2013) of text reading on the text that the classroom teacher had selected for the students’ current guided reading instruction. These Running Records were taken at two points over the course of the study.

*On-demand Writing Sample:* An on-demand writing sample was taken at the same time as the first Running Record of classroom text. Then, because of the frequency of classroom writing, it was determined that another on-demand writing sample would only be collected at the end of the study. To obtain this kind of sample, I invited the student to engage in free writing. The student was given as much time as required to complete the sample in one sitting. Descriptive notes on how the student went about the task were taken during the writing activity. Immediately following the first on-demand sample, the student was asked to talk about their writing with guiding questions (see Appendix 15) adapted from the *Ontario Writing Assessment* (Reid & Reid, 2008).

3.5.1.3. Data Collected Over the Course of the Study

*Classroom Observation:* Observing students in a classroom context fits within a sociocultural view of learning that sees the social and cultural setting in which the learning is situated as influential (McNaughton, 1995). As Stake (2005) explains, “qualitative researchers have strong
expectations that the reality perceived by people inside and outside the case will be social, cultural, situational, and contextual — and they want the interactivity of functions and contexts as well described as possible” (p. 452).

Permission was granted by the school district to observe the students in their classrooms during writing activities. Field notes were taken using an ethnographic method that distinguishes between descriptive and interpretive notes (Frank, 1999). I did not receive school district permission to videotape in the classroom. While observing, I used my laptop to take notes, describing the students’ actions while writing. The resulting detailed descriptions of how the students went about a writing activity that included interactions with their teacher, classmates and others allowed me to reconstruct the chain of events after the activity (Frank, 1999) and form interpretations: note making.

There were two case study students in each of the grade two classrooms. Each student was observed for a five-minute period. I rotated through all focus students at five-minute intervals until the end of the writing activity. Since the participating grade two classrooms were side by side, I was sometimes able to observe all of the students in the course of the observation time.

Classroom Writing Samples: Following each classroom observation the case study student’s written product was documented for analysis through photographic reproduction. Between classroom observations, the classroom teacher made accessible any classroom writing products that were on-going (see Appendices 17 and 18) so that I could document the finished product through photographic reproduction.

Memos: Throughout the data collection period, writing memos was used as a way of recording my thoughts as they occurred (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), my informal conversations about the students with the classroom teachers, and ideas raised during those conversations. Writing memos continued during the data analysis phase of the study as a way to capture my ideas on patterns and categories emerging from the data.
3.5.2. Data Analysis

Analyses of the data occurred in phases. Those phases are: 1) the initial analysis that occurred immediately following collection of the data, and 2) the in-depth analysis that occurred following the data collection period.

3.5.2.1. Initial Data Analysis

Observation Survey and Burt Word Reading Test: Immediately following the pre and post study administrations of the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) and the Burt Word Reading Test (NZCR, 1981), the results were analyzed from a literacy processing perspective (Askew, 2009; Clay, 2001; Doyle, 2013). The student’s performance across tasks was summarized in relation to each of the following topics (Clay, 2013):

- Useful or problematic strategic activity on text, for example: behaviour at difficulties, substitutions, and self-corrections.
- Useful or problematic strategic activity with words, for example: attention to the visual features, and sounds of words.
- Useful or problematic strategic activity with letters: for example: movements used to make letters, visual awareness, and sounds.

For comparison with their peers, the Canadian grade two norms (Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery, 2017) for Text Level, Writing Vocabulary, and the Burt Word Reading Test (NZCR, 1981) were applied to the pre-study assessment. These norms are for December of grade two only. Since the post-study assessments were completed in mid to late May, the norms no longer applied. The results of the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) and the Burt Word Reading Test (NZCR, 1981) were shared with the classroom teachers. Then no further analysis occurred until after the data collection period.

Student and Teacher Interviews: Insights arising from student and teacher interviews during transcription were recorded in memos. No further analysis was undertaken during the data collection period.

Running Records: Immediately following administration a descriptive comment on pacing and phrasing was added to the Running Record. The records were analyzed as close to the administration as possible to determine the kinds of information the student used and neglected
to use when processing information in print (Clay, 2013). The results of the Running Records were shared with the classroom teachers, but no further analysis was undertaken until after the data collection period.

Classroom Observation: Classroom data analysis occurred after the data collection phase of the project. This was intentional. Working from the assumption of written language development and conditions for learning as complex processes, everything observed was important. I did not want to narrow the funnel too soon (Bodgen & Biklen, 1982). I strove to keep an open mind (Miles, et al., 2014), and not overlook anything within the classroom context. Immediately following a classroom observation, I went over my notes, fixed typing errors and added my jottings (Miles, et al., 2014), or note-making (Frank, 1999). The field notes were filed by student pseudonym and date along with the photographic representation of the student’s classroom writing for easy access during the in-depth data analysis phase of the study.

On-demand and Classroom Writing Samples: During the data collection period I did no analyses of either the on-demand writing samples or the classroom writing samples. Both were filed by student name and date along with any descriptive notes for later analysis. As with classroom observation, delaying any in-depth analysis was intentional.

3.5.2.2. In-depth Data Analysis

Qualitative collective case study is observational; but more importantly, it is interpretive. “In being ever reflective, the researcher is committed to pondering the impressions, deliberating on recollections and records — but not necessarily following the conceptualizations of theorists…The case study researcher digs into meanings, working to relate them to contexts and experience” (Stake, 2005, p. 449).

This collective case study generated many pages of field notes, interview transcripts and artifacts. With clear parameters for analysis, it also had the potential of producing significant and meaningful findings (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1999). To that end, I used interpretational analysis which involved a systematic set of procedures to code and classify data to ensure that important constructs, themes and patterns emerged (Gall, et al., 1999). Coding and classifying procedures were organized using the computer software program NVivo. The steps of interpretational data analysis were:
1. Preparation of a database to contain all of the data collected during the case study;
2. Development of meaningful categories to code the data;
3. Coding of the data by any and all categories that applied;
4. Creating individual profiles from all the codes in each category;
5. Generating constructs that emerged from the categories (Gall et al., 1999).

These steps are elaborated in the following:

1. **Preparing a database to contain all of the data collected during the study.** All of the data sources were imported into the NVivo database and organized into the following folders for each student:
   - assessments and interviews,
   - observations,
   - teacher interviews,
   - writing samples.

Memos were a separate source and were organized into a separate folder. During this step I read through all of the data and made jottings of my emergent reflections (Miles, et al., 2014) and annotations and links to memos. I recorded a list of all of the different behaviours that were found in my field notes. The behaviours were then organized according to the two research questions and categories of behaviour began to emerge.

2. **Developing meaningful categories to code the data.** The categories and the student behaviours (codes) within each category were then entered into the database. The categories that were developed in response to the first research question were: composing, constructing and monitoring actions. Appendices 19, 20 and 21 report on the codes within these categories. Also, in response to the first research question, analysis of the students’ writing samples resulted in the following categories:
   - directionality
   - spatial layout
   - letter knowledge
   - word knowledge
   - message clarity
   - punctuation.
Appendix 22 reports on the codes within these categories.

The categories that were developed in response to the second question related to student and teacher interactions, student interactions with others, and student use of classroom resources and supports. These categories and the codes within them are found in Appendices 23, 24, and 25.

3. *Coding the data.* The next step was to code the different sources of data for each of the children that applied to each research question. This was accomplished using the NVivo software. Exemplars for coded student behaviour during writing are found in Appendix 26.

4. *Creating individual student profiles from all the codes in each category.* The culmination of the coding process was four individual profiles which told a story of how each student was developing as a writer in a classroom and contextual influences on their development.

5. *Generating constructs that emerged from the categories.* The analysis and reporting of each student’s profile followed by cross-case analysis focused on patterns of behaviour across cases and led to more general explanations (Miles, et al., 2014).
Chapter 4: Collective Case Study Findings

This chapter tells the story of four unique case study students developing as writers on their own terms within the defined context of their grade two classroom (Miles, et al., 2014). The students came from two classrooms. Sally and Cam were in Mrs. Zee’s classroom, and Jack and Aaron were in Mrs. Kit’s classroom. Getting to know the students as writers began with an assessment of their literacy competencies and a conversation probing their identity as writers (Johnston, 2003). The assessments provided a baseline for observing how each child’s literacy competencies supported progress in writing in the classroom. The chapter continues with descriptions of what each child was writing in the classroom. Descriptions of each child’s composing, constructing and monitoring actions bring to life how they went about their writing. These descriptions of process are followed by an analyses of each child’s written products. Since the case study students were situated within the context of a grade two classroom, their interactions with their teacher and other classroom members during writing activities, and how they used classroom resources are part of their stories. Each case study student’s profile concludes with a description of their written language development and a summary of their writing beyond Reading Recovery.

4.1. Sally as a Developing Writer

4.1.1. Getting to Know Sally

Sally was 7.01 years at the start of the study and nearly 7.06 by the end. She was in Mrs. Zee’s grade two class and the only girl in the study. Sally’s family included her parents and older brother. The family was originally from a Middle Eastern country, but Sally did not require English language support. As a former Reading Recovery student, she was accustomed to one-on-one sessions and worked willingly on the Observation Survey tasks. Sally’s scores were in the average band on all tasks (see Appendices 6 and 7). Assessment of her reading started with her classroom guided reading book, level 18 (end of grade one range), which she read with ease and expression. Sally’s highest instructional level was 22, which placed her in grade two range.

When reading text, Sally showed perseverance in problem solving unknown words. She searched for information from the meaning of the story, the structure (syntax) of the sentence, and the
visual information in the unknown word. Although she attempted to problem solve most unknown words, she did not consistently integrate information from different sources in coming up with a solution, and she would appeal for help. Encountering the word ground she said, “Let’s try garden,” followed by decoding: gr-o-l, and then an appeal for help. She reread phrases, appearing to work something out for herself and often resulting in self-corrections. On her highest instructional level text, Sally’s ungrammatical phrasing and frequent problem solving led me to question if she was losing the meaning of the story.

Sally took a flexible approach to solving some words and self-monitored her attempts. For example, on the word missed she tried mi / messed / miss-d before solving the word. She also made word substitutions that were visually similar but did not fit with the meaning or structure of the sentence. Some of these errors were self-corrected while others were not. Examples of this behaviour are: complete for compete left uncorrected, and laud for loud which she corrected. A common problem-solving pattern for Sally was to try on her own before appealing to me for help. Knowing how to use her own knowledge to problem solve some things independently and at other times to seek the help of others was a characteristic of Sally’s written language development that I also observed in the classroom context.

Sally’s reading and writing behaviour in solving words in text was supported by her knowledge of letters, vocabularies of words she could read and write, and control of directional movement and spatial layout for written language. While engaged in the word writing task she demonstrated confidence, telling me she would need two pages. Although she could read and write many different words, both vocabularies were predominantly single syllable words. While problem solving words on the writing tasks she used very little overt sound to letter analysis. Instead, she appeared to be able to work with letter clusters and to write words as a whole known unit.

Sally’s responses to the initial interview questions (see Chapter Three and Appendix 14) indicated that she used writing was a way of relaying her activities, for example, going to her mother’s friend’s apartment. It was also a way to learn about something or tell something, and what she wanted to learn next as a writer was “more about animals and more about nature.” Writing did have a purpose in her world. It gave her another way of expressing herself, “each
week I write about something different,” and a feeling of independence, “It makes me feel nice, ‘cause I really get to do it.”

Sally’s performance on the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) placed her within grade two range and provided evidence that she should be able to cope with the requirement of a grade two classroom writing program. She appeared to have a positive view of writing as a way to express herself and learn.

4.1.2. Sally Writing in the Classroom
I observed Sally during 20 classroom writing episodes (see Table 1: Sally’s Classroom Writing). These writing activities were always scheduled in the first block of the morning before the recess. (For a full list of the writing activities in Mrs. Zee’s classroom see Appendix 17.) Most of the writing activities were assigned by Mrs. Zee and developed around the specific expectations in writing for grade two (Ministry of Education, 2006). Two of the writing activities took the children through the process of generating an idea, gathering or creating the information in a planning phase, and writing in an organized way. Using this process, Sally researched and wrote a report on *Mice*, a topic that fit with her interest in learning about animals. She had to research interesting facts about mice and then, working from her research notes, organize those facts under subheadings, listed in a Table of Contents, such as what mice like to eat, and include an illustration. In a second writing activity Sally wrote a fiction story called *The Flying Book*, which was planned using a graphic organizer and developed over several writing times. The children worked through the organization of a problem and solution story as a class and then in partners before creating the organization for their own story. In Sally’s story Emma, Lilly and Jack found a mysterious flying book. During free writing opportunities Sally wrote a poem about things she likes, a retell called *My Weekend* highlighting her brother’s birthday, and *Money Tree*, in which she wakes up to a tree full of money in her yard.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Writing</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>Mice</td>
<td>What Mice Eat / Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Where Mice Live / Predators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal Box</td>
<td>Weetbet</td>
<td>Planner / Checklist / Drawing / Final product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>How I show kindness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem</td>
<td>I Like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrostic Poem</td>
<td>Valentine’s Day</td>
<td>Letters in the word Valentines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>George and Martha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tons of Fun</td>
<td>What you think happened and why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual Recount and</td>
<td>Pink T-shirt Day</td>
<td>How Pink T-shirt day started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How I can stop bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>George and Martha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Back in Town</td>
<td>What Martha was feeling /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What George was feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>The Flying Book</td>
<td>Problem / Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>The Hotel is Haunted</td>
<td>Title / Characters / Setting / Problem / Failed attempts / Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>The Flying Book</td>
<td>Title / Characters / Setting / Problem / Failed attempts / Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure Story</td>
<td>The Flying Book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Response</td>
<td>Earth Day</td>
<td>I didn’t think Earth Day mattered until…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Response</td>
<td>Golden Egg</td>
<td>If you were in charge of a golden egg, where would you hide it and why would you hide it there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>The Money Tree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recount</td>
<td>My Weekend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Narrative</td>
<td>Fidget Spinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The understanding of writing as a complex process (Clay, 2001; Ministry of Education, 2006) came to life for me while observing Sally engaged in writing activities. During each writing episode she undertook a variety of actions. These actions were categorized as composing actions, constructing actions, and monitoring actions (see Appendices 19, 20 and 21). Together they created a unique portrayal of the ways in which Sally was developing as a writer.

4.1.3. Sally’s Composing Actions

Composing actions in the context of this study were any observable behaviours that could be interpreted as contributing to the creation of an idea for a message and all the details that supported or expanded that message (Clay, 2001; 2016; Spandel, 2012). Sally’s composing actions that supported the composing process were: commenting, drawing before writing, generating ideas, looking up, moving her pencil, planning, talking about an idea while writing, and talking to herself while writing (See Appendix 19 for the frequency of each composing action.) Sally’s most common composing behaviours were talking to herself while writing and looking up. On several occasions these two behaviours occurred together. During a free writing episode, she looked up saying “I like, I like to.” This simple sentence starter was incorporated into a poem with a twist to the ending.

\[
I \text{ like school}
\]
\[
school!
\]
\[
I \text{ like snow}
\]
\[
snow!
\]
\[
I \text{ like snowman}
\]
\[
snowman!
\]
\[
I \text{ like toy’s}
\]
\[
toy’s!
\]
\[
I \text{ like day’s}
\]
\[
day’s!
\]
\[
I \text{ like Hug’s}
\]
\[
Hug’s!
\]
\[
I \text{ Love you}
\]
Composing orally was also combined with pencil movement. While engaged in an inferring activity from *George and Martha Tons of Fun* (Marshall, 1980) Sally said a part of her message out loud while pointing word by word on her blank paper. She then wrote:

*I think Martha was not hypnotize because she walked into the kitchen and aet george’s cookies.*

Use of a graphic organizer in planning *The Flying Book* supported Sally’s composing process. Sally looked back and forth from her planner to her message page, saying a word out loud as she looked at her planner. She wrote,

> then Lilly got
> in idea “I’ll be back”
> she said. then she came
> back with a roge (rope). they
> tied it on to the book.
> they pulled but it was to
> strog (strong). She felt scared
> because it bib (did) not work.

Sally’s ability to compose a variety messages on a variety of topics was confirmed by Mrs. Zee. She identified idea generation as one of Sally’s strengths as a developing writer. In our second interview Mrs. Zee talked about Sally’s ability to compose. “I would say her ability to generate ideas is more at grade level. She can do a few more different types of sentences… There is more voice in her work.” When I interviewed Sally after an on-demand writing sample she talked with confidence about her ability to generate an idea, put voice into her writing, and think of her audience.

> I thought it…I was gonna write about the tooth fairy.
> I was trying to make sense with the picture so they can understand the whole thing together.
> I was proud so if little kids were gonna see my writing I would say bye bye tooth fairy.
> Cause that would be funny.
Sally engaged in a variety of actions during the writing of her messages that were interpreted as composing actions. Standing out as most common were looking up and talking to herself while writing. Sally’s composing actions were independently initiated and supported her in expressing her ideas in her own voice.

4.1.4. Sally’s Constructing Actions

Actions by a child that were observed during the recorded expression of ideas were categorized as constructing actions (Clay, 1991). The constructing actions that I observed while Sally was writing were: asking how to spell a word, copying a sentence starter, copying a word, drawing after writing, indicating finished, inserting quotation marks, looking in her practice spelling book, making mouth movements, recording a cluster of letters, recording letter by letter, saying a word out loud, spelling a word orally, writing more than one word at a time, and writing a single word at a time. (See Appendix 20 for the frequency of each constructing action.)

Writing multiple words at a time and writing a word at a time were Sally’s most frequent constructing actions. For example, while writing The Flying Book she wrote, Oh no said Lilly and a couple words later catch (catch) that book. The pattern of Sally’s constructing actions indicated that she was able to express her ideas in whole word and multiple word units more often than by recording units smaller than a word. However, she also had the flexibility to engage in other more laborious word solving actions: recording letter by letter, recording clusters of letters, or copying a word. Writing until (until) and the Earth (the Earth) are examples of how she recorded two and three letter clusters.

As with her composing actions, Sally combined constructing actions in a sequence of moves. For example, while writing about her brother’s birthday she came to me with her practice spelling book. She had written rest and asked, “is the er (sound) in restaurant like the er (sound) in brother?” In addition to asking how to spell, Sally had utilized her word knowledge, letter sound knowledge, and awareness that a letter sound can have more than one spelling.

Sally engaged in a variety of constructing actions in recording her ideas. Most actions appeared to draw on her knowledge of words and word parts, and she enacted more laborious constructing
actions if required. She also looked for external support, specifically to confirm the spelling of a word.

4.1.5. Sally’s Monitoring Actions

Monitoring actions are observable actions by a child that are focused on previously written text. Reading aloud text she had written and erasing to make changes in text as it was being written (Boocock, et al., 2003) were Sally’s most frequent monitoring actions. While observing in the classroom, I became more specific in capturing erasing actions and started to note if Sally was erasing a letter, word, or multiple words. Other monitoring behaviours noted were looking back into the text and moving her pencil along the text. (See Appendix 21 for the frequency of each monitoring action.)

Sally’s monitoring actions appeared to be focused on a letter, a word, or a phrase. The most frequently observed behaviour was reading back a few words of her text before adding to it. I observed Sally read back over her entire message only once. All but one observation of pencil movement was combined with reading back into the text.

Interpreting erasing as a monitoring action became evident early in the study as Sally worked on her Mice report. She wrote:

\[
\text{Mices live in a} \\
\text{small holl in the} \\
\text{wall they could live} \\
\text{in a wall in the} \\
\text{stor or in a Libaray} \\
\text{they could live} \\
\text{anywhere.}
\]

By comparing my notes with her written product, I saw that as she worked through this piece of writing she erased and rewrote the letter \(v\) in the word \(live\) on line one and the word \(in\) on line four. On line six she wrote \(anywh\), erased those letters, and wrote \(anywhere\) on a new line. From these erasing actions it appeared that she was monitoring on letter and word formation and on spatial layout.
In a second example from later in the study, Sally’s written response to the question, “If you were in charge of the golden egg, where would you hide it and why would you hide it there?” was:

I would hide the golden egg in a hot and sunny place (place). filled with lots of nice people (people). you will find in a small room you will not find me here.

A comparison of my notes with the written product showed that Sally was monitoring on word spacing when she erased the letter g on line one and rewrote it further away from the previous word the. On line two she appeared to be monitoring on her composition when she wrote: hot place, erased place and wrote: and sunny place (place). Monitoring on spacing between words was again evident when she made a q next to the word nice on line three, erased it, and allowed for more space with the previous words when writing qeqol (people).

Sally’s monitoring actions were primarily erasing and re-reading actions. Her erasing actions indicated attention to letters, words and spacing, which have been described in the literature as surface level features (Matsumura et al., 2002). In creating the phrase hot and sunny place, she may have been monitoring on meaning and the best way to express her ideas.

4.1.6. Sally’s Messages
Sally’s composing, constructing and monitoring actions provided insight into the ways she went about the writing activities in her grade two classroom. Further insight into Sally’s writing development came from analyses of her written products. All writing samples were analyzed for control of directional rules, attention to spatial layout, message clarity, spelling, letter knowledge, and use of punctuation. (See Appendix 22 for a complete list of writing codes and profiles for each case study student.) Next, I chose two samples of Sally’s writing for analysis of ideas, organization and voice. This analysis focused on what the student could do and was adapted from Spandel’s (2012) continuum approach to writing development.
Directional and spatial learning are foundational steps in written language development that must be learned (Clay, 2001). Sally controlled directional rules at the message level, moving left to right across the page with a return sweep to the left, without lapses. At the word level she had one lapse. She wrote *gmo* for the abbreviation *omg*. Although she appeared to be monitoring for spacing between words, there were lapses in spacing between words, and one lapse in spacing letters within words.

Message clarity was a way of examining Sally’s control of the basic aspects of grammatical structures within a multi-sentence message. The following examples show Sally’s developing control over the regularities and irregularities of English grammar.

Irregular noun:

Mice are attracted to *grbij* (garbage) they *Love Eating* *grbij*. Mice *eats* 15 - 20 times a day.

Mouse is cold when they are yag (young) mice

Irregular verb:

*In a small village there were* A boy *weared a pink T-shirt* for his first day of school.

*three frands Emma, Lilly and Jack.*

Sally’s use of prepositions, pronouns, and past tense subject verb agreement across multiple sentences are evident in her fictional story, titled *Money Tree*.

-One sunny day I woke up and looked out of my window. I couldn’t believe my eyes there were money all over the tree. I ran downstairs and I toled my mom. there is money on my tree “let’s go bay (buy) stuf” saiand (said) my mom. We bot a school we bot a cat we bot every thing.*

*The End*
Figure 1: Sally’s Tooth Fairy Story

I lost my tooth, I put it under my pillow, the tooth fairy came. But she gave me money. But she forgot to take my tooth back. By the tooth fairy.
I am so excited for tomorrow. Because someone from Israel is coming to Canada. And I know he is going to pick me up from school on Friday.
4.1.6.1. Ideas, Organization, and Voice
To analyze the development of ideas, organization and voice in Sally’s writing I used Spandel’s (2012) Primary Continuums for ideas, organization and voice with two writing samples (see Figures 1 and 2). These pieces were on-demand writing samples, but were chosen because the topics were Sally’s choice, and she appeared to enjoy creating the stories.

In this analysis, ideas are “the writer’s main message or story line, and all the details that support or expand that message or story” (Spandel, 2012, p. 5). In both samples, Sally used text and art to create a message. In the Tooth Fairy she began with the art and in The Visitor she created the art after writing the text. She used multiple sentences and added detail to the main idea (e.g., that she will be picked up by the mystery visitor on Friday). Both text and image are connected to the main idea. Her images showed detail: in Figure 1 the butterflies on the bed cover, snoring, and the tooth waiting at the head of the bed for the Tooth Fairy; in Figure 2 the mystery visitor’s head in the airplane window. Sally was able to read her messages, and they are fully decodable by the reader.

Organization accounts for “the design and structure of a piece of writing” (Spandel, 2012, p. 6). Sally organizes her messages in such a way that the reader is able to follow the sequence of events and the development of her ideas. In The Visitor she uses an opening sentence, I am so excited for tomorrow, that draws the reader into the message. In The Tooth Fairy she finishes with a twist: But she forgot to take my tooth!!! She uses and, but, and because as connecting words.

Voice refers to the style or character of a piece of writing (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) to which the reader responds. It reflects personality, confidence, enthusiasm, curiosity, and passion (Spandel, 2012). Sally’s writing has a personal style. She used multiple exclamation marks to convey excitement in The Tooth Fairy, and conveys her anticipation of Friday in The Visitor when she will finally meet him. Sally’s comment after writing The Tooth Fairy shows her growing awareness of audience: “If little kids were gonna see my writing I would say, ‘bye bye tooth fairy’ cause that would be funny.”

From a developmental perspective, Sally’s control of message clarity adds support to findings that one-trial learning rarely occurs (Clay, 2005b; Siegler, 2006). Rather, change in written
language development is recognized as a process from being something new, to just known, to successfully problem-solved, to easily produced but easily thrown, to being used in most contexts, to being used in any context (Clay, 2001, 2016). I recognized this view of change in the ways in which Sally learned about written language through her writing and her interactions about writing.

4.1.7. Sally’s Writing Interactions with Her Teacher

Sally’s interactions with others during writing activities situates her writing development within the context of her grade two classroom. Sally’s interactions with her teacher Mrs. Zee were more frequent and diverse than her interactions with another adult or her classmates. (See Appendices 23 and 24 for a full list of writing interactions for the case study students.)

Interactions with the classroom teacher were categorized as those that 1) facilitated a writing action, 2) focused attention on some aspect of writing, and 3) provided feedback on an idea or written product. However brief, these interactions required a response from Sally that challenged her and moved some aspect of her writing forward in some way.

During our first interview, Mrs. Zee described how her perception of Sally as a writer changed due to her discovery that Sally’s lack of interest in writing was hiding her capability. Mrs. Zee raised her expectations of Sally and made them very explicit.

[S]he had a bit of work refusal. And I always find that tricky. Is that work refusal or is it ability? So, I don’t push too hard at the beginning because if there’s something else going on I don’t want to stop them from writing… I’m happy to see something. Then I pushed a little further and noticed, oh you know how to write you just didn’t want to. Now that I know she knows how to write I have been getting a bit more from her.

Teacher help needs to be very explicit. Maybe not as much now, but I found if I wasn’t saying, “I expect you to do two more sentences” she’d take the shortcut, so that’s helped her.
4.1.7.1. Providing Feedback

Feedback from Mrs. Zee gave support and direction for engaging in a next step. As Appendix 23 shows, many of Sally’s interactions with Mrs. Zee were around receiving feedback, often in the form of a question which required a responsive action by Sally. As the following example shows, a probing question helped Sally to articulate an idea.

Mrs. Zee:  (Reads aloud) The mommy tried to wash the paint off the wall.  
How else can they try to get it off?
Sally:  The daddy could wash it with a paper towel.
Mrs. Zee:  Okay Sally you write it.

Asking for more information was another form of feedback common in Mrs. Zee’s interactions with Sally. Mrs. Zee directed Sally to add to her research report on mice when she said, “Look at your research and see if there is another topic you can come up with. Do they have predators?” This question provided direction but was open ended enough for Sally to independently make the next move.

4.1.7.2. Focusing Attention

Interactions that focused Sally’s attention toward some aspect of writing were individualized lessons centred on a specific expectation, such as using quotation marks. Mrs. Zee’s first interaction with Sally about using quotation marks was while writing The Flying Book story. Mrs. Zee gave Sally some input inviting her into the learning.

Mrs. Zee:  Do you want to try using quotation marks? What could she say? If you had a book and it flew away what would you say?
Sally:  Oh no!
Mrs. Zee:  So use the quotation mark and close the quotation. Then…, said Lily let’s go catch that book.  
(Adds in the quotation marks around Oh no.)
Sally:  Oh that’s a lot of quotation marks.

Later, Mrs. Zee explained to me that she usually asked only the highest students to try using quotation marks. However, that day Sally had copied her problem from her planner, and getting her to add quotation marks around the dialogue would challenge her. After the individual lesson
Sally went over to the whiteboard and appeared to be studying Mrs. Zee’s example. Back at her desk she inserted quotation marks into her text with the following result:

_But one day Lilly found a_ mysterious Book. She _picked it up but it flew_ away from her hands. “Oh no” said “Lilly” _lets go_ "cath “that” book."

Sally’s first attempt led me to wonder if her attention was on how to make quotation marks rather than on how to use quotation marks. That understanding came over subsequent opportunities to use them in her writing.

4.1.7.3. Facilitating Action

Facilitating actions by Mrs. Zee were observed during individual conferencing times or when she moved around the classroom and interacted with students as they were writing. Like all teacher interactions, facilitating actions were brief and served to keep Sally writing or move her writing development forward in some way. For example, while writing a page of her _Mice_ report, Sally looked up and asked a classmate, “How do you spell library?” Overhearing this, Mrs. Zee redirected Sally to, “Use your word practice book.”

Writing down Sally’s idea could be interpreted as a highly supportive teaching decision, as in the following example from a problem and solution story planned with a classmate. However, since the focus was on the planning of ideas, writing those ideas down for the students kept the focus of their learning on the planning process.

Mrs. Zee: Why didn't the paper towel work?
Classmate: (Responds.)
Mrs. Zee: I’m going to write “but there was no water” because that was Sally’s idea.

Interactions with Mrs. Zee around writing also occurred in a cluster of teaching moves. For example, in the following exchange around Sally’s planning of a problem and solution scene in _The Flying Book_ story, Mrs. Zee asked for more information, asked a question, supported the
generation of an idea, helped to pull Sally’s ideas together, and possibly reformulated her language, although I was not able to hear Sally’s contribution.

Mrs. Zee: Add the detail of the scissors. What’s another idea? What do you think another problem could be?
Sally: (Says something to Mrs. Zee)
Mrs. Zee: Okay the problem is the girl cut it herself.

In the classroom context, interactions between Sally and Mrs. Zee were characteristically brief, but rarely perfunctory. They reflected a knowledge of Sally’s interest, personality and capabilities as a writer and presented a manageable challenge. They were mostly focused on the development of Sally’s ideas with some attention to using punctuation.

4.1.8. Sally’s Interactions with Others in the Classroom

While interactions with Mrs. Zee demanded something of Sally that moved composing and constructing processes forward, this was not evident in her interactions with classmates (See Appendix 24: Interactions with Others for Case Study Students.) In the following example from a pair planning activity, Sally took a passive role, leaving most of the work for her classmate.

Classmate: What’s the solution?
Sally: The solution
Classmate: I’ll write it
Sally (Puts on headphones)

Sally was more actively involved when she shared her story of the Money Tree with Cam. She may have disagreed with Cam’s suggestions, but was challenged to provide more details.

Cam: I’m ready for you to tell me your story.
Sally (Reads her story to Cam with fluency and expression.)
Cam: We bought a school? Why would they buy a school? No, you should buy a sports car for your dad.
Sally: No. You know what they bought? Everything in the whole entire world.
Cam: Even a baby? Even a boat? The Titanic? A cruise ship?
Sally: They bought broken books.

Both planning with a partner and sharing her story were writing activities organized by Mrs. Zee.
In self-initiated interactions Sally almost exclusively looked for help rather than offered help. The one offer of help I observed was on Valentine’s Day when the children were writing acrostic poems using the word Valentine. Sally was sitting in the group meeting area with other classmates when she said, “Guys, I thought of a word.” However, when a classmate came over to look at her poem she hid her work.

There were nuanced differences in the type of spelling help given to Sally by a classmate or an adult. Classmates helped by spelling the word for Sally, and thereby doing the problem solving for her. To get spelling help from an adult she was consistently prompted to try the word in her spelling practice book and contribute some of the problem solving. For example, Sally asked a classroom assistant how to spell kitchen. The assistant responded to Sally by saying the word out loud. Sally wrote kichin and then the correct form of the word was written above her attempt. Although classmates were helpful in allowing Sally to get on with her writing, adult help, like teacher help, required Sally to be an active participant in the solving.

Sally’s interactions in the classroom with others were primarily help-seeking and focused on spelling. As Appendix 24 shows, she did not engage in classroom conversation during any of my observations, nor did she appear particularly interested in her classmates’ writing or discussions.

4.1.9. Sally’s Use of Classroom Resources and Supports
Sally made use of chart and whiteboard displays that were part of the day’s writing lesson. For example, she appropriated language from the group lesson on where one might hide a golden egg. The chart example was, I would put the golden egg in a warm and sunny place. Sally wrote, I would hide the golden egg in a hot and sunny place. The next example shows how she also used chart and whiteboard displays as a resource for problem solving an unknown word. Written on the chart was: She woke up and cut the vine. Sally wrote: She cut the vine. In a series of moves to problem solve the word vine, Sally said the word aloud and then twice looked back and forth to the chart while recording the word.

Sally often used her practice spelling book as a resource for problem solving an unknown word she needed in her writing (see Figure 3). The expectation was that she would trial a word on her own then get feedback on her trial unless she was satisfied with the word. Sally’s spelling
practice book contained a history of the words she trialled with the correct spellings next to some of those words. I also observed her go back into her practice spelling book to look for a word previously written that was needed again. Trialling a word also created an opportunity to self-monitor her attempt. In the following interaction with me, Sally knew the word she trialled was spelled correctly.

Sally:  (Enters a word into her practice book)
Janice: Which word did you try in your practice book?
Sally:  girl.
Janice: Did you get it?
Sally:  Yes.

Sally’s practice spelling book became her most important resource for problem solving unknown words. I once observed her look in a book during writing, and on another occasion she found the word *Saturday* on the class calendar.

There were a few times when I observed Sally remove herself from the noise and activity of the classroom. Headphones were a resource in Mrs. Zee’s class for blocking out classroom noise. Sally made use of headphones on three occasions during writing time. On another occasion during free writing of a story about her brother’s birthday weekend, Sally chose to sit in a single desk with her back to the classroom activity. (See Appendix 25: Use of Classroom Resources and Supports by Case Study Students.)

Within the classroom environment, charts and her spelling practice book were Sally’s main writing resources. She was also supported by the setup of the classroom. She made use of a quiet space and headphones to block out the noise of classroom life.
Figure 3. A Page from Sally’s Spelling Practice Book
4.1.10. Sally’s Written Language Development

Qualitative data were gathered from different sources to create a detailed profile of the ways in which Sally’s written language was developing within the context of her grade two classroom. Assessment of literacy competencies at the end of the study using the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) showed that Sally had mastered letter identification, concepts about print, hearing and recording sounds in words, and basic sight words (see Appendices 6 and 7). Her writing vocabulary, *Burt Word Reading Test* (NZCER, 1981) score and text reading level were at age and grade level. While reading unfamiliar text, Sally was able to search for and use information from all sources with a consistent search for print information within the text. She was also able to monitor her problem solving and to take action to self-correct. By level 24, however, she was appealing more for help than trying to solve an unknown word on her own.

During the course of the study I monitored Sally’s reading twice by taking a Running Record on her classroom guided reading book. She had moved from level 18 on the first administration to a level 20 on the second administration. On both of the text reading assessments she scored at 95% or above with a high self-correction rate. Sally’s gains in reading were also noted by Mrs. Zee. In our final interview she said that Sally was reading at grade level and had made “strong gains” in reading.

If a child is to continue to make steady progress in writing after Reading Recovery, “taking her developing processing system further,” her writing needs to become “as varied and complex as children making good progress in classrooms. (Clay, 2016, p. 85). Sally changed from being what Mrs. Zee called a “fairly reluctant non-writer” whose goal was “to be done” to a writer who was “writing more than some of [the] higher students getting those ideas out.” According to Mrs. Zee’s assessment of Sally’s writing, she made progress on some measures of writing that put her at grade level. These areas were generating ideas, giving voice to her writing, composing different types of sentences, and her ability to organize a beginning, middle and end in her messages. Mrs. Zee stated that editing was “still too hard,” and that Sally’s control of spelling and use of punctuation were below grade level: “She finds punctuation and spelling the most challenging, and that can hold her back.”
Even though Sally was able to identify all letters on the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013), Mrs. Zee recognized that Sally did not have full control of letter formation. “I don’t think letter formation is probably accurate, which again would slow [her] down, and make [her] more tired.” In my final interview with Sally she said that “spelling and printing” were areas of writing development that she wanted to work on.

Although Sally would ask for help with spelling Mrs. Zee acknowledged that Sally was “using more of her own knowledge base.” The tension between letting ideas flow freely and thinking about spelling came together in the use of her practice spelling book. It was a way to access help while applying her knowledge of words and spelling patterns within words. Sally’s concern about spelling demonstrated her awareness that there is a right way to spell a word and her motivation to discover a correct spelling. As Mrs. Zee noted, “I think she’s getting the confidence to use what she knows: her spelling and her practice book. I think that helps with her confidence: ‘oh I did spell that word’.”

Sally was able to manage the writing activities in her grade two classroom. From what is emphasized in Reading Recovery, she composed different types of messages, and used writing as a form of personal expression accessible to an audience. She had different ways of solving to get to new words, with spelling, punctuation and letter formation her biggest challenges. Sally’s monitoring actions appeared to be mainly directed toward surface features of text. Letter formation and use of lower case were not fully mastered, and she seemed aware of this as a goal for improvement. Sally appeared to know when she needed help and how to get that help. She actively sought help from her teacher and other adults primarily for spelling. She used classroom resources to support composing and constructing her messages. Her interactions with classmates during writing were minimal. She did not appear to feed off of the social interactions around her. She was supported by Mrs. Zee who pushed her toward greater independence and ever higher expectations.
4.2. Cam as a Developing Writer

4.2.1. Getting to Know Cam

Cam was in Mrs. Zee’s grade two class. At the beginning of the study he was 7.04 years and 7.09 years at the end. Cam’s European-Canadian, English-speaking family included his parents and older brother. In my first interactions with him, while administering the Observation Survey tasks (Clay, 2013), Cam was cooperative but appeared apprehensive. In order to ensure he was at ease, we worked through all the tasks in short sessions over several days finishing with Running Records of text reading, which turned out to be the most challenging task for him (see Appendices 8 and 9).

Cam expressed his confidence as a writer in our first interview (see Appendix 14). What he had learned most recently as a writer was that he was “getting very good.” This made him feel “good.” What he wanted to learn next as a writer was “how to do very long words.” He took an active problem-solving approach to the writing tasks and appeared interested in writing words. His writing vocabulary score was low average for mid-grade two. He was able to generate words, with one word helping him to think of another. For example, he generated words analogous with his name, words that started with the same letter (is, in), reversible words (on and no), words that rhyme (run, sun), and two unique words (know and apple). Even though Cam could identify lower case b and d on the Letter Identification task, he did not control their formation when writing up (uq) and down (bown).

On the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words task he formed letters easily and legibly. He demonstrated his knowledge of directional movement and spatial awareness between words and within words. He appeared to write some words from memory, and when he wrote the word day he articulated the initial sound. While he wrote the word school, he articulated the c, and said the entire word out loud after writing it, as if to check. All errors were vowel substitutions: heve for have, it for at, and tok for take.

Cam did not take the same active a problem-solving approach on reading text. His score on the Burt Word Reading Test (NZCER, 1981) and Clay Word Reading task (Clay, 2013) were in the range of early to mid-grade one. This indicated that his reading vocabulary was not sufficient to
support grade two level text. His classroom guided reading text, with which I started assessing his reading, was early grade two (level 18). Though a familiar text to Cam, it scored in the hard range (below 90% accuracy) as did levels 14 to 16. I concluded that lower text levels would also be a challenge since Cam appeared to approach word solving as a memory activity rather than a problem-solving activity. When he did initiate problem solving actions he searched for information from the meaning of the story, the structure of the language and the print information at the beginning of the word; for example, *rumble* for *roar* and *great* for *good*. When he did initiate self-correcting actions, he was able to use information that he neglected on the error. For example, he read *went to a* for *went for a*, stopped, reread, and self-corrected. Twice he reread a phrase, and each time this action led to a self-correction. There was no evidence of problem solving by taking a word apart or decoding past the first letter.

Cam’s problem-solving activity was not efficient enough to read mid to late grade one text levels. Consequently, when he had difficulty he could not engage in word or word part problem solving. He made no attempt or appeal for help. Within the standard administration of Running Records if a child was unable to proceed because he was aware of an error and could not correct it, or because he was not able to attempt the word, the teacher was to wait no more than about three seconds before telling the word. This preserved the story line and the reader could continue (Clay, 2013). After telling Cam the problem word he most often repeated the word and then carried on reading. His reading pace was slow, word by word with pauses and with few places where the reading was fluent.

During our first interview Mrs. Zee noted what she described as a slide in Cam’s reading. “He’s the one I’m most concerned about because I see him continuing to slide. I’m getting help from the special education teacher to hopefully put in some remediation this year if that will help at all.” She also thought that writing was a relative strength. She said he was reluctant to try when he needed to solve an unknown word, and she wondered about his expressive language. After sharing Cam’s Observation Survey results with Mrs. Zee, she took him out of his level 18 guided reading group and provided him with one on one reading instruction at a lower text level. In subsequent Running Records taken at regular intervals he progressed from a Level 12 to a Level 14.
4.2.2. Cam Writing in the Classroom

I made 20 observations of Cam writing in the classroom during the morning writing block (see Appendix 17 for a description of the writing activities in Mrs. Zee’s class). Early in my observations Cam was working on a research report about fish, which he titled *Fish*. Information on characteristics of fish, where fish lived, and what they ate was mainly copied word for word from a beautifully illustrated book on fish. Cam’s report also included detailed illustrations that supported the one or two sentences on each page. He put the most interesting details about fish into his drawings rather than in his written message.

When there was a choice of topic Cam drew on his knowledge base and interests (see Table 2: Cam’s Classroom Writing). He designed a cereal which he called *Rock Star*. It was gluten free and had an outer space connection to the stars. He wrote a narrative problem and solution story titled *The Statue That Was Alive*. Mike and Kevin were the main characters and appeared in other stories. Mike was in Cam’s *Ghost Spirit* story plan, and Kevin was a main character in Cam’s three-chapter story titled *The Tornado*. His stories contained action, conflict, and problems to be overcome with great bravery and ingenuity. Statues, zombies and ghosts came to life. They needed to be cut down with swords and axes or caged. Tornadoes were managed by being “just a bad dream,” until the third chapter when they became real. What to do during a real tornado stimulated conversation with a classmate and may have inspired a safe ending for Kevin and his family down in the basement. There were always safe endings to Cam’s stories.

Table 2
Cam’s Classroom Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Writing</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Characteristics / Where fish live / What sharks eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal Box</td>
<td>Rock Star</td>
<td>Planner / Checklist / Drawing / Final Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Today I will show kindness by…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrostic Poem</td>
<td>Valentine’s Day</td>
<td>Letters in the word Valentines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>George &amp; Martha</td>
<td>What you think happened and why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tons of Fun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Today I will show kindness by…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual Recount and Response</td>
<td>Pink T-shirt Day</td>
<td>How Pink T-shirt Day started / How I can stop bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>George &amp; Martha</td>
<td>Back in Town What Martha was feeling / What George was feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipe</td>
<td>Pancakes</td>
<td>Materials and ingredients / Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>Ghost Spirit</td>
<td>Title/ Characters / Setting / Problem Failed attempts / Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>The Statue That Was Alive</td>
<td>Title/ Characters / Setting / Problem Failed attempts / Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure Story</td>
<td>The Statue That Was Alive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Response</td>
<td>Earth Day</td>
<td>I didn’t think Earth Day mattered until…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Response</td>
<td>Golden Egg</td>
<td>If you were in charge of a golden egg where would you hide it and why would you hide it there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure story</td>
<td>The Tornado</td>
<td>Three Chapters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During our first interview Mrs. Zee expressed her concern with Cam’s ability to communicate what he wanted to say in written language. He needed help getting started, particularly on teacher assigned writing activities. As Mrs. Zee explained, and referring to Cam’s recount of the origin of Pink T-Shirt Day,
We found out the last few days he definitely needs that starter sentence, something that he can copy, something to build his confidence, help him think and then write it down. Once he gets going, he did write a ton yesterday.

There were ideas that Cam wanted to relay through writing, but his confidence deterred him from getting started. The story and sentence starters supported him to get going; then his interest and imagination helped to keep him writing.

4.2.3. Cam’s Composing Actions

Analyses of Cam’s composing actions provided insights into how he went about communicating his ideas using written language. Actions interpreted as composing actions were: drawing, generating ideas, inventing detail not written, looking up, pencil movements, planning, talking about ideas during writing, and talking to himself while writing (see Appendix 19 for the frequency of each composing action).

Early in my observations, Cam’s composing actions were apparent in his preference for drawing over writing. For example, during the making of his Fish report (see Figure 4) Cam communicated his detailed knowledge of fish characteristics through his drawing rather than in his message. Drawing also helped Cam to organize his ideas. In the mid-study interview following an on-demand writing sample (see Appendix 15) he said that creating pictures of his favourite activities on his family’s cruise holiday “helped me write down.”

Where pictures could not tell the story, Cam relied on the support of a book, chart of key words, or story starters to begin a writing activity. I shared this observation with Mrs. Zee who then made sure those supports were on display. This type of external support appeared to give him confidence to get started. Then he was able to continue with his own ideas. For example, the support of a story starter and key words is evident in his Pink T-Shirt story.

*Pink T-shirt day started because*

*sumone ward (weared) a pink T-shirt*

*on his first day of sheool*

*and sum bullieds (bullies) camand (came and) bullied him because the bullied (bullies) toto (thought) that pink was a gals colue (girl’s colour)*
and then Travis Price and
David Sheppard cam and hep
and they wet (went) and bot 50 T-Shirts
and gave then to there frens (friends)
that how pink T-shirts Day
was mad (made).

Figure 4. Cam's Fish Report

Generating ideas and talking about those ideas in a partner planning activity were also external supports for composing. In the following conversation Cam and his classmate Mike were deciding on the characters for a problem and solution story plan.

Mike: It could be Mike and Cam.
Cam: My name’s going to be Mike. Is this how you spell the word Mike? I watch on TV because my TV doesn’t have Disney. Mike and… (Looks at eraser.)
Mike: There should be two characters because two characters should be doing this. And then…
Cam: We need setting.
Mike: I’m just going to be.. my name, my name is Zombie.
Cam: The zombies aren’t the main character. I’m just writing Mike, Mike and Bob (laughs).
Mike: Mike and Bob.
Cam: Should I do Kevin? Mike, how do you write Kevin? I don’t know.

Some of Cam’s pencil movements were interpreted as playful, but in other instances they appeared to be helpful to composing. For example, Cam tapped his pencil on his notebook, rolled it along his leg, and positioned an eraser on top of it. These movements were often combined with looking up or looking away from his writing without a clear focus on anything in particular, as if he was looking inward.

Looking up without a focus was Cam’s most common composing behaviour. In some instances, his looking up behaviour reminded me of a swimmer coming up for air, for example from my notes, “looks up, looks down, looks up, looks down and keeps writing.” While writing the third chapter of *The Tornado* I asked Cam about looking up.

Janice: When you look up are you looking at something or thinking?
Cam: Thinking.
Janice: What is your idea?
Cam: He woke the parents.
Janice: What did they do?
Cam: Go to the basement.

During my last three observations the children in Mrs. Zee’s class had free writing, and Cam wrote *The Tornado*. It was during this time that the changes in Cam’s composing actions were most evident. He did not use drawing to express his ideas. The detail went into his message. There were no external supports from a story starter or a chart of key words to assist in getting started. Yet, he approached the task with confidence, saying, “I love free write, I love free write” as he found a place to write in the classroom. He chose to sit among a grouping of four students.
and interacted with them about his ideas telling them, “Grandma’s only in the dream. [She] got sucked up ‘cause she was rescuing a baby.” What follows is his second chapter of *The Tornado* with Kevin, Gramee and the baby.

*One day Kevin went to bed and
Kevin woke up and lookt out his
window then he saa (saw) a TORNADO but
there were 2 tornados and he ran to
wake his Gramee and his Gramee
woke up and sey (she) said “is that a
tornado” ues (yes) “lets go to the undr grawd
bas uwte (out) side. they ran acras the
lone (lawn) and ones they got the
undr grawd bas? then Kevins
Gramee hrde (heard) a baby say waaaaa!
then his Gramee went uwte of
the bas and sey got suct up in to
the tornado and sey said “aaaaaa
aaa Im being suct up in the
TORNADO! Kevins Gramee felt
so bad that sey didt git the
baby? Then Kevin said “Nooooooo
oo? and he wock up and said “it
was dust (just) like the other drem”.
then he said fof (whew) that Gramee is
alive!*

Mrs. Zee commented on the change in Cam’s approach to composing a written message in our last interview. A “willingness to write independently”, and being “excited to write” were changes from the beginning of the year.

He seems happy to be reading and writing in class, so that’s good. And he wants to do it on his own too. It’s not just I’m sitting at the front and giving them ideas but they’re
doing the writing. If anything, it’s the opposite, he’s the one writing it all down. So that’s a big change, a change in confidence has definitely improved.

As Cam’s confidence improved he relied less on external supports, although he continued to enjoy sharing his ideas with others. His messages rather than his drawings became the main expression of his ideas. He engaged in a number of composing actions with looking up and pencil movements silent indications that he was thinking.

4.2.4. Cam’s Constructing Actions
While Cam was writing his messages, the constructing actions I observed were: articulating a phoneme, articulating a word, asking how to spell, copying a letter cluster, copying letter by letter, copying a sentence starter, copying a word, drawing after writing, indicating that he is finished, inserting quotation marks, looking at a previous message, looking at a planner, looking at an idea book, making mouth movements, recording a cluster of letters, recording letter by letter, saying a word out loud, spelling orally, writing multiple words, and writing a word. (See Appendix 20 for the frequency of each constructing action.)

Cam’s reliance on the external support of chart work to get composing started carried over into his constructing actions. As Mrs. Zee explained during our first interview, “Cam has been the most surprising because he tends to just want to use the sight words that he has in reading and in writing, but the pool isn’t getting much bigger. So, he’s really getting hung up.” This approach to problem solving words was evident in how he wanted to use his practice spelling book. After finishing an entry in his Kindness Book, I observed Cam take his free writing time to copy a word from a chart into his practice spelling book and put a line under it. Rather than use his spelling practice book the way it was intended — to trial words and get feedback from Mrs. Zee, he used it to build a repository of words he could access when writing (see Figure 5). Using his spelling practice book this way was potentially helpful at times when he needed a word in a message. However, as Appendix 20 shows, at moments of problem solving I did not observe Cam find and use any words he needed from his spelling practice book.
Copying from an external source was a common constructing action, particularly in the first three months of the study. I observed Cam copying letter by letter, letter clusters, words, and sentence starters. He also found words he needed by looking back at a previous message, and for his Fish story, looking at a planning page on which he had copied information from a book about fish. Although I did not observe him using his spelling book to find a word, I did observe him looking in his idea book for a word.

Cam: I know how to write Zombies. It’s in my idea book.
Mrs. Zee: Let me fix that in your idea book.

Cam could not always read the words he copied. On one occasion he asked a classmate to tell him what he had written. The class was doing procedural writing on how to make pancakes. Cam copied, measure 250 mL of pancake mix, from the whiteboard. He then asked a classmate, “What is it?” After learning what he had written, he drew a corresponding illustration.
Over the course of the study Cam became less reliant on external sources of support for constructing his written messages. Writing multiple words in one go and writing single words were his most frequent composing actions. These actions were also observed together. In the following example Mrs. Zee helped Cam to organize his ideas in writing *The Statue That Was Alive* and then encouraged him to write those ideas down.

Mrs. Zee: One day when Mike and Kevin were bringing wood into the house the statue came alive. Write that sentence down.

Cam: Moves his chair beside Mrs. Zee.

W rites *One day*

Mrs. Zee: Looks at Cam

Cam: Writes *Mike*

In the next example writing multiple words and writing single words were observed in *The Tornado*. Cam wrote, *wat am I going to do*, looked up, then wrote *mabe* (maybe).

Further evidence of change in Cam’s constructing actions came from a chronological analysis of my observations. When Cam’s constructing actions were examined over time, most occurrences of mouth movements, recording letter clusters and letter by letter, saying a word before writing it, and spelling orally, were observed in the last two months of the study. These actions indicate that he was taking a problem-solving approach to constructing the words he needed in a message. This problem-solving approach and a growing confidence in his own resources were evident when I heard him say, “I know how to write baby I’m not that dumb,” and then say *baby* out loud before writing it. In the same writing episode Cam’s problem-solving approach to writing *Gramee* is evident.

Cam: How do you write *grammy*? I want to know. Is this *g r a m m e* (spells)?

No what does it say? (Articulates) *gr a... gr and...*

Classmate: Grandma.

As Appendix 20 shows, Cam engaged in a large number of constructing actions. Over the course the study, he became less reliant on copying from charts and engaged in more word solving actions. Along with this change may have been the realization that he could take a problem-solving approach to constructing his messages rather than rely on his memory.
4.2.5 Cam’s Monitoring Actions

Cam engaged in a variety of monitoring actions. These actions were: adding to the body of a message, commenting on message length, erasing in general, erasing a letter cluster or letter, reading his message (quietly), reading aloud, finger pointing, moving his pencil along the written text, pencil pointing, tracing a letter, and verbal and non-verbal indication of monitoring. (See Appendix 21 for the frequency of each monitoring action.)

Cam’s erasing actions provided insight into what he was monitoring during message production. Sometimes it was not possible to be sure what he was erasing. On these occasions examining the writing sample uncovered evidence of his erasing actions. In the following example of Cam’s description of where he would hide a golden egg and why, his erasing actions showed he was monitoring at the letter, word and message level of written language. He monitored the size of his printing of the letter I and on the orientation of the letter s in hews (house) which he had originally formed backwards. He monitored for word choice when he changed the word the to a, and on spelling when he wrote a letter t and what could have been the beginnings of an h then changed that letter to an o to make the word to. Further into the message he wrote sutha, then changed the a to ing in an attempt to writing the word something. Monitoring for message content was evident where he erased several words, and wrote in the phrase it is suny and wrm (sunny and warm). Cam’s completed message showed b/d confusions that were not noticed and corrected.

I / I would hide the golden egg
in a famles spesl spot in thar
hew's because they mit look
thar so they kud git because / it
because (erased text not readable) / it is sunny and warm.
Thar is a loke (lock) on the / a boor dut (door but)
you will neb (need) to bo (do) a passwr (password)
to opin the boor. I’m
on sutha / suthing sine (shiny) I am
not on a lite.
Reading quietly and reading aloud, finger pointing, pencil pointing or moving a pencil along the text were monitoring actions that indicated Cam was reading back into his message. While he was writing the first chapter of *The Tornado*, Cam was about to start a fifth line of text when he returned to the beginning of his message and started to read. After a few words he suddenly stopped reading and continued writing his message. These actions prompted this exchange:

Janice: Why did you reread?
Cam: I was looking for the word *out*
Janice: Did you find it?
Cam: There (points to the word *out* on the first line of text).

Reading back in his message helped him to find a word he needed.

Some of Cam’s comments and actions (verbal and non-verbal indications) provided further evidence of monitoring. He commented on message length to classmates when he said, “My last story’s pretty good. Look how much I did.” When Mrs. Zee asked what he was doing Cam replied, “I’m making mine really big.” On another occasion a non-verbal action — banging lightly with his fist on his desk followed by erasing the word he had just written, was interpreted as a monitoring action. He had written the word *to* then changed it to the word *someone* in the sentence:

*Today I will show kindness* (kindness)
*by*

*including (including) to/ someone to play*

*wiht me.*

Cam’s monitoring actions appeared to be focused on conventions and clarity. Reading back may have resulted in going over content, but, as he told me, he also read back to find a word. Cam’s comment on the length of his message indicated that he associated a big story with a good one.

4.2.6. Cam’s Messages

Cam’s writing samples were analyzed for control of directional rules for written English language, spatial layout, message clarity, spelling, letter knowledge, and punctuation. (See Appendix 22 for a complete list of features evident in Cam’s writing samples.) I then chose two
samples for analysis of ideas, organization and voice. This analysis focused on what the student could do and was adapted from Spandel’s (2012) continuum approach to writing development.

Cam consistently followed the directional rules of left to right and return sweep in written English language. I found one lapse in word-level directional behaviour where he wrote fo for of. Cam’s messages showed his control of spacing letters within words. Spaces between words were evident in most of his messages with a few exceptions. For example, on his cereal box design he wrote, Free toy or game (toy or game).

Message clarity was analyzed by examining Cam’s use of irregular nouns, irregular verbs, pronouns, prepositions and subject verb agreement. In all of these aspects of language use, examples of correct use were common with an occasional misuse. The following examples show Cam’s control of language structure in his messages.

Irregular noun:
*Fish rule the world.*

Irregular verb:
*Fish are vertebrates.*

*Pink T-shirt day started because sumone (someone) ward (weared) a pink T-shirt.*

Preposition:
*hawabat (how about) we recycle they wet (went) to bot 50 T-Shirts things arawd (around) the prck (park)*

Pronoun:
*I didn’t think Earth Day mattered I will go and git sum until my frend tld (told) me then wotr (water) and puhe (pour) it on the grawd I got an iudeo (idea) So it cud slip [it meaning the statue, not the water]*

In our first interview, Mrs. Zee described Cam’s approach to writing words when he started grade two.

I find a lot of times when a grade two student can’t spell a word you can sound it out phonetically. His tend to be more a jumble of letters. He’ll get maybe the beginning and the end, the middle is just kind of a mix. He knows a vowel has to go in so he throws in some vowels. Vowels are his biggest challenge. Let’s say for colour he might get the c
and the r, knows an l has to go in there, and there might be an e,u and a all thrown in there. And on words you would think he would be able to sound out by now.

An analysis of Cam’s writing samples revealed a variety of spelling behaviours (see Appendix 22). In addition to standard spelling, from a bank of words he could write or read and copy, Cam drew on his knowledge of letter patterns and vowels, for example, cuming (coming), loke (lock) and stcyou (statue). When vowels were absent Cam was able to record letters in sequence, for example, crv for carve and frk for fork. Partially correct spelling was a category for words where he had the correct letters in the wrong order. Examples from Cam’s writing are oen for one and wiht for with. There were also instances in his writing where he recorded two words as one, for example, maxtost (makes most), and hawabat (how about).

The following excerpt from The Statue That Was Alive shows how Cam applied his various ways of writing words to the construction of this message.

One day Mike and Kevin were bring (were bringing) wood to make statues but wen (when) Mike saw that oen (one) of the statues mofd (moved) to a difrit (different) spot then they wandrd (wondered) how it moft and A statue came alive and the statue was cuming for Mike and Kevin and they didit (didn’t) no (know) wat (what) to do. and they were skard (scared) and it was cuming fast.

Cam used the conjunction and where a period was needed. Mrs. Zee brought this to his attention.

Cam: (Reads his message to Mrs. Zee, word by word reading and rocking back and forth as he reads)

Mrs. Zee: (Referring to line five, moft and) Okay so that’s where the period goes. So erase and and put a period there.

In a conversation with Mrs. Zee after this observation she said that Cam was “stuck on” using the word and rather than periods. She described the use of and as “hard to get rid of.” By the end of
the study Cam’s use of periods was inconsistent but more common. At the same time, he appeared to have a growing control over quotation marks, and he appeared to be trying out the question mark. The first chapter of *The Tornado* showed where Cam’s used punctuation (see Figure 6). This passage also showed that his unconventional use of capital letters was primarily related to capitalization after punctuation rather than not applying the lowercase form of a letter within a word.

Figure 6. Cam’s Story: The Tornado

*One day Kevin looked out his window and? saw a TORNADO he ran to wake up his parents and the parents said “what’s happening” Kevin said. “a tornado is coming” then they jumped out of bed and got their clothes on then they ran down stairs to the emergency room they listened for it to stop. then they got up stairs the hol havs was gone and he wock up and said “it was just a dream” then he went to tel his parins about the dream and the parins said we had a dream to about a tornado Kevin said “I had a tornado dream to” world if that was you*
then he went to tell his parents about the dream and the parents said we had a dream about a tornado” Kevin said “I had a tornado dream to” I wondered if that was you”

Figure 7. Cam’s Cruise Recount

1. At Windjamers we found our seats and then we get our food and then we ate
2. I like the basketball because we got to play games or basketball.
3. I like Central Park because a bar goes up and down.
4. I love the water park because you can splash people.

4.2.6.1. Ideas, Organization and Voice
Cam’s recount of a family cruise (see Figure 7) was an on-demand writing sample taken following the March Break holiday. I selected this piece of writing because Cam chose this personally important topic with a purpose: to communicate highlights of his trip to his classmates in drawing and writing. The second sample (see Figure 6) was written in the last month of the study during free writing time. It was also a self-chosen topic, and is the first of three chapters of a story titled The Tornado.

In expressing his ideas, Cam’s cruise recount (Figure 7) creates an interpretable message through text and art. The four images show detail: steam rising from the food in the first image, lines on the basketball in the second image, and an ice cream cone on the snack bar in the water park. All images are connected to the text and its main idea. The details build from what he likes to what he loves when he recounts his experiences at the water park, indicating this was his favourite cruise activity.

The organization of Cam’s cruise recount is clearly marked with numbers, and the drawings follow a sequence from left to right. There is a corresponding sentence for each drawing suggesting a sequence in the family’s day on the cruise ship. Each sentence uses because to connect the activity with detail on why he liked or loved it.

Cam’s voice comes out in his art and reflects his attention to detail and personal style also found in his Fish research report. His choice of I love to describe the water park and his reason, because you can splash people creates an element of fun.

In The Tornado (Figure 6) Cam expresses his ideas through text. It contains no images apart from a couple of doodles on the top of the page. The message is fully decodable and contains multiple sentences with significant detail that remains connected to the main idea: a tornado hits
and destroys the family’s home, and turns out to be a shared dream between Cam and his parents.

Cam organizes *The Tornado* with an opening sentence and brings closure to the story with the realization of a shared dream. The story has a logical order and the reader can follow the development of the story as the tornado hits the family home and the aftermath. Cam relies on the word *then* to connect the events and keep the story going.

Cam’s voice comes out strongly in *The Tornado*. The story is lively, engaging and fun to read out loud. His voice is sustained through the story. He speaks to his audience, and uses his voice to influence the meaning, for example, the capital letters for *TORNADO* communicates fear, and *jumped out of bed* indicates haste.

Over the course of the study Cam developed voice in text as well as in drawing. In our final interview he showed his awareness of how he had the power to touch readers (Spandel, 2012) when he said, “I like to show people it.” In the development of ideas Cam moved from a reliance on his art to creating text that was as engaging as his illustrations. In our interview following the on-demand writing sample (see Appendix 15 and Figure 7) Cam said, “all the things I did (in the illustrations) helped me write down.” showing his dependence on his drawings. In the last interview (see Appendix 14) he said, “I love making chapter stories” showing his confidence in communicating his ideas in text.

### 4.2.7. Cam’s Writing Interactions with His Teacher

Teacher interactions were categorized as those that facilitated student action, focused student attention, and provided the student with feedback. An examination of Mrs. Zee’s interactions with Cam showed that most facilitated his next writing action or provided feedback on his writing. (See Appendix 23 for the frequency of student and teacher interactions.)

#### 4.2.7.1. Facilitating Action

Once it was discovered that chart work helped Cam get started, Mrs. Zee ensured charts were visible and reminded him that they were a helpful resource. In the following example the
students were expected to make an entry into their Kindness Book. Cam, sitting at his desk, had not started.

Mrs. Zee:  (Speaking to the whole class)
If you are stuck thinking about a kindness thing the chart is here.

Cam:  (Looks over at the chart and begins to write. He lightly bangs his fist on his desk, erases, looks back at the chart and smiles.)

Providing an opening phrase was another type of interaction that facilitated getting Cam started.
In the next example Mrs. Zee offered a way to start a narrative story.

Mrs. Zee:  So how can we start it?
Cam:  I don’t really know.
Mrs. Zee:  So if we start with, one day…

This opening phrase later appeared in Cam’s free writing of *The Tornado*.

Inviting Cam to orally compose his message was another type of teacher support that facilitated student action. In the following example, through the act of orally composing Cam was also able to recast what he wanted to say in a more developed form.

Cam:  Um… Mike tried to close the door but he went through the door”
        Um… Mike closed the door on the ghost ….”
Mrs. Zee:  Great write it down.
Cam:  (Begins writing.)

4.2.7.2. Providing Feedback
Interactions that provided feedback were generally a response to what Cam had already written and provided him with a reader’s perspective on his writing. In the following example Cam needed to add more information in order to make his hints on a hiding place for a golden egg clear to the reader. Mrs. Zee supported Cam to extend his idea, and in their conversation she helpfully pulled his ideas together.

Mrs. Zee:  (Reads in a quiet voice.)
Okay give me another clue ‘cause I can’t figure it out yet.
What is this?
Cam:  Family.
Mrs. Zee: (Reading out loud)

…special spot in a house because…

Where in the house?

Cam: A special spot.

Mrs. Zee: You have to pick the spot you could say in a…

Cam: Like treasure.

Mrs. Zee: What room?

Cam: A locked up room.

Mrs. Zee: So you could say, there’s a lock on that room.

Mrs. Zee’s feedback was on the development of Cam’s ideas. Although there was a word she could not figure out, she kept the focus on how he could communicate his idea for a hiding space to a reader, not on fixing his spelling.

4.2.7.3. A Combination of Moves

In some instances, Mrs. Zee’s actions occurred in a cluster of moves. In the following interaction she focused Cam’s attention to a teaching point, facilitated word solving by articulating a word part, directed him on how to use of his practice spelling book, and provided feedback on an attempt.

Mrs. Zee: Sound out like a closed syllable word K e v

Write it down as you think about it in your practice book. It’s a book for making mistakes. Try it a couple of ways see if it looks right.

Cam: Kevin starts like my name Cam, Kevin

(Writes Cevin in his practice spelling book.)

Mrs. Zee: What did you come up with?

(Looks in Cam’s practice spelling book)

Cam: C it’s so close. I’ve always seen it with a K

I know cause it’s like my name.

In the next interaction Mrs. Zee gave feedback by asking him a question. She kept the focus of their interaction on developing his ideas by quickly writing in a phrase. She then summarized her understanding of the plot with another question.

Mrs. Zee: (Reading Cam’s message)
Mike tries to slice? Slice with a sword. I’m going to add but it broke
Kevin tried to trip so it … but it didn’t break.
So the sword doesn’t work but the axe does?
Cam: Because an axe breaks wood.

As Appendix 23 shows, the subject of some facilitative and feedback interactions was content level oriented while other interactions were surface level oriented. Of key importance to Cam’s writing development in the classroom was getting started. To this end, Mrs. Zee engaged in a variety of facilitating actions focused on content. In interactions where Mrs. Zee was focused on the development of ideas she let other things go, such as spelling. Where she did focus on spelling, it was on a word Cam wanted to write or it was to give him the spelling of a word so that his thinking remained on the development of his ideas.

4.2.8. Cam’s Interactions with Others in the Classroom
Cam’s interactions with others in his grade two classroom during writing activities were: asking a classmate to read chart work (see the making pancakes example in Cam’s Constructing Actions), asking for direction, talking about composing, covering what he had written, looking at a classmate’s writing, and planning (see Cam’s conversation with Mike about naming characters in Cam’s Composing Actions). I also observed Cam sharing his message, asking for spelling help from a classmate, and engaging in table conversation. (See Appendix 24 Interactions with Other for Case Study Students.)

All of Cam’s interactions with others during writing were with his classmates. He did not seek assistance or interact with an Educational Assistant or a parent volunteer. Cam did, however, ask for help from Mrs. Zee. In the following example he asked for clarification on the golden egg writing task.

Cam: Miss Zee, do it where you can find it?
Mrs. Zee: You are putting different clues, so we can know where to find it.
Cam: (Stands up and sticks his pencil into his eraser.)
(To a classmate) Where’d you hide yours?
In the golden egg example Cam also engaged in table conversation to find out what others were writing. On another occasion he shared his idea, “I’m doing mine about a statue” while writing *The Statue That Was Alive*.

Cam’s tornado story became well known in the classroom as he shared developments with his classmates and listened to their conversation. There was table conversation about where to hide during a tornado that may have inspired Cam to use the basement as a safe place to hide in his story. During another conversation he told classmates about Grandma (Gramee) and that she was going to get sucked up, but only in a dream. He also announced that he was going to share this chapter with the class.

Cam appeared to be well liked by his classmates and there was genuine interest in his tornado story. He seemed to be aware that his classmates were a ready audience for his messages. As Appendix 24 shows, Cam engaged in table conversation and used his classmates as a source of help.

### 4.2.9. Cam’s Use of Classroom Resources

Charts were an important support for Cam’s writing development. In the following example the students walked around the classroom and created lists of silent *e* words on small whiteboards. Cam moved confidently around the room. He found words on charts that were no longer displayed but were accessible on a work table in the back of the room.

Cam: I have *ice*. Is *fice* even a word?
Classmate: *face*
Cam: *fist*? (smiles)
        I have nine; I have 10.
        (Walks over to the large whiteboard.)
        (Walks to the back of the classroom and looks at a chart.)
        Mike, come over here I found one.
        (Points to *ape*.)
Cam: That one’s *dude*.
        (Walks over to Mrs. Zee’s desk.)
        (Walks back to a chart in the back of room.)
(Laughs.)
(Copies dude.)
(Walks around the room.)
No, no, no, no.

Mrs. Zee: I’m going to take some pictures.
Cam: Life, life.

I need an eraser.

By the end of the activity he had written the words: ice, dice, mice, nice, rice, lice, slice, drpe, face, ape, dude, life, nife, like, cave, and take.

Cam also utilized books, a picture, and his spelling practice book. (See Appendix 25 Use of Classroom Resources and Supports by Case Study Students.) While writing his report on fish I overheard Cam say, “I need that book Fish.” A couple weeks later I observed him in the reading corner talking with his friend Mike about this book.

Cam: (Takes a pile of books.)
Mike, which one do you like the most?
You like all of them. I like this one the most I’ll show you the page.
It looks like the killer whale was so… see now it looks, like the colour.
Ahh ohh, I’m going to eat this.

Cam did not use his spelling practice spelling book as it was intended— to try out a word he needed in a message with feedback on his attempt. He used it as a repository of words for later reference. Consequently, it was not of great help to him. Still, I observed how he placed it on his desk as a ready resource during the writing of his report on fish, while writing an entry into his Kindness Book, during the creation of his Rock Star cereal box, and while writing his tornado story.

Classroom writing resources were an important external support for Cam in writing his messages. As Appendix 25 shows, charts were his main resource and he knew where to find something if it was not displayed. Over the course of the study Cam became less reliant on external supports. However, he kept his practice spelling book on his desk as a ready resource if required.
4.2.10. Cam’s Written Language Development

Over the course of the study I monitored Cam’s reading development by administering a Running Record of his classroom reading text at two points in time. By the first administration he had received individual reading instruction from Mrs. Zee for a month. Cam read a level 12 text with 96% accuracy (easy) and had a self-correction rate of one correction to every four errors. Analysis of his reading behaviour showed that he was able to problem solve using information from the meaning of the text, the structure of the language, and the print information. However, he was not able to monitor his attempts for a fit across all information sources. He used meaning and print information on verb substitutions, for example come for coming and climbed on for climb. Or he used structure and print information at the beginning of sentences, for example This for It’s and The for He. He was told two words when he made no attempt to problem solve. He looked back into the text and reread a phrase. This action appeared to support problem solving. On one word he also looked away from the text, which resulted in being told the word. Cam’s reading sounded word by word with a few two-word phrases.

A month later, Cam’s classroom text was level 14, which he read with 94% accuracy (instructional) and had a self-correction rate of one correction to every four errors. He read at a good pace though still word by word, and he paused before solving some words. As with the previous Running Record, he used all information sources but not in an integrated way. Pronoun substitutions were a common error pattern, for example, their for her and its for his and for this. Cam took action on all challenges and did not need to be told any words.

At the end of the study when I re-administered the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) Cam read a level 16 text, which is in the late grade one range. He read with 90% accuracy (instructional) and had a self-correction rate of one correction in every seven errors. His reading was slow and predominantly word by word. On one page he did not use the punctuation, which may have made it challenging to follow the plot. From a total of 16 errors, he made no attempts on five words and needed to be told the word in order to go on reading. There may have been one lapse in directional movement on the first page of text. He substituted the last word in the line for the first word, and he needed to be told the correct word before he could continue. As with earlier Running Records, Cam was able to use information from all sources but not in an integrated way. This text may have been at the outer limits of what he could manage independently with
challenges in the complexity of the language and in his ability to problem solve unknown words or known words used in ways that he could not anticipate.

As Appendix 8 showed, Cam identified all letters and all but one high frequency word on the Clay Word Reading task. Appendix 9 showed that on the Burt Word Reading Test (NZCER, 1981), he knew four more words than in the first administration, and tried to take apart three unknown words attending to letter sequence- wō ter for water, s ād for sad, and w ēt for wet. As with the first administration, he did not attempt to take apart less high frequency and slightly more challenging words such as carry, village, quickly, nurse, and beware. These words are comparable to words he would encounter in grade two level text.

Cam made gains on the two writing tasks of the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013). In the first administration of Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words all of his errors were on vowel sounds at the beginning and middle of words. Now, he was able to record all the correct vowels, and he self-corrected coming for coming. Before beginning the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words task Cam asked, “What if I don’t know?” Using the standard script for administering this task I told him to, “Say them slowly and think how you can write them” (Clay, 2013, p. 118). This seemed to satisfy him. On the Writing Vocabulary assessment Cam wrote 48 words in the 10 minutes allowed. He was able to generate words along the following categories: words that start with the same letter or digraph (and, am, at, is, it, love, like, look, the, they, this, that, there), rhyming words (will, hill, school, pool, we, he), words that change by adding a letter (you, your) or by changing a letter (run, ran), and number words (six, ten).

Some former Reading Recovery students need a temporary increase in attention from the classroom teacher to facilitate change beyond Reading Recovery (Clay, 2016). For other children, “a refresher course of individual instruction for a short period would be most helpful for a child who has begun to slip behind his classmates.” (Clay, 2016, p. 193) Cam was one of those students. Over the course of the study he received individual reading instruction from Mrs. Zee at a level at which he could feel that he was progressing. Mrs. Zee also consulted with the Special Education teacher. By moving him down to lower level text he became a more independent problem solver. As Mrs. Zee described in our last interview,
He seems happy to be reading and writing in class, so that’s good. And he wants to do it on his own too. It’s not just I’m sitting at the front and giving them ideas but they’re doing the writing. If anything, it’s the opposite, he’s the one writing it all down. So that’s a big change, a change in confidence has definitely improved.

Word and word part processing in reading and applying spelling knowledge and punctuation in writing were challenges that led Mrs. Zee to assess Cam’s reading and writing development as comparable.

I would say it’s more at par, I don’t think he’s stronger. If you ignore all the spelling, he’d be a stronger writer than a reader. Because some of the sounds are not even close makes him more on par. Then again, he’s made a lot of progress.

Mrs. Zee assessed Cam to be at grade level in generating ideas and organizing his messages. Creating a message with a beginning, middle and end was close to grade level. She went on to say that he was, “more willingness to write independently … he’s excited to write, which I think is a change from the beginning of the year.”

Cam expressed his confidence and motivation to write his stories in our final interview. He thought that he was, “getting better at it and I really like making stories.” He went on to say that making stories made him feel, “really happy and I like to show people it, and I like to make chapter stories.” When asked what he wanted to learn next Cam replied that he wanted to, “start making really, really big chapters,” and “get more like better at writing words.” He concluded our conversation by telling me that he loved making his tornado story.

The stall in Cam’s reading and the progress in his writing create a unique individual profile. Through writing, Cam voiced his ideas and expressed his creativity. He became a risk-taker (Fletcher, 2017), initially through art and text and over time through text alone. He changed from relying on external resources, such as charts, to find words he could copy, to drawing from his internal resources for problem solving unknown words. His monitoring actions were directed toward conventions and clarity. Cam was socially engaged in classroom life and appeared to enjoy pair planning and talking about his ideas during free writing.
4.3. Jack as a Developing Writer

4.3.1. Getting to Know Jack

Jack was in Mrs. Kit’s grade two classroom. At the beginning of the study he was 7.02 years and 7.07 at the end. Jack lived with his mother and older sister. His family is European-Canadian and speaks English as their native language. I administered the tasks of the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) with Jack over three sessions to ensure that he was fully engaged and cooperative (see Appendices 10 and 11). Jack’s classroom guided reading level was 19. He read a text that I selected in the easy range (between 95 and 100% accuracy), and he read a level 20 text at an instructional level (between 90 and 94% accuracy). He was very interested in this story about dinosaurs and asked to read the entire book.

Jack’s interest in the plot of a story and motivation to read appeared to be an important factor in how actively he problem solved any challenges during text reading. The story of a level 21 book I chose was about a child who took an airplane flight by himself. On this text he scored low instructional (90%) and, unlike the dinosaur story, was happy to stop after a few pages. The next text (level 22) was about a family with car trouble on the way to a hot air balloon festival. Jack appeared interested in this story and scored in the easy range.

Analysis of Jack’s text reading behaviour indicated that he searched for information from the meaning of the text, the structure of the language, and the visual information at the word and sub-word level. He made attempts to use letter clusters and controlled the sequence of those clusters within words. For example, he attempted An- ky- saurus for Ankylosaur and wild- beast for wildebeest. On several challenges he said the first part of a word, then went back to the beginning of the phrase and reread solving the unknown word. His self-correction rate was between one in two errors and one in six errors, and he used sources of information neglected on his first attempt to solve a word in flexible ways. For example, in solving the word metres in the dinosaur story, he first substituted met, then meet before solving the word. When uninterested in the text he was reading, Jack’s problem solving behaviour was less efficient. In the story about flying solo, he skipped words and phrases, paused as if distracted from the text and substituted words that did not make sense in the story, for example, badge hander for baggage handler.
Jack’s strong performance on the Clay Word Reading Task and the *Burt Word Reading Test* (NZCR, 1981) fit with his ability to solve words in text reading (see Appendices 10 and 11). He was able to use his knowledge of letter patterns as a source of information in solving or trying to solve an unknown word. For example, on the *Burt Word Reading Test* he solved *journey* by saying the first syllable followed by the entire word, and he solved *belief* by taking the word apart *bel- ef* and then saying the word. He tried to solve the word *shelves* the same way (*she-ives*) but was unable to come up with the word.

Jack’s performance on the Letter Identification task and the Concepts About Print task was inconsistent with his control of these aspects of written language in text reading. The Letter Identification task revealed a confusion with lower case *d/b, i/l, and p/q*. However, confusing *d/b* occurred only once during text reading when he substituted *Deddy* for *Debbie*. On the Concepts About Print task Jack did not detect any changes in line, word or letter order. This result was in contrast to his word solving activity while text reading which indicated how he was able to attend to line, word, and letter detail in print.

On both of the writing tasks (Writing Vocabulary and Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words) Jack showed no need to articulate a word slowly as a support in problem solving. There were no lapses in directional movement or spacing within and between words. On the Writing Vocabulary task, he generated most words after being prompted to think of a category rather than on his own. For example, he wrote words that started the same: *is, in, it, if* and *the, they*, names of family and friends: *Mom, Nathan*, animals: *dog, cat, bird*, opposites: *off, on*, things to do: *play, run, jump*, and things you can ride in: *car, bus, chran (train), airplan (airplane)*. On both writing tasks Jack formed letters slowly and carefully, and he used the capital letter form for *Nn, Tt, Hh, Bb, Ll, Mm* and sometimes *Dd, Ss, and Kk*.

When exploring Jack’s identity as a writer during the pre-study interview (see Appendix 14), Jack had no response to my query on what he had learned most recently as a writer. What he wanted to learn next as a writer was “about dogs,” which he thought would make him feel “happy.” This led me to think that Jack interpreted my question as what he wanted to learn about in general, rather than what he was learning about being a writer.
Jack had frequent absences from school which, according to Mrs. Kit, made him appear out of step with the rest of the class.

He misses a fair bit of school, and I think that probably affects where he is at with things as well; his confidence in whether he is doing the right thing or doing it the right way. He’ll look around and see what the other kids are doing. Sometimes that encourages him to get going when he sees these people have got going. But sometimes I think he’s like, ‘I don’t know what they’re doing’ because he’s missed something. He’ll often miss two or three days a week or parts of days a week.

4.3.2. Jack Writing in the Classroom

Despite Jack’s absences, I was able to observe him writing in the classroom on 18 occasions (see Table 3: Jack’s Classroom Writing). As in Mrs. Zee’s class, writing activities in Mrs. Kit’s class were scheduled in the first block of the morning. (See Appendix 18 for a list of the writing activities in Mrs. Kit’s class.) February writing activities centred around the theme of friendship. These were generally activities that required an answer to a question, recall of information discussed by the class, and selection of a Valentine friend. Jack did what was expected, completing his writing in one or two sentences. According to Mrs. Kit, during our first interview, Jack’s cooperation with writing activities had improved since the beginning of the school year: “The biggest change is that he is willing to do some writing because he didn’t want to do any writing at the beginning of the year… He’s trying to write sentences now instead of just words.”

Where there was an opportunity to select a topic or choose an outcome Jack’s interests and sense of humour were evident. Mrs. Kit said that Jack could be silly with others, and in the George and Martha inferencing activity he was able to express his humour by inferring that George would act “crazy” by putting the bathtub on his head.
### Table 3
Jack’s Classroom Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Writing</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Text and art to show what a friend is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrostic Poem</td>
<td>Valentine’s Day</td>
<td>Letters in the word Valentine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitation</td>
<td>Valentine’s Day</td>
<td>An invitation to be his Valentine and why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>George &amp; Martha</td>
<td>What you think happened and why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recount</td>
<td>Pink T-shirt Day</td>
<td>How Pink T-shirt Day started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>The Invisible Boy</td>
<td>Describe how an invisible boy could be included and more visible to those around him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipe</td>
<td>Pancakes</td>
<td>Materials and ingredients / Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scary Story</td>
<td>The Lost Forest</td>
<td>Problem and solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>The House on Maple Street</td>
<td>Title / Characters / Setting / Problem / Failed Attempts / Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriller</td>
<td>The House on Maple Street</td>
<td>Story following graphic organizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Response</td>
<td>Golden Egg</td>
<td>If you were in charge of a golden egg where would you hide it and why would you hide it there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>My Earth Day Book</td>
<td>Pokemon characters fight littering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>One Wish</td>
<td>If you could have one wish what would it be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>How I can show kindness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open ended narrative writing activities provided Jack with the chance to choose his own characters and create his own stories. Unlike the assigned writing activities on the friendship theme, Jack’s pieces were two to four pages in length, with a page being half open for an illustration and half lined for writing. In his first problem and solution story Kathran had a dance battle with a Creeper (from Minecraft), stepping on a caterpillar that later had to be buried. The
House on Maple Street was the title of a second problem and solution narrative which began with a planning process (see Appendix 18). In Jack’s story a mother and father encountered a ghost in their new house. They tried to get rid of it with a leaf blower but that didn’t work. Herobrine (also from Minecraft) came through a portal and used his fireball to get rid of the ghost. Unfortunately, the house exploded, but the earth was saved.

Jack’s stories exceeded his planner or class assigned topic. The House on Maple Street moved beyond Maple Street with the inclusion of Herobrine who became a legend and battled to save the earth from Notch. Jack’s My Earth Day Book featured Pokemon and his friends who put junk into their inventory and made a robot that could pick up garbage. From here the story branched out. Pokemon and his friends were challenged by an evil Pokemon. This monster was defeated and the Pokemon world never got dirty.

Jack appeared to write in fits and starts. He wrote for a stretch, ignoring all of the talk and activity around him, and then he would get up and move around the room, seeking the attention of a classmate at another table, or he would just move around. The following example is from my observations during procedure writing on how to make pancakes:

- Walks away from his desk and stops at the LCD projector in middle of room.
- Walks to a table and blows on a classmate who ignores him.
- Returns to his desk moving his body in large steps.
- Looks at his page and begins writing one letter, erases.
- Says “After” then begins to write the word
- Writes next word stur (stir).

The next example from my observations showed how on another occasion Jack wrote for a stretch then, as if taking a break from his writing, he engaged in conversation.

- Head down on his desk as he keeps writing.
- Formation letter by letter, writes three words and stops
- On to the next line.
- Calls to student “(Name) did you get a new haircut?”

Although I did not observe any free writing in which Jack came up with the topic, ideas and organization, it was clear that he was motivated by writing activities that were open-ended. Then
he was able to draw on his interest in the worlds of Minecraft and Pokemon and wrote stories that were fantastical, adventurous and thrilling.

4.3.3. Jack’s Composing Actions

Observable behaviours that were interpreted as composing actions by Jack were: commenting, drawing, generating ideas, looking up, word writing movements, pencil movements, talking about an idea during writing, talking about an idea while drawing, and talking about an idea while writing. (See Appendix 19 for the frequency of each composing action by Jack.)

Looking up was Jack’s most common composing action, and, as the following example from his My Earth Day Book shows, it was often combined with other actions, such as talking to himself:

Mrs. Kit: (reading Jack’s writing) Found a pile of garbage.
How could it help them and the earth?
Do you want to tell me first, or do you know what you are going to write?
Jack: (Back to his desk sits down.)
(Looks up.)
(Looks around the room, pencil posed to write.)
Jack (To himself)
The whole earth… earth how do you spell earth?”
Oh yeah.

Talking during writing was Jack’s second most common composing behaviour. However, as the next example shows, what he was saying aloud while composing a Valentine invitation did not appear related to what he was composing. I interpreted this as enjoying a private thought:

Looks up.
Adds writing to the top of the page.
Head in hands, smiles as he looks at his work.
Looks up.
Smiles and says, “No amigo.”

Commenting and, on one occasion, making word writing movements across his page were behaviours that I interpreted as composing behaviours. Commenting was observed only in the first month and occurred when he appeared to be tussling with something. While composing his
Valentine invitation he looked at a chart and said to himself, “I need help.” Also, while writing the procedure for making pancakes he said, “I don’t know, I don’t know.” On another occasion his comment followed a conversation with the classroom volunteer about his *Invisible Boy* response. It appeared that the comment was to himself.

Volunteer: (After reading Jack’s text) Excited about what?
Jack: Oh
Volunteer: Just add a little more detail
Jack: (Returns to desk and continues writing in last square)
(Mouthing)
(Eyes up)
(Rubs eyes)
(Erases)
Oh I get it …play with him.

Jack wrote,

*im (I’m) icided (excited) abouT The*

*Pool Praty (party) NexTTime*

During our first interview Mrs. Kit said that generating ideas and expanding on them was challenging for Jack and described how she supported this aspect of writing in the following example from the Pink T-shirt Day assigned writing:

Mrs. Kit: He’ll add details but to one sentence then he thinks that’s done. He has a hard time figuring out how to expand on it.
Janice: Today they saw a video, then you generated a little bit of board work. Would that be helpful to him because the idea is generated for him? Or is it still hard for him to come up with the idea?
Mrs. Kit: With everything we talked about, then I still had to start with him. That was getting him to tell me, ‘Okay, I’m going to ask you how did pink t-shirt day start?’ Then he picked up the pencil and I said, ‘Tell me with your words.’ Once he did that, and it was just the first sentence, I said, ‘Great! Put that down and then go from there.’ When he finished that he came to me and said, ‘Now what?’ I said, ‘Well then what did they do about it?’ Then he could tell me with his words. Then he went and wrote
that. So it’s generating the ideas, maybe it’s for confidence that he is doing the right thing.

In my second interview with Jack (see Appendix 15) I used the writing he had done that day rather than an on-demand writing sample. I had learned from Mrs. Kit that, “with Jack, it’s just the desire to do it,” and this had been a writing activity he appeared to enjoy. Predicting what would come next in a George and Martha story, Jack wrote,

MarTha aTe The cake
because She wanted Pay Back
for George STaPling MarThas
Shoes To The flore (floor)

When I asked Jack how he decided what to put into his writing he described in-the-head processes. “I thought it, and I just reminded myself.” Then, when asked about the way he decided to write about his ideas, he responded, “I wanted to, like, make it in my brain.”

Jack engaged in a number of independent composing actions of which looking up and talking to himself while writing were the most common. Composing appeared to come more easily to Jack when he controlled the topic and had the freedom to draw from his imaginary world and his interest in video game culture. If there was a particular requirement to an assigned writing task he was less confident, appeared to be concerned with getting it right, and would seek confirmation from Mrs. Kit.

4.3.4. Jack’s Constructing Actions

An examination of Jack’s constructing actions revealed the observable actions he took to construct his messages. Jack articulated letter clusters, phonemes and words, asked how to spell a word, covered his eyes, drew after writing, indicated he was finished, inserted periods, looked at a previous message, made mouth movements, recorded clusters of letters and letter by letter, said words aloud, wrote multiple words at a time, and wrote single words. (See Appendix 20 for the frequency of each constructing action for Jack.) There was no evidence of any copying actions.

If copying actions are interpreted as utilizing external resources, then Jack’s constructing actions indicated that he was able to draw on internal resources for communicating in written language.
Writing multiple words and single words, without any evidence of overt problem solving behaviour, were Jack’s most frequent constructing actions. However, his ability to draw on other constructing actions showed that he had the flexibility to gear down to more laborious problem-solving actions when necessary. He constructed a word in clusters without any verbal articulation, for example, *gar-ba-ge*, or, if he was not able to call up the word he used slow articulation and recorded a word or a cluster of letters. Only once did I observe Jack articulate at the phoneme level. The following example from my observations of *The House on Maple Street* shows how Jack combined constructing actions. It is also another example of how he moved around the classroom during writing:

Starts on the top left.
Writes *an old man came thru the portal and his name was Notch*
Takes finger to first word.
Continues writing: *he was par f an-d wa-n ted to sho*
Makes *o* into an *a*
Erases *sh*...
Adds in *B.* *Te* adds to *B*...

Goes over to classmate and looks out of the window.
Talks with classmate.

Mouth movements were interpreted as movements that occurred while writing but were distinct from articulation of a word or word part. The next example from my observations showed how mouth movements were combined with other constructing actions:

Writes a word.
Looks at his writing.

Makes very small mouth movements as he writes.
Looks at his writing.
Whereas composing an assigned writing task presented Jack with some challenges to conform, he worked independently at constructing his messages. As Appendix 20 shows, he was able to take the least laborious approaches and drew on his internal knowledge sources to problem solve words.

4.3.5. Jack’s Monitoring Actions

Jack’s most common monitoring actions clustered into two categories: erasing and reading his message. While observing Jack, I was often not able to be sure exactly what he was erasing—a letter, word part, or word. Consequently, most erasing actions were categorized as erasing in general. However, from an analysis of his writing samples and observation of his actions during writing, it was clear when Jack erased all that he had written and started over. During one such episode, Jack learned that his story about Pokemon had nothing to do with Earth Day. Mrs. Kit suggested adding to what he had already written, but Jack took a different action. He erased the entire message and started again as if starting with a clean slate. Although I observed Jack erasing multiple words on only two occasions, according to Mrs. Kit it occurred more often on assigned writing. During our second interview Mrs. Kit provided her insights into this behaviour:

If I suggest something he’s more apt to go and erase the whole thing and start again, something completely different instead of just adding or expanding on that thought. To him if I say, ‘Why don’t you tell me a little more about that?’ To him he hears, ‘oh that’s wrong take it away.’ I’m not certain but that seems to be.

As with Jack’s erasing actions, a variety of message reading behaviours were interpreted as monitoring actions. The actions within this second cluster were: reading his message, looking back into the text, finger pointing, moving his pencil along the text, and reading aloud. Of these actions, looking back into the text was the most common and could be interpreted as silent reading of what he had written so far. This led to other actions, such as erasing as noted in this first example from my observations of Jack writing his One Wish response:

Reading his message aloud to himself from the beginning.
Comes to a word and stops.
Goes to bin and gets an eraser.
In the second example while writing *My Earth Day Book*, reading aloud was followed by verbal self-monitoring.

...was... oh my god!

Eraser in hand.

Erases last word.

Looking back into the text also led to letter and word corrections, for example, while writing *The House on Maple Street*.

Looks back at his text.

Makes a dot on top of a letter *i*.

Remakes a letter *d*.

Writes into his text: *they had a l-a*.

Puts a letter between *l* and *a*.

In addition to the two predominant clustering of monitoring actions, Jack added to his message, commented on length, corrected a letter and a word, traced a letter, used his finger for spacing, and made verbal and non-verbal indications of monitoring. (See Appendix 21 for the frequency of each monitoring action.) Jack’s comment on the length of his message gave further insight into how he viewed writing. He held up his paper and said to a classmate, “I finished this much work.” The satisfaction appeared to be in completing work rather than in communicating his ideas in written language.

Jack’s monitoring actions appear to be focused on surface-level features such as letter formation, spelling, and length. Erasing action may have related to content when his ideas veered from what was assigned. Although Mrs. Kit encouraged Jack to carry on and incorporate what was required, he chose to start again, as if the merging of ideas was incompatible.

### 4.3.6. Jack’s Messages

Jack’s messages were examined to determine his control of directional movement for English written language at the message and word level, and his control of spacing between words and within words. Message clarity was analyzed from his use of irregular nouns and verbs, prepositions and pronouns, subject and verb agreement, and the occurrence of multiple or single sentences. Jack’s spelling was examined for his use of standard spelling, partially correct.
spelling, letter patterns, letter sequence and his attention to word boundaries. His letter knowledge was examined for his use of upper- and lower-case letters and control of letter formation. His control of punctuation was analyzed by noting its use or absence in his messages. (See Appendix 22 for the frequency of each item.) Spandel’s (2012) Primary Continuums on the development of ideas, organization and voice were applied to two of Jack’s classroom writing samples.

Jack’s writing samples showed consistent control of directional movement at both the message and the word level. There was one lapse in the spacing within words, and there were frequent lapses in the spacing between words. On one occasion, after Mrs. Kit complimented a classmate for putting spaces between words, Jack used his finger to mark out the space between words. As shown in Figure 8, Jack’s opening sentence to The Lost Forest, shows his control of spacing within words, with the exception of the word Day, and his inconsistent use of space between words.

Figure 8. The Opening Sentences to Jack’s Story: The Lost Forest

Jack’s control of English grammar was evident in the clarity of his messages. As noted in Appendix 22, he used irregular nouns and verbs and prepositions with few lapses, and he was consistent in his use of pronouns. Examples from Jack’s messages are as follows:
Irregular noun (correct and incorrect):

They herd foot steps The hole house explowed (exploded) and The world went
and Nocking on the Door. To halves (halves)

Irregular verb (correct and incorrect):

I would Like you To Be my Valentine he beat (beatened) Lisey up
cus you are happy and Lists Tome

Preposition (correct, incorrect and absent):

George Lifted The Tub Then They To hit it away They put a scary Mask
and Put it on his head

cus he is crazy.

Pronoun (correct use):

The friends are playing

with him They invited (invited)
him To play

An analysis of Jack’s control of spelling showed growing control over standard spelling and the ability to apply knowledge of spelling patterns when problem solving unknown words. Examples of partially correct words are: world (world), how (who), earth (earth), and fair (fair). Of particular interest in the examination of a developing writer was the variety of the spelling patterns that he used. Examples are: portal (portal), used (used) and use, drill (drill), beat (beat), perfect (perfect), invited (invited), pancake mix (pancake mix), battle (battle), and giant.

While Jack’s spelling knowledge was a relative strength in message writing, his letter knowledge, and in particular conventions for using upper and lowercase letters, was incomplete (see Figure 8). During our first interview Mrs. Kit said that Jack was “working on his fine motor skills” and on “uppercase and where it needs to be.” This was evident when I observed Jack recording the word egg during procedural writing on how to make pancakes. Jack appeared to be paying special attention to the formation of the lowercase letter g.

Writes e-g.

Head up.

Writes the next g slowly putting tail below the line.
Although, as Mrs. Kit noted, Jack used lowercase appropriately for most letters, he used the uppercase letter T consistently, and he used the uppercase letters B, D, K, M, N, P, and S where lowercase was conventional. Lowercase n was reversed on some samples, and b was reversed once on the word valuadle (valuable).

All forms of punctuation were often absent from Jack’s writing samples. On the two samples where an exclamation mark was used, he applied it correctly. A question mark was used once and applied inappropriately. There was no evidence of an apostrophe on contractions: for example, woodit (wouldn’t) and cant (can’t), or on the possessive friends name (friend’s name). Using periods in his messages was a specific curriculum expectation for grade two that Mrs. Kit was working on with Jack. In our first interview she said that his use of periods had improved since the beginning of the school-year:

  What he is working on more noticeably is using his punctuation… And if I get him to read it back to me, if he’s missed punctuation he can do that. He’ll know that’s a stop and he’ll go, ‘Oh that’s a stop.’ So that’s good, because we’ve been really focusing on that.

4.3.6.1. Ideas, Organization and Voice

Jack drew on his interest and knowledge of Minecraft characters and action in the development of his ideas for The House on Maple Street (Figure 9) and The Lost Forest (Figure 10). In both stories the text is fully decodable. Jack uses multiple pages in The House on Maple Street, and multiple sentences, to tell a detailed story and play out the action. The main message is in the text; the art appears secondary. However, both illustrations are connected to the text. In Figure 9 the image includes the split earth, and there is a look of fear on Herobrine’s face and one of triumph on Notch. In Figure 10 the image does not relay the action of the text, but appears to be of a victorious and smiling Kathryn standing over the dead caterpillar. The greatest detail in the illustration is in Kathryn’s shirt.

In organizing his story Jack included intriguing titles. The House on Maple Street relates to most of the story which continues after the house is blown up. The setting for The Lost Forest is a forest. Both stories have an opening sentence, the classical Once upon a time and It was a sunny day. There is also closure to the stories with the idea of forever in The House on Maple Street and burying the caterpillar in The Lost Forest. There is order to the events with a problem played
out and actions, such as a dance battle or a scrap, that leads to a solution with good overcoming evil. In *The House on Maple Street* Jack uses *then, after, and so* to communicate transitions in the story.

Jack uses his voice to communicate his enjoyment of Minecraft, thereby bringing that world into his writing. He gives life to the Minecraft characters: Lizzy, Herobrine, Notch, Kathryn, the Creeper and the caterpillar. He also includes phrases like, *things got worse, and he sensed* and *kicked the door down* to convey action, and “Noooooo!” as a device to convey emotion.

Figure 9. Jack’s Story: The House on Maple Street (page 6 only)
Once upon a time in a haunted home on a street called Maple Street they just moved to the haunted house.

My characters are the ghost, the father and the mother. They like moving to homes and like exploring.

They wanted the ghost out of the house because they can’t fall asleep. They heard footsteps and knocking on the door. They had a leaf blower. They will suck him in the leaf blower.

Lizzy sucked him in. The ghost said, “Nooooo!” but the gas tank was empty. He beat Lizzy up. Then someone from Minecraft, it was Herobrine. He looked like Steve except he had white eyes and he came through a portal.

He can fly and use his fireball, and hit him with 1 shot and the whole house exploded and the world went to halves and Herobrine saved the earth. He became a legend. After 200 years

An old man came through the portal and his name was Notch. He was powerful! and wanted to beat Herobrine.

He sensed Notch so they made a scrap and so Herobrine split the earth so he fell so won’t come back forever.
The Lost Forest

It was a sunny day
She woke up in a forest.
Things got worse. Her name was
Kathryn. She got scared. It was
night. In the morning
there was a Creeper.
He kicked the door open.
She locked the door
and jumped out the
window and went
back in and had a
dance battle. He stepped on
a caterpillar. She said, “Nooo!
Kathryn was sad. she
buried the caterpillar.

Figure 11: Jack’s Illustration from The Lost Forest

In summary, there was a contrast between writing that had to fit a specific curricular purpose and writing that resulted from time and space to share out-of-school interests (Wohlwend, 2008). With the latter, Jack’s ideas, vocabulary, and characters were drawn from the media world of Minecraft and Pokemon. In constructing his messages, Jack controlled directional constraints for written English and spacing within words. He applied his knowledge of spelling and control of language structure. He had less control of spacing between words, conventions for using upper and lowercase letter forms, and punctuation. Surface-level features appeared to dominate Jack’s monitoring actions. At the content level, when he strayed from the intent of a writing activity he chose to erase the entire piece and start again rather than weave the intent into his message.
4.3.7. Jack’s Writing Interactions with His Teacher

Jack responded positively to moments of individual attention to his writing from Mrs. Kit. Her facilitating interactions served to move his writing of that day forward in some way, and her focusing actions generally drew his attention to a specific and individual expectation. Jack was eager to share his messages with Mrs. Kit, and her feedback centred on supporting the development of his ideas and adding more to his messages. She showed enthusiasm for a developing plot and her questioning led to the need for him to respond. (See Appendix 23 for the type and frequency of each teacher interaction.)

4.3.7.1. Facilitating Action

As noted in Appendix 23, some of Mrs. Kit’s facilitating actions redirected Jack from something that had distracted him back to his writing. I observed her look over his shoulder, and provide a general comment to his table group: “getting too noisy for concentrating.” Anticipating his tendency to wander, she directed him “right back to work” after he returned to the classroom from the bathroom. Other facilitating actions were focused on Jack’s writing. In the following example, Mrs. Kit’s question gave him a choice on how to proceed:

Mrs. Kit: … found a pile of garbage.
How could it help them and the earth?
Do you want tell me first, or do you know what you are going to write?

Facilitating actions that supported Jack in developing his ideas and translating them into a written composition were both specific and general. An example of a facilitating action for a specific response was when Mrs. Kit invited Jack to compose orally following this with encouragement to “write that.” General facilitating actions were open ended. Mrs. Kit left it up to Jack to decide what would occur next:

Mrs. Kit: Okay, so what would you do if they came alive?
Jack: Goes directly back to his desk and continues writing.
Jack: (Back to Mrs. Kit)
I would make a train
Mrs. Kit: How would you do that? Put yourself in the story.
Mrs. Kit’s facilitating actions with Jack were not directed at supporting word solving, nor did he seek help with solving words. On one occasion I observed Mrs. Kit remind Jack to use his spelling practice book. However, apart from that I did not observe any interactions initiated by Jack or Mrs. Kit that facilitated word solving.

4.3.7.2. Focusing Attention

Appendix 23 showed that most of Mrs. Kit’s focusing actions were directed to teaching Jack how to use periods in his messages. While writing page six of The House on Maple Street (see Figure 9), Mrs. Kit’s question focused Jack’s attention on adding periods into his message.

Mrs. Kit: You’ve got one entire sentence do you remember how they go?
Jack: (Returns to his desk.)
(Add periods into text with no evidence of rereading.)
Erases.
Fixes a letter.
Add periods.

Although Mrs. Kit was successful in focusing Jack’s attention on punctuating his message, he was not able to independently apply periods conventionally. Mrs. Kit provided a higher level of support for using periods during Jack’s writing of My Earth Day Book. To judge where to insert periods into his composition, Mrs. Kit invited Jack to read through so that he would “know where to take a breath.” What this meant was not clear to Jack. Mrs. Kit demonstrated by reading aloud and stopping where a period was required. She then invited Jack to continue reading and responded to a pause by asking, “What did you voice do?” Jack did not appear aware of what his voice did. He continued reading until Mrs. Kit responded: “Good! See how your voice pauses? Read out loud.” Jack read quietly to himself and added a period.

Mrs. Kit tried to get Jack to understand how periods were used in writing by getting him to focus on how his reading voice sounded: where he naturally paused. Although she could hear the pauses in his reading voice, my observations showed that Jack did not, nor did he show an awareness of its link to punctuation in written language.
4.3.7.3. Providing Feedback

As shown in Appendix 23, Mrs. Kit’s feedback for Jack was predominantly on the development of ideas. She did this most often by asking a question that would lead Jack to add more information and detail. As the following examples show, Mrs. Kit also used feedback interactions to communicate her interest and enthusiasm for Jack’s messages. While writing his One Wish response, Mrs. Kit commented on Jack’s response that he wished Monster Legends were real.

Mrs. Kit: Oh what would happen if they were, Jack? I can’t wait!
Jack: (Smiles.)

In the next example, Jack was left to infer from Mrs. Kit’s feedback that more was needed to develop a failed attempt in The House on Maple Street.

Mrs. Kit: I just have to read what you wrote before.
Jack: (Reads aloud.)
Mrs. Kit: But after 200 years? You need a new paper!

As a developing writer, Jack’s compositions showed that he was not aware of information required by the reader, and Mrs. Kit’s feedback directed him to think in this way. In the following example Jack was developing an opening sentence for The Lost Forest:

Jack: (Reads his opening sentence to the class.)
It was a nice day she found a track.
Mrs. Kit: Who’s she?
Jack: Oh yeah.
Mrs. Kit: So instead of “she,” put her name so you introduce us to the character.

In the next example, referring to The House on Maple Street, Mrs. Kit asked Jack to provide information that the reader needed in order for his message to make sense.

Mrs. Kit: So tell me who are they? What are their names?
Are you going to call them something?
Jack: (nods his head)
(Take papers and goes to his desk.)
(Starts on a new sheet.)

Mrs. Kit’s responses to Jack’s messages were important to him. He enjoyed sharing his ideas and responded positively to Mrs. Kit’s facilitative comments, content-level feedback and requests for
clarification. Mrs. Kit’s focusing interactions with Jack were predominantly about how to apply periods in his messages. Jack did not control this form of punctuation, and yet its mastery was a specific exception of grade two writing.

4.3.8. Jack’s Interactions with Others in the Classroom

Many of Jack’s interactions with others in the classroom were in the form of table conversations. (See Appendix 24 for the type and frequency of Jack’s interactions with others.) There were also occasions when he appeared to be looking and listening to the conversations and actions of his classmates without interacting with them. Some of the table conversations that Jack did enter into related to a writing activity, particularly with closed activities when the children wrote about the same topic and shared their ideas. In the first example, Jack’s table group was talking about where they would hide a golden egg:

Jack: (Looks across the table.)
(Enters a word in his message.)
(Joins the conversation.)
Umm behind the toilet?

Classmate: I would hide it in the egg carton.

In the next example Jack joined in a table conversation about what he would wish for if he only had one wish. His idea was not well received by his table mates and may have been offered for its shock value.

Jack: I’ve two. I wish we had desks
I know what mine is, I wish my mom was dead.

Classmate 1 You will go to jail that’s illegal.
Classmate 2 That’s rude.

Neither of these wishes appeared in his written response. Instead, he wished that Monster Legend was real. Other table conversations appeared to be on a topic of interest to the children but unrelated to the day’s writing activity. For example, during a conversation about bee stings Jack listened and said, “I got bit right here.” Then he turned back to his writing.

As noted above, Jack disengaged from his writing by moving around the room or over to another table group. On two occasions I observed a classmate take some action that focused Jack back on
his writing. In the first example, Jack’s classmate appeared to non-verbally redirect him back on task.

Jack: Looks up at ceiling. 
    Chin in his hand.
Classmate: Taps Jack.
Jack: Returns to his writing.

In the second example Jack’s classmate’s comment implied that he did not want to be disturbed and they could have this conversation later.

Jack: (Turns to classmate at a desk behind him.)
    You know what?
Classmate: At recess time.
Jack: (Looks at classmate’s writing.)
    I forget what I was talking about.

During our second interview Mrs. Kit commented on Jack’s ability to disengage from conversations around him or be the cause of a distraction:

Sometimes [the challenge is] just focusing. And that depends on who he’s with. And then yet again sometimes he’s focused with everything going on around him. Does that tie into his interests? If it’s something he’s interested in he can shut everything else out. And if he’s not sure what he wants to do then he will be distracted by others because that’s a way out.

The interactions that Jack initiated with the classroom volunteer occurred during open ended writing tasks when he was free to create a story and draw from his own interests and experiences. In addition to sharing his ideas with his classmates, Jack would seek out the classroom volunteer, as in the following example when he wanted to tell her where he would hide a golden egg.

Jack: You know what mine’s going to be?
Volunteer: I want to read about it don’t tell me.
Jack: (Returns to his desk.)
    (Head in hand, looking across the table.)

The feedback that Jack received from the classroom volunteer was similar to the feedback he got from Mrs. Kit as noted in the following example from his response to *The Invisible Boy*:

Jack: (Goes to Volunteer.)
Volunteer: (Reads) *He’s playing with his friends.*
        But remember he does not have any friends.
Jack: Oh.
Volunteer ( Reads) *I’m excited.*
        Excited about what?
Jack: Oh
Volunteer: Just add a little more detail.

Jack would also look to the classroom volunteer for help, as in the next example when he was expected to write the procedure for making pancakes.

Jack: (Gets up and goes to classroom volunteer.)
        (Waiting and listening to a conversation between the classroom volunteer and a classmate.)
        I need help
Volunteer: In your procedure you write your sentences of what you do.

Jack was an active participant in the life of the classroom. He was curious about what was happening around him, engaged in table conversations, and sometimes just listened without contributing. When he needed help or wanted feedback, Jack would seek out the classroom volunteer more often than a classmate.

4.3.9. Jack’s Use of Classroom Resources

Jack used classroom resources during specific word generating writing activities. (See Appendix 25 for the types and frequency of use.) He used a chart of a class generated list of words for his acrostic poem about Valentine’s Day, and he used a wall display to generate rhyming words. In the following example from my observations, Jack used a chart to search for a word for his acrostic poem that started with letter I.

        Gets up and goes over to the chart.
        Walks away and walks back to his desk.
        Returns to the chart.
        Looks at the chart.
        Looks away from the chart.
        Points to the word *intelligent* and returns to his desk.
While I observed Jack using classroom resources on only two occasions, in our first interview Mrs. Kit described how she usually found ways to redirect him to utilize classroom resources:

Usually he comes and asks first. But if I ask, ‘Where do you think you can find some of those things?’ he’ll know. He’ll use the word wall or charts that we have or things that we’ve used for our discussions to start with. He’s not as keen at trying to use his word book to try and word through. He’ll ask me how to spell it, but he doesn’t want to try it. Throughout the study I did not observe Jack use his spelling practice book, and, in our second interview Mrs. Kit confirmed that Jack remained reluctant to use it:

We’re still working on his word book where he attempts the words first if he’s not sure. It’s not something he certainly thinks of doing, even if he’s come to it three times in a writing session. ‘Did you try it in your word book first?’ ‘Oh no.’ So he’ll go and get that, then he’ll come back a little while later with a different word. ‘Did you try it first?’ ‘Oh no.’ So you have to remind him every time. But that helped. I talk about that with him too. When he looks at it and he can bring it to me and I’ll say, ‘Does it look right though?’ If he does stop and look he knows if it’s right or wrong.

While Jack appeared to make little use of classroom resources to problem solve words, he may have appropriated a caterpillar from a class-generated chart story in which “Susie found two fuzzy little caterpillars” who became her friends. Or, it may have come from Minecraft which has a caterpillar in one of its games. In Jack’s story, The Lost Forest,(see Figure 10) a caterpillar came to a violent end in a dance battle between Kathran and the Creeper.

Jack’s use of classroom resources during my observations was limited to two word writing activities where the resource was directly related to the activity. Although Mrs. Kit encouraged Jack to use his practice spelling book when he asked about spelling, I did not observe him use it during independent writing. Jack may have used the idea of a caterpillar from a class-generated chart story, or this story may have inspired him to build a Minecraft caterpillar into his message.

4.3.10. Jack’s Written Language Development

A Running Record of Jack’s classroom guided reading text was taken twice over the course of the study. The first was an unlevelled text titled Who Would Win? Komodo Dragon Versus King Cobra, which he read at an instructional level (90 - 94%). His reading was fluent with
appropriate phrasing, and he slowed down in places to problem solve. A month later, his classroom guided reading book was a level 20 text titled Dragon Hunter, which he read at an easy level (95 - 100%) with long stretches of accurate reading, good phrasing and fluency. When I suggested he stop part way through the text, he asked, “Can I keep reading?”

Mrs. Kit knew the types of books that Jack liked to read, and in our final interview she talked about how Jack was developing as a reader and writer:

I think his reading and writing progress are similar. But he is more willing and excited to go farther with the reading. He’s more willing to explore different genres with the reading. He’s really interested right now in the information books; not so much in writing things like that if we’re doing research. Loves to read research about it; doesn’t want to write about it.

Mrs. Kit’s comment reflected my own experience collecting an on-demand writing sample from Jack. I asked him to write about who he thought would win in a fight between a komodo dragon and a king cobra. He wrote, A comdow dragin. When I asked him to write why he thought so he did not write anything else. I was more successful using the day’s classroom writing assignment predicting the outcome of a story. Jack wrote:

*MarTha aTe The cake*

*becuse She wanTed Pay Back*

*for George sTaPling MarThas*

*Shoes To The flore*

When I asked Jack if there was anything he learned about writing that he included in his message (see Appendix 15) he said, “no,” and “the picture” was the only thing he found hard. Then, when asked if there was anything he was working on as a writer he said, “Yeah, writing.”

Jack’s greater interest in reading books over writing messages was supported by his performance on the post-study Observation Survey (Clay, 2013). He read a level 24 text at an easy level (see Appendix 10). Further analyses of useful strategic actions indicated that he problem solved by taking apart a word in letter clusters and attended to the letter sequence. For example, he problem-solved arthritis saying, a-tha-tis. It appears that he integrated the print information with information from meaning and the structure. He monitored his attempts and when a substituted word did not reflect the visual information in print, he repeated the phrase and pulled the
neglected information into the solving. His reading was phrased appropriately with expression, and large stretches of print were read fluently. A comment during the reading, “Why are there no kids in the playground?” indicated that he was thinking about what he was reading.

Jack’s scores on the Word Reading task and the Burt Word Reading Test (NZCR, 1981) showed that he had a bank of words he could use in text reading (See Appendices 10 and 11). He also appeared to be aware that letter patterns could be used as a source of information to solve unknown words. For example, bel-if helped him to solve belief, and he attempted to solve the word shelves by taking it apart shel-ev.

Jack’s performance on the Concepts About Print task gave insight into his lack of awareness of quotation marks and capitalization rules in his writing. He said, “I don’t know” when I pointed to quotation marks in the Concepts About Print booklet and asked what they were for. When asked to show me a capital letter he responded with, “What is a capital letter?” and showed me a lowercase letter Ll.

Jack’s strengths and challenges with written language were further evident in his performance on the writing tasks. In the administration of the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words task, the assessor reads a two-sentence passage, thereby controlling for the composing aspect of writing. Jack got a perfect score with no evidence of slow articulation. He applied directional rules for written English language and spatial layout of print. However, he showed an awkward formation of lowercase letter m, and used capital letters for B, T and L where lowercase was conventional. In our final interview Mrs. Kit noted how these aspects of writing had improved over the course of the year:

I think his ability is there, his spelling, his spacing, all that physical part of it has improved and he’s doing well. He leaves his spaces, he’s working on his capitals and his lower case. He will go back and look for punctuation. He does put a period at the end, always, maybe not in the middle, but always at the end. He’s working on it and he’s more aware of all that, so that’s good.

I made two attempts to get Jack’s best performance on the Writing Vocabulary task. On the first attempt he was unwilling to engage, said he was done after two of the 10 minutes allowed, and did not respond to my use of scripted prompts. I re-administered this task the next day. Jack was
more cooperative and wrote for the full 10 minutes, but did not respond to any prompts and stopped on more than one occasion to count the words he had written. Although Jack wrote only 29 correctly spelled words, further analysis of all the words he wrote (33) indicated that he could spell words using orthographic patterns, for example, Leaf, cool, Lion, Bee Plane; also Teacher (teacher), Tonight (tonight), and Tattle (tattle). There was evidence of self-monitoring. He wrote tow for two then corrected it, he wrote A some for awesome and then added an e after the A, and he wrote Laef for leaf; erased the ae and corrected it. Jack did not write many of the high frequency words that were evident in his classroom writing samples. Instead, he wrote words like awesome, because, and I Pad. Consequently, I did not think that his score on this task indicated the extent of his writing vocabulary.

Purpose and motivation may have been factors that affected Jack’s performance on the Writing Vocabulary assessment. They were also important factors in his response to classroom writing activities. If Jack did not see a writing activity as purposeful, it was hard for him to get going and direct his thoughts to the task. However, if he was interested, it appeared that the task became his. He used his voice to express his ideas and how the story would unfold. As Mrs. Kit explained in our final interview,

If it’s something that attracts his attention he goes, no problem. There’s where I get his voice and he put in description and things like that, which is so promising. But if it’s not something that he’s keen to do, he struggles to get started and add any kind of supporting details. That’s when you just get the basics, a very short little clip. So, voice is coming close with things that he’s interested in.

Viewing writing as personal, purposeful, and therefore motivating may have contributed to Jack’s challenge with putting detail into his writing. Consequently, when he was motivated and engaged in a writing activity, Mrs. Kit was careful in suggesting any changes:

Mrs. Kit: I don’t want him to erase anything. So now I start by saying, ‘Don’t erase anything. I want that to stay there, but I want you to add more to it so I want you to go underneath it and tell me a little bit more about the games you like.’ Sometimes he just goes back and erases the whole thing, anyway, if he can’t think of what else to write, and he’ll change it completely.
Janice: Have you ever had other students who has done that?

Mrs. Kit: Not erase the whole thing and start over, no. Sometimes I don’t get him to revise because I’d rather have what he’s done. And if I had a photocopier or a scanner in my room I could just photocopy it first and give it to him to revise and then I’d have both, but you don’t want to lose the whole thing. And then he gets frustrated too once he’s erased it. He thinks, ‘Now I’m doing it twice.’

Jack’s approach to revising his ideas was to wipe the slate clean and start over.

In Reading Recovery, children are challenged to compose longer and more complex stories daily (Clay, 2016). In his grade two classroom, what appeared to grab Jack’s attention led to a flow of ideas in his writing that drew from his interest in Minecraft and Pokemon, linking peer culture and play with writing (Wells Rowe, 2018). Jack’s knowledge of Minecraft games was a resource he could draw on (Compton Lilly, 2006). His approach to closed writing tasks was to get the job done. He was concerned that his writing was meeting expectations and would check in with Mrs. Kit or the classroom volunteer to be sure. Regarding end-of-Reading Recovery expectations for independent monitoring and revising, Jack’s monitoring actions appeared to be focused on letter formation, spelling and length. Although letter formation and conventions for capitalization were not fully controlled, Jack was able to construct his messages using a number of word-solving actions that drew on his knowledge of how words worked. In this aspect of writing, he was not reliant on external resources. Jack’s movement around the classroom and conversations with peers appeared to be more of a diversion from writing than a support. He preferred to approach Mrs. Kit or the classroom volunteer for help rather than his peers.
4.4. Aaron as a Developing Writer

4.4.1. Getting to Know Aaron

Aaron was in Mrs. Kit’s grade two classroom. At the beginning of the study he was 7.01 years and 7.05 years at the end. He lived with his parents and older sister. Aaron’s family was Middle Eastern, but he did not require English language support. Aaron was a willing participant in the pre-study assessments, and I administered all of the tasks of the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) and the Burt Word Reading Test (NZCR, 1981) in one morning (see Appendices 12 and 13).

Aaron worked quickly through the tasks. Wanting to work fast and be done was a characteristic also noted by Mrs. Kit in our first interview: “He’s at 100 miles an hour constantly in life, exuberant, excitable, excited, everything. But sometimes you just have to settle down a little bit.”

Being fast may have affected Aaron’s ability to self-monitor his decision-making and pick up the detail in print on word and text reading tasks. Consequently, his self-correction ratio during text reading was low, and his errors showed a pattern of neglecting visual detail. For example, he read was for were, medium-sized for middle-sized, tell for talk, and sang for smiled. Similar errors occurred on the Word Reading task. Words on this task were compiled from words most frequently occurring in the type of books Aaron would have been exposed to in Reading Recovery (Clay, 2013). Aaron substituted Mom for Mother, shout for shouted, no for not and mat for meet. His performance on The Burt Word Reading Test (NZCR, 1981) gave further insight into how he approached the problem solving of unknown words that were not frequently occurring and required decoding. His attempts included some word detail. For example, he tried car then crazy for carry, be-er for beware and re-tur for return without solving those words. He used the first part of the word vill in village, ter in terror and ton in tongue but was unable to finish solving those words. He solved known by first trying now, then know-n before he said the word.

Aaron’s neglect of the visual detail in print was also evident in the Concepts About Print task where he did not detect a change in line order, word order, or letter order. On the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words task he wrote tate for take and hem for him which also led me to wonder about his monitoring actions in writing.
Aaron’s Writing Vocabulary was a relative strength. He wrote 56 words, of which 50 were accurate. He drew from his knowledge of word categories and words with similar letter patterns. He generated words that started the same, or had a common part, (e.g. go, going, thing, something, and classroom, room). He wrote number words, countries and continents, opposites, and the names of family and friends. As he wrote, there was no evidence of sound analysis. His errors indicated that he was drawing on other sources of knowledge, possibly a memory of what the word looked like. For example, he wrote Garmary for Germany, and Nechchland for Netherlands. He wrote America in different ways, South ArcaciA (South America) and North ArcacrA (North America).

During our first interview Mrs. Kit connected Aaron’s lack of attention to word detail in his writing to his focus on length and on being the first one finished:

He seems to be more focused on, ‘Look I did a whole page,’ instead of the quality of it… He likes to be the first person done. We had a discussion yesterday. I think it was the third or fourth time possibly that he brought [his writing] to me. He said, ‘I just want it to be finished’… Slowing down to do things, for his writing, for his letter formation for his everything. Because, if we can get him to slow down a bit on that, then he can go back and reread what he’s written; then he can go back and fix things. But until he does that he just gets frustrated because he doesn’t know what he’s done a lot of the time.

In the pre-study interview Aaron may have been telling me the same thing. Writing “big words,” he said, made him feel “good.” However, he thought there was a lot more to learn. As he explained, “In grade two I learned some big words and some words that I don’t know yet.” Then he added, “We also learned about the earth.” When I asked him what he wanted to learn next as a writer he responded, “I want to learn about outer space.” Like other case study students, learning and writing were interwoven in Aaron’s world.

In summary, at the beginning of the study Aaron’s text reading was at a late grade one level. His word solving actions while reading revealed a lack of attention to word detail. Although the vocabulary of words he could write was a relative strength and something he was proud to display, his problem-solving actions showed the same neglect of word detail as in his reading.
4.4.2. Aaron Writing in the Classroom

I made 21 observations of Aaron writing in Mrs. Kit’s classroom during the morning writing block. (See Table 4 for a list of Aaron’s classroom writing and Appendix 18 for a description of the writing activities in Mrs. Kit’s classroom.) According to Mrs. Kit, generating ideas for both assigned and open-ended writing activities was a strength for Aaron. However, he did not always follow directions on an assigned task. For example, on Pink T-shirt Day the children were directed to write about how Pink T-shirt Day began. Aaron wrote about a bullying incident he witnessed on the school playground. On Earth Day, one choice was to write about what aliens would say about the state of the earth if they landed on earth. The setting for Aaron’s story was Earth Day night. Two blue slimy aliens were zigzagging through the trees. At this point, Aaron’s story moved away from the assigned topic. He placed himself in the story to battle with the aliens who got on fire and zoomed away. Mrs. Kit redirected Aaron back to the purpose:

Mrs. Kit:  We need to get something about Earth Day.
Aaron:    They don’t teach you.
Mrs. Kit:  How can you help the earth?
Aaron:    I could just throw them back.
Mrs. Kit:  How would that help the earth?
Aaron:    Wash their slime, then I will clean up the slime.

Aaron’s family members appeared in his messages. His mother was the recipient of his Valentine invitation, and during a free writing activity he wrote about his sister’s floor hockey game and his prediction of the outcome. In two problem and solution narratives, his parents were the rescuers and helpers, and his entire family featured in his One Wish story.

Observations of how Aaron worked on classroom writing tasks captured moments of engagement and moments when he appeared disengaged and stalled. Behaviours that indicated he was stalled in his writing or disengaged from the task were: rubbing his ear, looking at the clock, playing with his pencil, and walking around the classroom. In the following example, Aaron returned from a conference with Mrs. Kit on his Pink T-shirt story about bullying. As noted above, he had not followed directions for this writing task:

Mrs. Kit:   Excellent. You wrote about where you saw some bullying.
Our task today was to talk about how Pink T shirt day started…
You are going to start from here.

Aaron: (Returns to his desk.)
(Rubs his ear while looking up.)
(Looks toward the hallway.)
(Rubs his ear.)
(Yawns.)
(Rubs his eyes.)
When is recess going to come?
(Yawns.)
(Rubs his ear.)
(Laughs.)
When is the recess going to come? I can’t wait.
(Picks up a pencil, goes to the chalkboard.)
(Returns to his desk.)
(Moves his pencil through his fingers while talking quietly to himself.)
I don’t know.

After returning to his desk, Aaron’s behaviour indicted that he was not able to independently redirect his thinking from a battle with aliens to the information from a video that the class had watched before the writing activity. The composing actions that facilitated the creation of his original message were not helpful when he was required to recall information that he may not have thought of as important enough to remember.

Table 4
Aaron’s Classroom Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Writing</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Text and art to show what a friend is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrostic Poem</td>
<td>First and last name</td>
<td>Using words to describe yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrostic Poem</td>
<td>Valentine’s Day</td>
<td>Letters in the word Valentine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitation</td>
<td>Valentine’s Day</td>
<td>An invitation to be his Valentine and why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>George and Martha</td>
<td>What do you think happened and why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal narrative</td>
<td>Pink T-shirt Day</td>
<td>A recount of a bullying incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>The Invisible Boy</td>
<td>Describe how an invisible boy could be included and more visible to those around him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipe</td>
<td>Pancakes</td>
<td>Procedure for making pancakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure Story</td>
<td>Getting Lost</td>
<td>Problem and solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>How I can show kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>George Makes Clay</td>
<td>Title / Characters / Setting / Problem / Failed Attempts / Solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure Story</td>
<td>George Makes Clay</td>
<td>George, Jack and Sam try to make a dragon and bird out of clay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Response</td>
<td>Golden Egg</td>
<td>If you were in charge of a golden egg where would you hide it and why would you hide it there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>Earth Day</td>
<td>Fighting aliens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>One Wish</td>
<td>If you could have one wish what would it be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>Floor Hockey</td>
<td>The floor hockey championship game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card</td>
<td>Mother’s Day</td>
<td>Message of thanks to his mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>How I can show kindness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aaron wrote his family members, friends, and imaginary characters into his writing, creating adventure, fantasy and science fiction. When an assigned writing task required a specific type of response, Aaron’s writing showed that he did not understand the expectations. There were moments of complete engagement, such as when he was writing his One Wish story. There were also moments when his actions and comments indicated that he was stalled and unsure how to proceed.

4.4.3. Aaron’s Composing Actions

Aaron’s actions during writing activities that were interpreted as composing actions were commenting, drawing, indicating thinking, looking up, looking at a drawing, pencil movements,
planning, talking about ideas during writing, and talking to himself while writing. (See Appendix 19 for the frequency of each composing action.)

Talking to himself while writing was a common composing action. Sitting near Aaron I heard him say specific words and phrases as he was writing, such that talking was concurrent with writing. In the first example (see Figure 12), Aaron was writing his responses to how Brian in *The Invisible Boy* could be included and more visible to those around him:

> And then then then then got a g-g or- or-…
> You you come c ooo m birthday I

He wrote:

> *When Brian walked away*
> *JT said Brian you want*  
> *to play? Then BrIan*  
> *got a goal.*  
> *Madison said to Brian*  
> *you want to come to my*  
> *next birthday?*
I also observed actions which I interpreted as talking while writing during which the talking and writing were consecutive actions, as in the next example from Aaron’s problem and solution narrative.

Aaron: (Looking up and playing with his pencil.)
(Looks down at his book still playing with his pencil.)

Mrs. Kit: (Comes by Aaron’s desk.)

Aaron: I’m writing (not decipherable)… okay.
(Smiles at classmate in his group.)

Figure 12. Aaron’s Responses for The Invisible Boy
(Sighs.)
So he can play
(Writes several words.)
He wrote:

_Wen I cameBack form school I_
\_got lost. my mom and Dad came_
\_looking for me, The (Then) she fon (found)_
\_me. She talk (took) me home so I can_
\_play with my toys._

Aaron’s comments while writing gave me an indication of how things were going. From the above example of the Pink T-shirt message, his final comment, “I don’t know” indicated things were not going well. During other writing activities, his comments indicated that things were going well. While writing his responses to _The Invisible Boy_ he commented, “It’s so easy.” And, when writing how he would show kindness he commented, “I’ve got great plans.” These comments appeared to be addressed to no one in particular. On one occasion when the task was to generate rhyming words Aaron’s comment was addressed to Mrs. Kit when he said, “Oh, I know a great one.”

Two composing behaviours that were unique to Aaron were indication of thinking and looking at an illustration. He indicated his thinking while writing about where he would hide a golden egg. Aaron wrote that he would hide it in his sister’s tub. He appeared stalled on the second part, which was to explain why he would hide the golden egg in that spot. At this point Mrs. Kit checked in.

Aaron: (Head in his hands.)
(Rubs his ear.)
Mrs. Kit: What’s next?
Aaron: I’m thinking.
Mrs. Kit: Did you fix your tib to make it tub?
Aaron: (Gets up goes to get eraser from a classmate.)
uuu baaa
(Writes a letter b.)
In a conversation after the writing Mrs. Kit said that Aaron, along with other children, did not “get it.” Most children described exactly where they would hide the golden egg. However, the direction was to give clues without telling the exact place.

Although it was not clear to me exactly what Aaron found helpful, the practice of looking at the illustration in *The Invisible Boy* assignment (see Figure 12) appeared to support him in composing his responses as shown in the next example:

Aaron: (Looks at the illustration.)
I, I
Supply Teacher: Do you have a question for me?
Aaron: I got it.
(Continues writing.)
Classmate: I’m done.
Aaron: I don’t care.
(Says words out loud.)
to nnnn
It’s so easy.

Looking up without a focus on anything in particular was interpreted as a composing action. In the following example Aaron was writing a Valentine invitation to his mother. The children were provided with the sentence starter, Dear ___ I would like you to be my Valentine. They were encouraged to include descriptive words. Aaron had finished copying the starting sentence into his message, and now had to continue with his own ideas:

Looks up.
Looks down and reads what he has written.
Looks up.
Puts his pencil under his eye.
Looks at me.
Talks quietly to himself as he stares at his pencil.

He went on to compose a message describing why his loved his mother.
Dear mom I would (would) like you
to be my Valentine because I love ya
because It is Valentine Day my mom
makes me happy because my mom lovez
Me and My sisber (Name) to and my
mom is playfel and kindfol and
my mom Love me.

Aaron engaged in a variety of composing actions. However, talking to himself while writing, which could also be described as composing orally, was his most frequent composing action. Aaron’s comments let me know when things were or were not going well. When things were going well, looking up was a commonly observed indication of thinking.

4.4.4. Aaron’s Constructing Actions

Actions that were categorized as constructing actions were: articulating in general and articulating a cluster, phoneme or word, asking how to spell a word, copying a sentence starter or word, drawing after writing, indicating he is finished, inserting a period, looking around the room, looking in his spelling practice book, recording a cluster of letters or recording letter by letter, saying a word out loud, writing multiple words, and writing a single word. (See Appendix 20 for the frequency of each constructing action.)

Aaron’s predominant constructing action was slow articulation. Most of the time I could hear and record what he was articulating, but when it was not clear, I categorized that observation as articulation in general. Examples of Aaron’s articulation of letter clusters are fl ou ou (flour), ou nd (found), tr y (try), and arge (charge). Aaron articulated phonemes as in rrr e f (breakfast), www rr k (work), and d iiiii d (did). He also combined the articulation of letter cluster and phoneme in ch ch eee err ing (cheering). Articulation of a word was noted when he elongated an entire word as with Ge o r ge (George). Articulating a word was also followed by articulating a phoneme, for example h i s h iii (his) and w e n t w eee w eeeee n t (went).

The articulation of sounds in words was a slow and frequent problem-solving process for Aaron. Other problem-solving actions were quicker, for example he recorded multiple words with no
overt problem-solving actions. Problem solving actions observed occasionally were saying a word out loud before writing and recording a cluster of letters. For example, while writing his Mother’s Day message Aaron wrote watches by recording wat ch es.

Mrs. Kit brought the use of periods in writing to Aaron’s attention, and this resulted in inserting periods as a constructing action. While writing his One Wish story I observed how Aaron went about inserting periods into his message:

Aaron: (Reads aloud to himself.)
Then one day he went out for a walk.
(Adds a period.)
Then a …..right in front…
(Adds period.)
Then I
(Pencil at end of line.)
(Stops keeps reading to end of sentence and adds period.)

Janice: Why not put a period after “Then I?”

Aaron: Too close.

Aaron was aware of the need to include periods in his message. His comment provided insight into his developing understanding, which was that there needed to be more than two words between periods.

Aaron engaged in a variety of constructing actions. Writing multiple words (not necessarily accurately) was a common action and an efficient way to get down his ideas. When problem solving, slow articulation of words, phonemes and clusters were commonly observed actions. Although Aaron most often appeared to draw from his own knowledge to construct his messages, I observed him look around the room, use his spelling practice book, ask how to spell a word, and copy from class resources.

4.4.5. Aaron’s Monitoring Actions

While writing his messages, Aaron engaged in a number of actions that were interpreted as monitoring actions. He added to his message, commented on message length, corrected a letter, word or the space between letters in a word, counted lines, erased a letter, a cluster of letters or a
word, read what he had written, looked back into his message, and gave a verbal indication that something was not quite right. (See Appendix 21 for the frequency of each monitoring action.) Aaron’s monitoring actions gave insight into what he was and was not monitoring on. Although he would spell an unknown word in different ways, such as, the word because in his Valentine invitation to his mother, his action in the following example showed that he was monitoring the spelling of good in his floor hockey story.

Erases last word, adds two more letters
Looks round
Head in hand
Rubs his eyes
says, “are”
writes g o d
Inserts a letter o

When I asked Aaron how he knew he needed another letter o, he responded with, “I just knowed.”

Aaron made a variety of verbal indications, such as “Oops, I forgot something,” that were interpreted as monitoring actions. His verbal indications would be followed by some other monitoring action, for example. “Oh” was followed by changing a letter, “One second” and “Oh I’m wrong” were followed by looking back into his message, and “Ahhh,” a frustrated sound, led to erasing action. Somewhat bewildered by his own mistake in writing the word not, he said to no one in particular, “Why do I keep doing the i before the n o t?”

Erasing actions and actions that indicated he was either reading back or looking back into his message were Aaron’s most frequent monitoring actions. During the writing of his One Wish story Aaron’s response to my question about why he was erasing helped me to understand how those two monitoring actions worked together for him.

Aaron: Then then he he then he said you
(Erases)
you can make aaaa wish ww ww w -i- sh
Janice: Why were you erasing?
Aaron: Was this word.
Points to the word *then*.
I was reading in my mind.

Perhaps “reading in my mind” was Aaron’s description of silent reading.

By reading back into his message, Aaron shifted his attention from the word he was working on to the phrase that preceded it. This action may have helped him pick up a story line after word solving. Aaron’s erasing actions indicated that he was monitoring on surface-level features: spelling, letter formation and spacing. His comments on story length and number of lines indicated that “how much I’ve written” was important to him.

### 4.4.6. Aaron’s Messages

Aaron’s control of directional and spatial rules for written English, the clarity of his messages, his spelling and letter knowledge, and his use of punctuation were examined through an analyses of writing samples. (See Appendix 22 for the behaviours within each category.) Spandel’s (2012) primary continuum was used for analysis of the expression of ideas, organization and voice on two of Aaron’s writing samples.

Control of directional and spatial rules are foundational habits for literacy processing (Clay, 2016). Aaron’s writing samples showed no lapses in his control of directional rules for written language at the message level and at the word level. Spacing between words was more common than lapses in word spacing, and Aaron’s control of spacing within words was evident from only one lapse across all samples. I observed Aaron monitoring for spacing within words while writing the word *all* in *George Makes Clay*. He wrote, *But it Did not work at a ll*. Noticing that he had left a space between the *a* and the *ll*, Aaron placed a second letter *a* close to the two *l*’s and erased the first letter *a*.

Aaron’s messages showed greater control of some aspects of language than others. Irregular nouns, irregular verbs and prepositions were more often used correctly than incorrectly. His incorrect application of pronouns and subject/verb agreement were aspects of written language that affected the clarity of his messages. Examples of Aaron’s use of language are as follows:  

**Irregular Noun (Correct Use)**

*I will show kindness by*

*Helping df br pepl (people) thf (if) they*
are Blooding
Irregular verb (Correct and Incorrect Use)

*We are playing tag I tAg Nate and Nate*  

*is it*  

Preposition (Correct and Incorrect Use)

*george came back from school he*  

*went to the Bacment*  

Pronoun (Correct and Incorrect Use)

*george chied (tried) make a tal (tail) But*  

*it Did not work.*  

Subject Verb (Agreement and Disagreement)

*Wen I cameBack form school I got lost.*  

*My mom and Dad came looking for me.*

Mrs. Kit brought word omissions to Aaron’s attention by reading aloud what he had written or inviting him to read his message to her, as in the following example:

Mrs. Kit: **Awesome story. Read to me**  

Aaron: (Reads word by word.)  

Mrs. Kit: Where’s ‘they?’ It says ‘then zoom away.’  

You got words you want; make sure they are on the page.

In our first interview Mrs. Kit explained that she thought Aaron’s tendency to work fast contributed to his word omissions:

Slowing down to do things, for his writing: for his letter formation for his everything because if we can get him to slow down a bit on that, then he can go back and reread what he’s written; then he can go back and fix things.

Being fast may have affected Aaron’s spelling decisions. His writing samples showed a flexible approach to spelling when writing messages (see Appendix 22). Most common were standard spelling, and categories that were closest to standard spelling: partially correct words, *bceaues (because)*, and words that had spelling patterns, *reach (reach)*. Aaron used spellings that showed attention to letter sequence, *hrt (hurt)* or used vowels, *buf (bath)*. However, his writing samples
also contained words with the initial letters, and digraphs/blends only, \textit{br (word unknown)}, and initial letters followed by letters that did not reflect the phonology or orthography of the word, \textit{flen (fire)}.

Aaron’s speedy approach to getting down his messages resulted in messy letter formation. Still, I found only one letter reversal across all of the writing samples, the letter \textit{n} in the word \textit{can}. In contrast, only two of Aaron’s writing samples had standard use of upper and lowercase letters. Uppercase \textit{Bb, Dd, Ii, and Hh} were common at the beginning or within a word. Uppercase \textit{Ff, Jj, Ll, Mm} and \textit{Rr} were sometimes used at the beginning of words, and with \textit{Ww, Pp} and \textit{Kk} it was unclear if he used an uppercase letter or a larger size of the lowercase letter. The names of the characters in his messages: Martha, his sister, Brian, Madison, Sam and Jack were consistently capitalized; george was the only exception. Aaron also capitalized team names, Red Wings and Saler (Sabres), in his floor hockey message.

Periods were the only form of punctuation evident in Aaron’s messages. As shown in Appendix 22, three writing samples contained the conventional use of periods. In most of his messages the period was absent, used only at the end of some sentences, or the end of the message.

4.4.6.1. Ideas, Organization and Voice

For an analysis of Aaron’s expression of ideas, organization, and voice, I chose two samples, written in the last month of the study (see Figures 13 and 14). They were produced during writing episodes in which Aaron appeared completely engaged in topics that were personally important in his world. The \textit{One Wish} story was an assigned topic: If you could have one wish what would it be? Aaron responded with an enthusiastic, “Yes!” He closed his eyes and gasped. It was as if he had thought about this topic before, and now was his chance to play it out. The following week, Aaron wrote \textit{Floor Hockey} during free writing. As the children transitioned from a class discussion to writing, Aaron looked at me and said, “I want to write about hockey,” and pointed to the gym, right across the hallway from his classroom.

In both samples, Aaron expresses his ideas in a clear message. All the details are in the text with no accompanying art. He uses multiple sentences that build on a main idea and extend the story. Both messages can be read without the help of the writer. The \textit{One Wish} story includes detail that creates an image: \textit{e.g. a genie came right in front of me, and, the sky was getting dark}. Details in
*Floor Hockey* convey Aaron’s excitement and anticipation of a *tough game* with a lot at stake: a trophy and jumbo freezie and, of course, *to be champion.*

Aaron organizes his *One Wish* story in a developing sequence of events that set up the encounter with a genie, the one wish, and the aftermath. He uses *then* as a way to connect the sequence of events in a logical order, and uses an identifiable beginning to a fantasy story: *Once upon a time.* The organization Aaron gives to *Floor Hockey* makes it read like an information piece. It begins with a lead sentence, and the content blends information with commentary. He uses *and, so,* and *because* to transition from one detail to another.

Aaron’s voice in his *One Wish* story comes through in his choice of words to convey his excitement over seeing his wish fulfilled (e.g., *raced* to his parent’s and sister’s rooms, *jumped* on the bed and *yelled* the news). Aaron takes the voice of a sports pundit in *Floor Hockey.* He is conversational in tone and speaks directly to his reader (e.g. *But who will win?).

In summary, Aaron’s messages provide evidence of his control of essential foundational habits for directional movement and spatial layout. He writes letters in a standard way but with unconventional use of upper and lowercase. Although the reader encounters errors in standard grammar, spelling and punctuation, Aaron’s messages are clear enough to communicate his ideas in his own voice.
Once a time there was a boy. Name Aaron, her Mom and Dad did not have little boy until one day he went out for a walk then a genie came feet in front of him. Then he said:

You can make a wish. Then I made a wish. I said, "I wish I had lost my last TV more than the sky wizard because I have to be home than it was. Next, then my house fell with more than then I raced to my dad's room then I saw mom and one way is fell with more.

Then I raced to my sister's room then I jumped on bed then I yelled "safety, safety, we're dead." Our house is fell we're more than then I jumped down on then we played last ball then the next out house was fell with more and took we buy and play all day.

Figure 13. Aaron's One Wish Story
Once upon a time there was a boy named Aaron. His Mom and Dad did not have lots of money. Then one day he went out for a walk. Then a genie came right in front of me. Then he said, “You can have one wish.” Then I made a wish. I said, “I wish I had lots and lots of money.” Then the sky was getting dark. I have to be home. Then it was [the] next day. Then my house [was] full with money. Then I raced to my Dad’s room.

Then I said, “Mom, Dad, our house is full with money.” Then I raced to my sister’s room. Then I jumped on the bed. Then I yelled, “(Sister’s name twice) wake up. Our house is full with money. Then I jumped down and then we played all day. Then the next [day] our house was full with money and toys. We played and played all day.

Floor hockey is today — Red Wings versus Sabres. I am so excited. Both teams are very good. So I am cheering for both teams. Because, both teams are very [good]. And the players are very good to win the trophy and
a jumbo freezie, and to be a champion.
The game starts at lunch recess
at 1:00. Good luck Red Wings and
Sabres. But who will win? Red Wings
or Sabres? It is going to be a
tough game. Because, when they versed
another team they tried their best
to win so.

Figure 14. Aaron’s Floor Hockey Story
4.4.7. Aaron’s Writing Interactions with His Teacher

Aaron’s interactions with Mrs. Kit were categorized as actions that facilitated his next move, focused his attention, or provided feedback. Most interactions facilitated Aaron’s next move or provided feedback. Interactions that focused his attention were less in number compared with the other types of interactions. However, there were more teacher interactions that focused attention than with the other case study students. (See Appendix 23 for the actions and their frequency for Aaron and the other case study students.)

4.4.7.1. Facilitating Action

Mrs. Kit’s interactions with Aaron facilitated his composing, word solving, attention to punctuation, and engagement in a writing task. In the following example, Mrs. Kit was conferencing with Aaron about his One Wish story. Her actions facilitated his decision making on a choice of word to best communicated his idea:

Mrs. Kit: This. (points)
Aaron: Oops.
Mrs. Kit: You are writing so fast, so many ideas. What is a word to fit in here? Out house or our house, makes a bit of a difference.

In the next example, Mrs. Kit acknowledged Aaron’s use of punctuation. Her subsequent action facilitated his understanding of where else he would need to place a period in his message:

Mrs. Kit: Here’s a period. You have all of this with one period. Read it out loud. (Mrs. Kit reads.) Once upon a time there was a boy named Aaron. Pause, period. Listen to your voice. Where do you need to take a breath? That’s how you talk or read.
Aaron: (Reading aloud to himself.) Then one day he went out for a walk. (Inserts a period.)
Teacher interactions that facilitated word solving were breaking down a word, inviting Aaron to try a word, and directing him to use his spelling practice book. In this example of breaking down a word, Mrs. Kit was making pancakes while the children were engaged in procedure writing.

Aaron: (Pencil in his mouth, watching Mrs. Kit.)
(Gets up and goes over to Mrs. Kit.)
Miss Kit, do you call this a tray?
Mrs. Kit: Griddle, grid dle.
Aaron: Gri, gri, the, the,
(Writes without saying out loud.)

In addition to facilitating composing, word solving and use of punctuation, there were interactions that directed Aaron to a next step. On one occasion he was directed to free writing after completing an assigned writing task. On another occasion he was directed to add his name to his message and place it in his folder. In the following example, while Aaron was writing an acrostic poem, Mrs. Kit directed him to a necessary step before using a dictionary.

Aaron: (Looks up.)
(Rubs his eyes.)
Miss Kit.
(Looks in the dictionary.)
Miss Kit, (yawns,) Miss Kit.
Mrs. Kit: Close the book. You didn’t try to think of a word.
Aaron is a….
Aaron: (Mouths something.)

Some of Mrs. Kit’s redirecting actions were management actions, such as redirecting Aaron back to his writing task from talking with a classmate, moving around the classroom, or leaving the room.

4.4.7.2. Focusing Attention
As noted in Appendix 23, prompting, reminding of a teaching point, and using periods were actions taken by Mrs. Kit to focus Aaron’s attention. Using Clay’s (2016) definition, Mrs. Kit’s prompts were a call for Aaron to take an action, with the assumption that the action prompted was within his control. For example, Mrs. Kit prompted Aaron to attend to punctuation when she
asked, “So what do you need at the end?” She called on him to pull two things together in figuring out the word *awesome* with, “say it slowly, use your book (spelling practice book).”

Reading his messages out loud in order to monitor the clarity of his ideas and punctuation were teaching points on which Mrs. Kit focused Aaron’s attention, as shown in the following example:

Mrs. Kit: See why it is important to read back your work?
(Reads) But it did not work. George tried make?
Aaron: Ahhh!
Mrs. Kit: Okay so let’s go back there.
So George tried making the?
Aaron: I’ll fix that.
Mrs. Kit: The what?
Aaron: The head.
Mrs. Kit: Okay, so you need to add “the head.”
(Reads) ….at all.
You need a period there.
Okay … and making (*make the to making the*).

### 4.4.7.3. Providing Feedback

Mrs. Kit asked questions that provided Aaron with feedback and in so doing put herself in the position of the reader needing information from him, the writer. She was explicit about her needs as a reader when she said, “You got words you want; make sure they are on the page.” More often, she asked a question that supported the development of Aaron’s ideas and choice of words. The first example comes from Aaron’s Mother’s Day message.

Mrs. Kit: She watches with me?
So do you want to say, she watches TV with me?
Gave me breakfast or gives me breakfast?

The second example is from Aaron’s adventure story about getting lost:

Mrs. Kit: But she found me or then she found me?
Aaron: Then.
The feedback Mrs. Kit gave to Aaron on an illustration of what he liked to do with a friend in his *Friends* message may have supported the inclusion of those ideas into his written response.

Aaron: (Gets up and takes his paper over to Mrs. Kit.)
Mrs. Kit: What are you doing in your picture?
Aaron: (Not able to hear his response.)
Mrs. Kit: Who is your friend?
Aaron: (Friend’s name.)
Mrs. Kit: What kind of tag?
Aaron: (Writes quietly, looks up, and says a word to himself.)

Feedback in the form of general praise acknowledged Aaron’s accomplishment. Examples of general praise are, “Good,” “Good job,” “Awesome story,” “Excellent,” and “High five.” Within the context of this kind of interaction, a general praise comment was followed by a teaching move or was used as a form of encouragement as shown in the following example. Aaron was writing his *One Wish* story.

Mrs. Kit: Boy, Aaron. Okay.
   Maybe you should wear your shirt backwards every day it is bringing you much.

Feedback in the form of specific praise was observed less frequently. In the following example, Mrs. Kit’s acknowledged Aaron’s use of standard spelling.

Mrs. Kit: Good for you. you wrote ‘helps.’
   You got ‘with’ we’ve been working on that.

While writing his *One Wish* story, Mrs. Kit acknowledged Aaron’s attention to line spacing when she said, “Look my wish is coming true, to have lines between.”

I reviewed my analysis of Mrs. Kit’s interactions with Aaron by examining each interaction within each category (facilitating action, focusing attention, and providing feedback) to ascertain the content of these interactions. The subject of over half of the interactions was surface-level aspects of writing: punctuation, grammar, spelling, word solving and spacing. The content of Aaron’s messages, such as drawing out his ideas, was the subject of over a quarter of the interactions, and the remainder were requests to clarifying his ideas.
Mrs. Kit gave me some insight into why the surface-level aspects of writing were the subject of the majority of her interactions with Aaron in our first interview. She thought that Aaron’s ability to express his ideas was meeting specific expectations: “He does get lots of ideas. He can come up with the content, not necessarily what was asked, but he can come up with lots of content.” She also thought that Aaron needed to put more care into his writing. His desire to be the first person done resulted in a lack of attention to surface-level aspects of his writing. In our final interview Mrs. Kit noted that there had been change in the volume of Aaron’s writing but not a lot of change in his attention to spelling, spacing and slowing down enough to listen for sounds in words.

4.4.8. Aaron’s Interactions with Others in the Classroom

In the social world of his classroom, Aaron engaged in a variety of interactions with others. (See Appendix 24 for the type and frequency of each interaction.) Most interactions with classmates occurred within his table group. In addition to table conversations, Aaron asked classmates at his table to identify a word and provide direction. He asked for help in general and specifically with editing by asking for an eraser. He also indicated to a classmate at his table when he did not want to be disturbed, and Aaron was redirected by a classmate to use a chart when he asked how to spell a word. Outside of his table group, Aaron talked with a classmate about a word starting with the letter N when composing his Valentine’s Day acrostic poem, and on two occasions he went over to another table group to look a classmate’s writing.

Most conversations within Aaron’s table group related in some way to the writing activity. While writing the golden egg response, Aaron commented, “Does the Easter Bunny even hide eggs?” to which there was no response from his table mates. While composing his One Wish story Aaron suddenly said, “A dollar sign is an S with two lines.” This non sequitur made sense in the context of his story about a money tree. When a table mate let the group know he was done an assigned writing task, Aaron responded with, “I don’t care.” Being finished was important information and so was length. In the following example Aaron reported on the length of his Mother’s Day message which went onto flowers.

Aaron: I’m doing another flower.
I am doing 6 flowers.
(Traces form onto pink paper.)
I have 6 flowers
We’re going to do the same thing for Father’s Day.
How many days till Mother’s Day?

I observed one table conversation that was not relevant to the writing activity in some way. While writing an entry into his Kindness Book, Aaron joined into a conversation about how long each student had been at the school.

In comparison to interactions with classmates, very few of Aaron’s interactions with others were with an adult other than Mrs. Kit. Twice he asked me for help spelling a word, and all other interactions were with a regular classroom volunteer. Those interactions related to composing his message. While writing out the procedure for making pancakes, the classroom volunteer directed Aaron and his table mates to think about the ingredients for the pancakes Mrs. Kit was making when she said, “Remember we don’t need flour because we have pancake mix.” As with his classmates, Aaron made it clear when he did not want to be disturbed. While writing his George and Martha inference, he told the classroom volunteer to “leave” when she asked if she could read his message.

There was a lively give and take in the conversational exchanges in Mrs. Kit’s grade two classroom. Aaron engaged in a variety of different interactions with others, but participation in table group conversations was the most common. What the children talked about during those conversations ranged from topics that were writing-related to something of general interest. Their conversations provided some insight into how the social world of the classroom influenced Aaron’s writing — that others are a source of help, and that volume is a measure of good writing.

4.4.9. Aaron’s Use of Classroom Resources and Supports

While engaged in writing activities, I observed Aaron use charts, a dictionary and his spelling practice book to support word solving. He also used his writing folder and headphones to block out the noise and activity of the classroom. (See Appendix 25 for the frequency of each classroom resource.) Charts were Aaron’s most frequently used classroom resources, but only during the first month of the study when the children were engaged in writing activities about friends and Valentine’s Day. In the following example Aaron was writing his response to the
question, “What is a friend?” He was prompted by a classmate to use a chart that the class created together to help him spell a word.

Aaron: (Says a word slowly to himself, adjusts his paper on his desk.)

How to spell respectful?

Classmate: If you don't know how to spell respectful go to [the chart].

Aaron: (Goes to Friends chart.)

I got it.

While writing his Valentine’s Day acrostic poem, Aaron independently used a chart to find a word that went with the letter I. His subsequent interaction with Mrs. Kit indicated that he wanted to know what word he had chosen:

Aaron: (Gets up and goes over to chart.)

Ah (Returns quickly to his desk.)

(Writes letters next to letter I.)

(Goes back to chart.)

(Runs back to his desk, writes letters.)

(Back to chart.)

n g (Goes over to Mrs. Kit.)

I do the word up there, the I.

Mrs. Kit: So it is.

Aaron: Int In ell leein gent

Mrs. Kit: (Articulates quietly along with Aaron.)

Aaron: Intelligent, I knew it!

Mrs. Kit: You got it.

Aaron appeared proud to have figured it out, and Mrs. Kit confirmed he was correct.

The way Aaron used a dictionary demonstrated that although he saw it as a resource for finding a word, he did not know how to use it. In the following example he was writing an acrostic poem using the letters in his name:

Aaron: (Gets up and goes to get a dictionary.)
I like to find out what’s for A.

Mrs. Kit: You need to say the sentence, Nathan is…. It has to be a describing word that fits in that sentence.

Aaron: (Looks at words in the A section.)
(Runs his finger down a page.)
I’m looking for a word that…
(Looks at classmate.)
I can’t see any nice word on there.
(Changes his angle of inspection on the same page.)

Aaron did not appear to know how to use a classroom dictionary. He responded to an unfamiliar layout by trying different ways to search the print before abandoning it.

I did not observe Aaron using a wall display, however, during our first interview Mrs. Kit recalled a teaching interaction with Aaron in which she directed him to use the word wall to find the word was.

He wanted to write today w-o-r. And I said, ‘You just asked me how to spell was’ and he goes, ‘Yes.’ ‘You told me w-o-r. Do you hear that r sound in the word was? No.’ I said, ‘Okay.’ He said, ‘Where is it?’ I said, ‘It’s on the word wall.’ He looked up and there’s lots of w words up there, and he says, ‘Oh yeah its w-a-s.’ He can read those words. So that’s what we need to be listening to and look at his work to see if it looks like it should: if it looks right.

My observations of Aaron’s use of classroom resources captured how he used charts as an external resource for word solving and not as an inspiration for the content of his messages. However, he may have used an Earth Day chart as an inspiration for the development of his idea of aliens in his Earth Day story. Mrs. Kit and the students created the start of a story idea for Earth Day as follows:

On Earth Day a small flying object landed on a rock in my backyard. A grey and yellow thingamajig climbed out. It zigzagged over to me and sputtered, ‘What is happening on this planet?’

Aaron then wrote (also see Figure 15):

On Earth Day night I went camping.
Two blue slimy aliens came. It went zigzagging on the tree. Then I had an idea. I take the slimy aliens to the fire. Then they got on fire and then they zoomooooooom away.

Figure 15. Aaron’s Earth Day Story

In summary, Aaron primarily used classroom resources as a support for word solving, although he may have been inspired by a chart story on Earth Day. Using his writing folder to create a screen and using headphones served as supports that Aaron set up for himself to create a private space for writing and minimize distractions.

4.4.10. Aaron’s Written Language Development

By the end of the study Aaron’s reading progress was stalled at late grade one level with some ineffective reading behaviours dominating his decision-making. Twice during the course of the study, I monitored Aaron’s reading development by taking a Running Record on his classroom guided reading text. On the first administration he scored hard (below 90%) on a level 17 text with a self-correction ratio of one to six. A month later on another level 17 text he scored instructional (between 90 and 94%) with a self-correction ratio of one to four. As part of the post-study Observation Survey (Clay, 2013), I began the assessment of text level with a level 17
that he had read once before. Aaron scored in the hard range (87.5%) with a self-correction ratio of one to five. A familiar level 16 text was also in the hard range (83%) with a self-correction ratio of one to six (see Appendix 12).

Aaron read at a fast pace. There were pages where he read fluently and pages where he neglected punctuation and grouped words together in ungrammatical phrases. His error behaviour indicated that he could pull together some visual information from the print with the meaning of the message and/or the structure of the language. This resulted in errors such as forgot for found, take for told, and tell for talked. Self-correcting actions were initiated when meaning or structure were compromised. By the end of the study a new behaviour emerged. Aaron kept a fast pace and substituted entire phrases. For example, all the way for along beside them. He looked at me, which indicated he was monitoring, but kept going. Being quick overrode monitoring and checking behaviour. Mrs. Kit noticed the same behaviour during guided reading lessons:

I say, ‘Stop. Go back. Take a look at that.’ He just wanted to get through it… If I say to him, ‘Look at that. Does that go with what you just read to me? No it doesn’t. Why? What do you need to change?’ And he can tell me. S for him, he just has an innate need to be the first one for everything, whether it’s leaving the classroom, washing his hands, lining up, finishing his work, finishing a story.

While reading to me, however, without other children to compete with, Aaron took the same decision-making approach.

Insight into Aaron’s competency in solving words in text reading came from the few instances during the administration of Running Records when he appealed for help. Then I could prompt him with, “You try it.” (Clay, 2013, p. 61). He tried fon for found, ch-on-ken for chicken, and Dex for Dexter without solving the words. Aaron was reluctant to try unknown words on the Burt Word Reading Test (NZCR, 1981). His substitutions led me to conclude that in addition to wanting to read quickly, he was not able to solve unknown words by taking the word apart. He said crazy for carry, vegetable for village, ret for return, jors for journey, kown for known, and explanation for explorer (see Appendix 13). He did not appear to have knowledge to apply to solving unknown words and attending to word detail.
Aaron approached the post study writing assessments with confidence and enthusiasm. On the Writing Vocabulary task of the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) Aaron wrote 71 words, of which 54 were correct in every detail. He generated words in categories: family, friends, animals, colours, numbers, and words that had similar spelling patterns. He wrote words that he associated together, for example, will you, and Blood, red. He used spelling patterns and sequencing knowledge on some of his attempts: family (family), Nethelnd (Netherlands). On other attempts he appeared to use some memory of the word without attention to sequence, for example, Polnad (Poland), ongeg (orange), geern (green) and blen (blue).

Beyond Reading Recovery, writing messages requires Aaron to pull together composing, constructing and monitoring processes. In doing so, he relied heavily on oral composition and the slow articulation of words. Rushing to be finished may have left little resources for monitoring the word detail and searching his writing and reading vocabulary knowledge. Developing Aaron’s conceptual understanding of the consistency of a word in written language was supported by Mrs. Kit’s attention to it. She focused on standard spelling in some of her conferences with Aaron, pointing out inconsistencies with common words (wor for was and da for the), and praised him for using standard spelling on words she had previously brought to his attention.

Mrs. Kit described Aaron as, “on fire” the day he wrote his One Wish story (see Figure 13). While writing this message Aaron exhibited a combination of composing, constructing and monitoring behaviours described above. He paused part way through to show Mrs. Kit how long his story was becoming, but he did not rush to be the first one finished.

Interest in the topic and a knowledge base of ideas to draw from were important factors in Aaron’s writing. He played out his ideas on having one wish and his excitement over his sister’s floor hockey game in a subsequent story. These two messages provided Mrs. Kit with evidence that volume and a willingness to write were the biggest changes in Aaron’s writing. However, in our end-of-study interview she evaluated his reading and writing as below grade level on all criteria: “Challenging is finding things that will draw him, be interested in the task for the task, not just do it and get it done. To have a purpose for it.”
From his perspective, Aaron continued to interweave his identity as a writer and a learner. In our final interview (see Appendix 14) he said that lately he learned “a lot about new words” and when I asked if there was anything else, he may have included what he had learned about in math when he said, “I learned about symmetry.” What he wanted to learn next as writer was, “some things that we can play with.” When asked what he wanted to get better at, Aaron responded, “I get better at sounding out a word.”

I discovered that Lists was a form of writing that Aaron enjoyed. For the first on-demand writing sample, he chose to write a list of all the countries (see Figure 16). When I asked him to talk about how he decided to write about countries he responded, “I have a globe at home where I look up countries and then I find some countries.” He went on to say how he pursued this knowledge in the classroom: “I’m learning about some stuff and then I go on to Google, and then we teach about stuff and countries.” Aaron also displayed his knowledge of country names in the Writing Vocabulary task of the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013).

Figure 16. Aaron’s List of Countries
There is a difference between meeting curriculum expectations and claiming one’s status as a writer (Fletcher, 2017). Despite how his writing measured up to curriculum expectations, I observed Aaron’s best writing in the final month of the study. When he had latitude in classroom writing to draw on his general knowledge and interests, he wrote messages that gave expression to his ideas and a window into his world. As expected at the end of Reading Recovery lessons, he engaged in a variety of composing, constructing and monitoring actions that supported independent writing, drawing from internal knowledge sources and external resources. Aaron’s monitoring actions appeared to be primarily focused on surface-level features. This focus may have been influenced by Mrs. Kit. Her interactions with Aaron about his writing were more often surface-level oriented than content-level oriented. In our first interview, Mrs. Kit said that Aaron’s ability to come up with content and express his ideas was at grade level. Perhaps that is why surface-features were her focus. However, in our final interview she said that Aaron was below grade level on all of the specific expectations for grade two.
5. Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter the four case study findings are brought together in a cross-case analysis and discussion of the two questions that guide this study:

1. How does the literacy behaviour of former Reading Recovery students who made accelerated progress continue to develop while creating written text in grade two classrooms?

2. In what ways does the classroom context influence the writing development of former Reading Recovery students in grade two classrooms who made accelerated progress?

The chapter begins with an explanation of the students’ writing development from a literacy processing perspective (Clay, 2001; 2016). This is followed by discussion of development as movement toward conventional forms of meaningful communication in written language. In response to the second question, the chapter continues with discussion of how the students’ writing development is influenced by the classroom context in which it was studied. This is followed by conclusions on writing development beyond Reading Recovery. The chapter ends with limitations of the findings from this study and recommendations for further research.

5.1. Writing Development in Grade Two

The profiles of the four case study students provide a rich description of their written language development. In this section those descriptions are brought together to discuss the students’ writing development from a literacy processing perspective (Clay, 2001; 2016). This explanation accounts for the actions taken in order to communicate in written language. The change in their writing toward independent use of conventional forms to make meaning is discussed with links to processes of internalization ((Beach, et al., 2016; Damianova & Sullivan, 2011; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978).

5.1.1. Case Study Students Exhibit Composing, Constructing and Monitoring Actions

Writing as a complex process involving a range of skills and tasks (Clay, 2001; Graham & Harris, 2005; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) came to life observing the case study students writing in their grade two classrooms. What emerged from the data were a number of observable behaviours which showed how each student went about communicating in written
language. Analyses of the type and frequency of each behaviour for each case study student revealed a menu of actions that the students drew on in individual ways to engage in the activity of writing in the classroom. Those actions were interpreted from a literacy processing view of development (Clay, 2001; 2016) as composing, constructing and monitoring actions. They can be further described as internal resources coming from within the child’s control and external resources coming from the social context of the classroom.

5.1.1.1. Composing Actions
The translation of ideas into written form is a composing action (Clay, 2016). Such action may not be overt and therefore requires interpretation. Thirteen independent composing actions were interpreted from observations of the case study students’ writing behaviour (see Appendices 19 and 26). Looking at an illustration, talking about one’s ideas while drawing, generating ideas, planning with a partner, talking about one’s ideas while writing, commenting, and indicating thinking were actions that drew on the external resources accessible within the social life of the classroom. Drawing, looking up, making word writing movements, making pencil movements, talking to oneself while writing, and inventing detail not written were interpreted as composing actions that called on inner resources.

The origin of a student’s ideas was sometimes evident. Aaron took full credit for the ideas in his floor hockey story when he told me that his idea came from his brain. Partner planning may have helped Cam to decide on the name Kevin for a character in The Statue That Was Alive. During the same partner planning, Sally was not an active participant. However, I later observed her looking at her planning sheet while writing The Flying Book. These examples show how the children made different use of a common idea generating experience set up by the teacher. Cam, Jack and Aaron more commonly shared their ideas with others while Sally only did so when invited by Mrs. Zee.

Composing actions were observed in all of the students with varying frequency, and there were a few behaviours unique to one student. Composing actions that required teacher support earlier in development, had been transformed into internal processes (Vygotsky, 1978). The action of looking up at nothing in particular was commonly observed in all of the students. It was characterized by an unfocused gaze in contrast to a focused gaze at an object or person. During
the act of looking up, the students appeared oblivious to any conversation and activity around them. Consequently, I interpreted looking up as a thinking action that drew upon inner resources of knowledge and imagination. It was a helpful behaviour with a non-verbal “do not disturb” sign attached to it. This became clear to me when I observed Aaron tell the classroom volunteer to “leave” when she interrupted his thinking.

Talking to oneself while writing was a common composing action by Sally and Jack and a very common composing action by Aaron (see Appendix 19). I interpreted it as an oral composing behaviour that differed from saying a word out loud as part of a word solving approach. It was a spontaneous and independent action that provided the added support of hearing the message as it was composed – language by ear (Berninger et al., 2002). The process of going from talk to text is referred to in the literature as oral rehearsal (Myhill & Jones, 2009) or oral narrative (Fayol, 2016; Kaderavek & Higbee Mandlebaum, 1993). From a Vygotskian perspective, this action resembles performance assisted by self (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Control of the writing task required overt verbalization which provided self-guidance that had its origins in earlier social experiences. For beginning writers who are managing both transcription and text generation, talking to oneself while writing may function to reduce cognitive demand (Myhill & Jones, 2009). It is an individual rather than a social activity, and in this form it “may be a precursor to the internal mental rehearsal common in more experienced writers” (Myhill & Jones, 2009, p. 277).

Oral composing assisted Aaron in the translation of his ideas into written form. However, it taxed processes of transcription (Berninger et al., 2002; Graham & Harris, 2005) and contributed to the omission of words in his written product since he was not able to consistently coordinate the pace of his oral composing with that of his writing (Christensen, 2009). In contrast, I observed Cam engaged in oral composing behaviour on only two occasions. It was more common for him to exhibit other composing behaviours, such as pencil movements, which indicated thinking, or the social actions of talking about his ideas, generating ideas, and planning with a partner.

As young children make their way into the world of representation, their drawings can be viewed as a medium of meaning (Kress, 1994; 1997). There is a gradual movement toward an
understanding of what constitutes text that is complex and varied, and “part of the semiotic organization of social life” (Kenner, 2000, p. 264). If drawing is viewed as situated within the context of a child’s entire history of sign development (Dyson, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978), then the transformation from drawing one’s ideas to writing them can be interpreted as development.

Drawing was an important composing action for Cam in the creation of his Fish research and his family cruise recount (see Figures 4 and 7). By the end of the study, drawing the details had been replaced by other composing actions. Sally included drawings in her messages where the layout provided the space, but she did not play out the details of her ideas in her drawings. I observed Jack and Aaron drawing when it was a requirement on two assigned writing activities. Although drawing may have been helpful in the process of expressing their ideas, it was not a composing action that either student relied on.

5.1.1.2. Constructing Actions
The behaviours of the case study students during the recorded expression of ideas were interpreted as constructing actions (Clay, 1991). A flexible processing system allows learners to mobilize or construct assemblies of different working systems for different writing activities (Clay 2001), “actively organizing and learning from self-initiated experiences” (Clay, 2001, p. 15). When children can engage in independent strategic activity for working out words by using knowledge sources they already have, there is potential to push their knowledge further and gain more independence in writing (Askew & Frasier, 1999).

All of the students engaged in a variety of independent constructing actions directed toward problem solving their messages. I observed twenty-six different constructing actions across the students with each presenting a unique profile (see Appendices 20 and 26). Further analyses of these actions revealed that in the moment of problem solving, the students engaged in an external search for resources within the classroom environment or an internal search of their own resources, often in a sequence of moves combining both external and internal resources. Looking around the room, in a practice spelling book, idea book, planner or previous message, asking how to spell, and copying were constructing actions that used classroom resources. Constructing actions that indicated an internal search of their own resources were articulating and recording behaviours, covering eyes, making mouth movements, saying a word out loud, spelling orally,
writing single and multiple words with no evidence of overt solving, inserting punctuation in a message, drawing after writing, and indicating they were finished.

All of the students demonstrated an ability to use a number of different constructing actions to problem solve their messages. What could be put into action quickly was the preferred action to take. This fits with a focus on the communication of ideas in written language rather than on the accurate written form of those ideas. The most efficient and least laborious constructing actions were writing multiple words in one go and writing a single word, regardless of accuracy. Appendix 20 showed that for all the students these were common constructing behaviours. However, when required, the students could also use more laborious constructing actions, such as locating a classroom resource, finding what they were looking for within that resource, and copying the information into their message.

The profile of Sally’s constructing actions shows her interest in spelling and the application of her spelling knowledge to solve new words. It also shows no evidence of slow articulation which draws more on sound (language by ear) than orthography (language by eye) (Berninger et al., 2002). Aaron’s profile tells a different story. Articulation of sounds in words was a frequent constructing action. Jack’s profile points to little use of classroom resources or copying behaviours. His constructing actions clustered around the application of spelling patterns (clusters of letters) to solve words. Cam’s profile shows that he engaged in the highest number of constructing actions. How he used his spelling practice book (see Figure 5), how he looked to other classroom resources, and his copying actions indicated that he was aware that there was a spelling exemplar for words (Sipe, 1998). This influenced the approaches he took to word solving and explains why he did not commonly use slow articulation.

5.1.1.3. Monitoring Actions

Behaviours that focused on previously written text were interpreted as monitoring actions (Boocock et.al., 2003). Appendices 21 and 26 show there were 21 different monitoring actions, with a unique profile for each case study student. Erasing and reading previously written text were the most frequently observed monitoring actions. Where it was possible to observe, I broke down those actions into what was being erased and how a student read previously written text. Other monitoring actions clustered around correcting actions, such as correcting a letter,
inserting a letter into a previously written word, adding words into a previously written message, and tracing over a previously written letter. Jack was observed using his finger to monitor for spaces between words once to prevent spacing errors. There were signals of frustration, both verbal and non-verbal indications that something was not right, and there were signals of accomplishment, such as comments on length of text or number of lines.

In Mrs. Zee’s classroom, Sally engaged in a larger number of monitoring actions than Cam. However, her actions were limited to erasing or reading previously written text. Cam engaged in a wider variety of monitoring actions such as verbal and non-verbal indications, correcting actions and commenting on the length of his message. In Mrs. Kit’s classroom, Jack and Aaron had a similar number of monitoring actions. However, Jack had a higher number of erasing actions while Aaron did more reading of previously written text. Both students also engaged in a number of monitoring actions directed at correcting something previously written.

Writing messages requires working across hierarchical levels of language. Consistently but subtly it requires a developing writer to switch between the different levels of letters, letter clusters, words, phrases and messages (Berninger et al., 2002; Boocock et al., 2003; Clay, 2001, 2016; Gibson, 2008; James et al., 2016). A careful analysis of the students’ erasing and correcting actions gave insight into what level of language received their attention at a point in time. All of the students were primarily monitoring for surface-level features: letters, words, spacing, and length (Matsumura et al., 2002; Peterson & Portier, 2014). Erasing provides an opportunity to start something afresh. Jack’s erasing of an entire message and starting again was an easier action for him to take than trying and adapt his previously written message to the assigned requirements. Furthermore, the reading of what was previously written brings the writer back to the previous word, phrase or even beginning of the message, and with the case study students this led to further composing, constructing or monitoring actions. To that end, one measure of the growing complexity of the students’ writing development is their self-initiated composing, constructing and monitoring actions.
5.1.2. Case Study Students Are Developing Conventional Forms of Meaningful Communication in Written Language

Another way of looking at the case study students’ writing development was through an analysis of writing samples obtained on the days when classroom observation occurred. The categories that emerged from analyses of the samples were the foundational habits of direction and spatial layout, letter and word knowledge, message clarity, and punctuation (see Appendix 22). In all of these aspects of written language the students exhibited individual and sometimes idiosyncratic profiles in their movement toward control of conventional forms of communication.

5.1.2.1. Foundational Habits for Processing Written Language

Knowing the directional constraints of written language and how to lay out print on a page are foundational habits for recording language that are formed in the background as children work on writing tasks. They are aspects of written language a child must learn in order to process print in an organized way (Berninger, 2012; Clay, 2016). Evidence of the case study students’ control of directional rules at the message and word level is found in Appendix 22. Left to right movement at the message level is fully developed in all students. One lapse at the word level for two students across all writing samples pointed to the potential for an occasional lapse by those students in what was otherwise near perfect performance. Sally wrote gmo for omg in her Money Tree story, and Cam wrote fo for of while inferring the feelings of book characters.

Spatial layout accounts for an understanding of the relationship between letters and words (Clay, 2016) and how space is used to delineate the boundaries between one word and the next. Knowing what is a letter and what is a word is not the same as knowing how to act on that knowledge while writing a message. All of the case study students demonstrated their conceptual knowledge of letter and word on both administrations of the Concepts About Print task of the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013). However, analysis of their writing samples for how they applied the rules for spatial layout (see Appendix 22) showed that control of space within words was more fully developed than control of space between words. Although all of the students had lapses, Jack had the greatest challenge with spacing between words. It seems to be easier to control the space within a word than between words when writing messages.
5.1.2.2. Using Letter Knowledge

Letter knowledge encompasses more than correctly identifying a letter by name. A comparison of the case study students’ performance on the Letter Identification task (see Appendices 6, 8, 10 and 12) of the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) with their control of the standard form for constructing a letter (see Appendix 22) illustrates this. Sally worked quickly to identify letters on both administrations of the Letter Identification task. When she came to letter b, however, she slowed down and looked carefully as if she was aware that this letter needed more thought. A study of Sally’s writing samples showed persistent reversals on letters b and d, sometimes p and y and one reversal of letter c. Aaron confused d for b on the pre-study Letter Identification task. I found no reversal of this letter in his writing samples and only one reversal of letter n. However, this does not mean that b and d were under control in writing. Aaron used capital letters B and D where the lower-case form was conventional. The capital letter may have been the form of the letter he was most sure of and therefore easiest to call up quickly when needed in print. On the pre-study Letter Identification task, Jack confused d for b and then corrected himself. He also confused p for q. Jack’s writing samples contain occasional reversals of b and d, but frequent reversals of letter n, which he easily identified. Both Jack and Cam made a reversed letter z.

There are different patterns to the way the case study students reversed letters. Letters b, d and p are letters which when reversed become another letter. They are also letters which occurred frequently in the children’s messages. The frequency of use increases the frequency with which the letter is reversed in print. Letter z was rarely found in the children’s writing. Therefore, lack of experience in the formation of a letter was also a factor in its formation.

The application of conventions for using upper and lowercase letters is another aspect of letter knowledge evident in the case study students’ writing samples. Appendix 22 shows this aspect to be still developing in all of the students. However, analysis of each student’s writing samples revealed their unique profiles of what was developed and what was still developing. Although Sally controlled the lowercase formation of most letters, she would occasionally use the upper case E, L and H. Most of her errors of use were on capitalization at the beginning of sentences. Cam exhibited the greatest control. Most of his errors were following a period and idiosyncratically on letter S when writing words that started with st. As discussed in Chapter Four, both Jack and Aaron habitually used the capital letter form on some letters in words. In
addition to avoiding easily reversed letter forms by Aaron and habitual use by Jack, the capital was the form of a letter that could be called up quickly. This allowed the student to put energy toward other aspects of message production (Graham, Harris, & Fink, 2000; Hayes, 2012). Furthermore, when a student lacks fluency in writing letters, groups of letters and words they are not able to get their ideas on the page fast enough to keep up with their thoughts (Christensen, 2009; Graham & Harris, 2005). Using capital letters allowed these students to focus on the expression of their ideas.

5.1.2.3. Using Word Knowledge
Analysis of the case study students’ writing samples provided insight into their application of word knowledge. The categories of word knowledge found in the writing samples for each student are found in Appendix 22. The numbers listed for each student indicate where evidence of that category was found in a writing sample. Although the profiles of each student are unique, they commonly indicate movement toward conventional spelling. Sally and Jack were able to use word knowledge that brought them closer to standard spelling than Cam and Aaron who, more commonly, used their knowledge of letter sounds to solve words. Aaron exhibited the greatest variety of word categories and the least attention to accuracy. His focus on getting his ideas down as quickly as possible contributed to some careless word solving behaviour. Aaron’s performance on the pre-study and post-study Writing Vocabulary assessments are evidence of a personal vocabulary of words comparable to Sally and more extensive than Cam or Jack. Sally’s word knowledge reflects her quest for the conventional form (Sipe, 1998). She directed her search and use of internal and external resources in pursuit of an acceptable form. Like Sally, Jack primarily used his knowledge of standard spelling and letter patterns to write words. Analysis of Jack’s writing samples demonstrated his word knowledge, and provided better evidence of how he applied that knowledge than his performance on the Writing Vocabulary assessment from the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013). Therefore, while Cam and Aaron relied on phonological knowledge while writing messages, Sally and Jack more commonly used spelling knowledge, but could also apply their phonological knowledge to solve words.

Partially correct words was a category that came between standard spelling and using spelling patterns on a continuum toward the conventional form. The words in this category contained the correct letters but not in the correct sequence. Each student had words in this category, such as
sopt for stop and wiht for with. One possible explanation for its occurrence is that these are words that draw on internal knowledge in the same way that known words are accessed. This way of solving does not require the slowing down of attention, overt solving or use of external resources. Furthermore, since the error is in the detail of the word, it was not be monitored by the student and subject to self-correcting action. A study of the case study students’ performance on the Concepts About Print task of the Observation Survey (Clay, 2013) adds further information on the level of word detail noticed in print when letters within words are out of order. On the pre-study administration none of the students noticed a reordering of letters in words on a page of the administration booklet. By the end of the study only Cam did not notice a change in the order of letters in the middle of words. Once children have sufficient spelling knowledge to be aware that the order of letters in a word makes a difference, it is possible to ask a student a version of a question asked during the Concepts About Print task, “What’s wrong with the writing on this page?” (Clay, 2013, p. 45), namely, “What’s wrong with the writing of this word?”

5.1.2.4. Message Clarity
Message clarity (see Appendix 22) accounts for how the case study students communicate meaning through their knowledge of English grammar (Ministry of Education, 2006). This requires the “skilful packaging of ideas” (Clay, 2016, p. 81). Communicating ideas in multiple sentences was also included in an analysis of message clarity. As discussed in Chapter Two, an end goal for the acquisition phase of literacy learning is for children to become efficient readers and writers of text who know how to operate effectively on all levels of language. Letter and word knowledge are not enough. By grade two, classroom literacy activities place heavy demands on children’s knowledge of sentence structure and the nuances of meaning (Clay, 2001). This warrants analysis of the students’ application of language structure in making their messages clear to the reader.

One study of children writing in classrooms reviewed in Chapter Two, found a sharp increase in the mean number of the total words in children’s writing between Year One and Year Two, the equivalent of grade one and grade two (Boocock et al., 2003). An increase in volume of writing was also a change noted in the case study students by their teachers. In interviews, Mrs. Zee described both Cam and Sally as willing to write. Sally changed from a fairly reluctant writer who did the bare minimum to a willing writer who produced messages of volume. Mrs. Kit said
that quantity of writing and a willingness to write were changes observed in Aaron’s writing. Over the course of his grade two year, Jack became willing to do some writing and produced messages that were sentences and not just words. Writing multiple sentence messages provided the case study students with increased opportunities to work with the grammar of the language in expressing their ideas.

Analysis of the students’ messages for control of English grammar revealed movement toward conventional use of irregular nouns and verbs, prepositions, and pronouns with subject and verb agreement (see Appendix 22). Aaron demonstrated the least control over subject and verb agreement, and correct pronoun use in his writing. He was also the only student in the study who omitted words. As with reading messages, writing messages requires holding onto meaning, linking words in phrases and sentences, and sentences in messages. The more a student has to think about how to get his or her message down, the less thinking goes into structuring the language in a message (Graham, Harris, & Fink, 2000; Hayes, 2012). Aaron’s profile continues to point to a writer who is working hard to get his message down, and this limits what he can link up.

5.1.2.5. Using Punctuation Knowledge
Specific expectations for applying punctuation to written messages by the end of grade two include, “the use of question marks, periods, or exclamation marks at the end of a sentence; commas to mark pauses; and some use of quotation marks” (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 57). This control requires the ability to translate intonational features of speech into written language (Kress, 2003). Appendix 22 shows to what extent the case study students were using each of these forms of punctuation in their writing samples. The apostrophe is not an expected form of punctuation by the end of grade two. However, it was included in the analysis because it was found in the writing samples of two students.

Sally, Cam and Jack used exclamation marks conventionally in their writing. Sally’s writing samples showed that she used all of the expected forms of punctuation with growing control of how to use periods in particular. Cam’s attention to punctuation illustrates the differences in attention and development between the students. His use of periods was more often unconventional than conventional, yet he most often used quotations marks in a conventional
way. As noted in Cam’s profile in Chapter Four, he was more inclined to use and than insert a period, drawing on his knowledge of speaking (Kress, 1994). His use of dialogue and the punctuation that goes with it in written language was easier for him to apply to his writing than a period. Both Jack and Aaron’s writing samples showed that they did not give much attention to punctuation. Jack used a question mark once, and where he used periods he frequently did so in unconventional ways. Aaron writing samples provided evidence of the meagre attention he gave to using punctuation. The period was the only form he used although his messages included exclamation, questions and dialogue.

5.1.2.6. Making Meaning
The expression of ideas has been described as “the heart and soul of good writing” (Spandel, 2012, p. 5). It accounts for the content of a student’s message or story and all the details that support or expand that message or story. Details create images in the reader’s mind or engage them with interesting facts. “Nothing in writing matters more than detail. It supports ideas, guides organizational flow, and bolsters voice” (Spandel, 2012, p. 6). As prospective writers, young children who know how to tell a story have an advantage (Clay, 2016). Children who come into Reading Recovery vary in their level of control over telling a story, but by the end of Reading Recovery children who made accelerated progress need to be “competent in creating interesting stories” (Clay, 2016, p. 78).

From the writing samples collected through the course of the study, I selected two which could be described as the students’ “best work” (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 58) and analyzed them for ideas, organization and voice. When the students were given scope for expressing their ideas without having to figure out the purpose of a piece or the intention of the teacher, they drew on cultural resources outside of curriculum expectations and classroom learning (Compton Lilly, 2006). Special events in family life was a favourite theme in Sally’s writing. Cam’s recount of his family’s cruise also drew on family experiences. He created a fictional family for his adventure story, The Tornado, and he included detail that showed his knowledge and respect of tornadoes. Wherever possible, Jack brought his knowledge of gaming culture into his writing. He played out adventures and appropriated characters and language from this world. Aaron’s best work was in two different genres: sports commentary and fantasy. His floor hockey commentary
was filled with detail on the teams and the championship, and he used an open-ended one wish topic to play out a personal fantasy from his imaginary world.

As makers of meaning the students wrote about “the very stuff of their childhood practices” (Dyson, 2003, p. 355) and out-of-school interests (Wohlwend, 2008). These practices identified them as members of families, neighbourhoods, cultural communities, and as children (Dyson, 2003), motivated by the opportunity to connect writing and identity (Compton Lilly, 2006). When writing tasks were open-ended they made use of the familiar from popular culture, digital media, and personal experience. When writing tasks had a specific purpose the challenge was to fit experience into curricular frameworks (Dyson, 2003).

5.2. Influences on Case Study Students’ Writing Development in Grade Two

This study examined the case study students’ writing development in the context of their grade two classrooms during periods of independent writing. Consequently, observations of the students included their interactions with other members of the classroom community. This section focuses on those interactions and their influence on the students’ writing development, beginning with opportunities to engage in writing activities. In so doing, the section brings together the idea of children as active participants in their own learning, and how that learning is contextualized within their classroom community (Cole, et al., 1978; Karpov, 2003; Sipe, 1998).

5.2.1. Opportunities to Write Messages

The context for my observations was individual writing time which generally took place between 9:30 and 10:30 daily. Appendices 17 and 18 outline the types of writing that I observed by order of occurrence over the course of the study in both classrooms. Tables 1 to 4 list what the students wrote: the form of writing, topic and content. The writing activities that were observed and the resulting number of writing samples from each student provide evidence of the opportunities to write in the classroom and what the students did with those opportunities. The samples also gave me insight into who the students were: their interests, passions, quirks and obsessions (Compton Lilly, 2006; Fletcher, 2017). Most writing activities were teacher-assigned and designed around the specific expectations for grade two writing (Ministry of Education, 2006). Some of the writing activities were completed in stages, while others could be completed in one sitting. Some
assigned writing was used by the teacher to assess how well a student could infer or retell. Those tasks had a specific purpose and expected outcome. Other assigned writing tasks were more open-ended, and allowed the students to choose the topic and freely develop the content.

Free writing was assigned in the last weeks of the study. Prior to that, it was offered as an option once assigned writing was finished. Free writing was unstructured and unfocused, thereby allowing the students to develop as writers outside of the curriculum-shaped expectations (Bazerman, 2016). Early in the study when it was hard for Cam to get started on writing tasks, I observed him use free writing time to copy words into his practice spelling book (see Figure 5) rather than write a message. Later in the study, the chapters of his story *The Tornado* were written during free writing. This story held his and his classmates’ interest over three writing sessions. Early in the study when the students were writing acrostic poems, Sally used free writing time to write her *I Like* poem; *Money Tree* was written near the end of the study in one sitting. Aaron used free writing time to create his floor hockey story. I did not observe Jack engage in any free writing. Instead, he caught up on assigned writing, which was a consequence of his absences.

Student engagement in writing requires alignment with the educational objectives of the classroom and communicative relations with their teacher (Bazerman, 2016). In my first interviews with the teachers, Sally, Aaron and Jack were described as reluctant writers at the beginning of grade two. Sally would do the bare minimum. Mrs. Zee said that one day she “pushed” Sally and saw what she was capable of producing. Cam started out more willing to try than Sally, but he stuck to using the words he knew how to write. Mrs. Kit said that Aaron wrote very little at the beginning of grade two and just wanted to be the first one done. Early in the school year Jack did not want to do any writing, and Mrs. Kit thought that his poor fine motor skills contributed to his reluctance.

Research on the contribution of handwriting to children’s development as writers concludes that frequency matters (Graham et al., 2000), and a cluster of evidence-based practices identified the importance of writing often and for a variety of purposes (Graham et al., 2016). From their reluctant beginnings in grade two, daily writing activities gave the students opportunities to use and expand on their internal resources. However, giving children opportunities to write may not
be sufficient to move them beyond what they can do independently (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999), though it does support the assimilation of the many skills and strategic activities needed to write well (Fletcher, 2017).

### 5.2.2. Teachers Influenced Writing Development Through Individualized Learning Experiences

In addition to creating opportunities for independent writing and assigning the type of writing to be completed, the classroom teachers influenced the students’ writing development by engaging with them in learning interactions during writing times. Those interactions provided the students with differentiated forms of teaching and personalized support (Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Ricks et al., 2017). Analyses of teacher and student interactions taken from observational data and memos of conversations with the teachers resulted in the development of three categories of action, those that:

- facilitated a next step by a student,
- focused the student’s attention, and
- provided the student with feedback.

Appendix 23 lists the interactions within each category and their frequency for each student. A study of the students’ profiles revealed a unique combination of teacher actions which became opportunities for personalized learning experiences (Fletcher, 2017). Facilitating actions occurred while a student was writing or during a conferencing time when the student shared their writing with the teacher. These interactions were characteristically brief and served to keep the student writing or to support some aspect of their writing development. Facilitating actions were further categorized into actions that managed the student’s behaviour in some way, supported the development of their ideas, supported word solving, and provided editing support. Interactions that focused a student’s attention were in the form of a reminder of a specific expectation of that student or a prompt to direct their thinking in some way. Interactions that provided feedback occurred during times when the students would present their writing to the teacher. These interactions were generally initiated by the students who were ready to share their writing. This sort of one-on-one conferencing was expected by the teacher before students could move on to another activity. Drawing from the research on the types of teacher feedback as discussed in
Chapter Two (Matsumara et al., 2002; Peterson & Portier, 2014), a further analysis of the subject of those interactions showed to what extent the teachers responded to the content of the message, requested clarification, or addressed surface features.

The majority of teacher interactions with case study students were in the form of feedback. This, in part, reflects the organization of independent writing time. As the students began independent writing, the teacher moved around the classroom and conversed with students individually at their location. Once students were ready to conference, the teacher generally remained in one spot and the students came to her. An examination of the case study students’ individual profile of interactions (see Appendix 23) shows that during these conferences the most frequent type of teacher interaction with Sally, Jack and Aaron was providing feedback. Cam experienced a similar amount of feedback and facilitating interactions. Further analysis of the type of feedback revealed that the content of their writing was the subject of most of the feedback that Sally, Cam and Jack received. Although Aaron also received content feedback, most interactions were about surface features or requests for clarification.

If feedback in its various forms builds the student’s awareness of the social consequences of writing (Bazerman, 2016) then it is important to consider the subject of that feedback and its influence on writing development. As noted in the literature, because teachers have an influence on student writing, they must monitor how their interactions shape student responses (Wollman-Bonilla & Werchadlo, 1999). Through writing, children create shareable meanings and representations of their worlds, and from feedback they can develop an awareness of the need to make information explicit in order to be understood by the reader (Bazerman, 2016; Raban, 1999).

Each student’s profile of facilitating interactions reflected the individualized support they received. Mrs. Zee engaged Sally in a balance of facilitative interactions directed at the content of her messages and its surface features. Cam received a balance between content and surface features, and some facilitative interactions that helped him to manage a writing activity. Mrs. Kit directed most of her facilitating interactions with Jack toward the content of his messages and some to managing his attention to a task or to surface features. Aaron received a comparably
high amount of management support. Some facilitative interactions were also about content, but the majority were about the surface features of his messages.

Sally, Cam and Jack had relatively few student and teacher interactions that focused their attention on something specific during a writing activity. When they did, the focus was primarily on surface features. Mrs. Kit engaged Aaron in a variety of focusing interactions. Prompting was the least supportive, and, as noted in Chapter Four, it was a call to take an action he was not doing on his own but could with prompting. Surface features were the subject of the majority of Mrs. Kit’s focusing interactions, with just a few about content or seeking clarification.

Teachers and student interactions can be interpreted as in-the-moment instructional scaffolds (Gibson, 2008; Parr et al., 2009; Wood, et al., 1976, Wood, 1998) that provide specific information in order for a student to complete a task (Peterson & Portier, 2014), putting composing, constructing and monitoring processes into action. The teachers in this study used these moments of teaching to address what they thought was most important for a student, and thereby used it as a form of personalized instruction. The data on teacher and student interactions made clear the specific goals for those interactions within the complexity of the writing process (Glasswell et al., 2003). Content was the subject of the majority of interactions with Jack and Sally. While most interactions with Cam addressed content, there were also interactions about surface features in all three categories. The majority of interactions with Aaron were directed toward the surface features of text. While the content of his messages received the most attention during feedback interactions, attention to surface features dominated focusing and facilitating interactions.

From a sociocultural perspective on learning and development and from “idealized descriptions” of teacher and student interactions (Parr et al., 2009, p. 13), effective interactions about writing are guided by the teacher’s knowledge of the learner, the writing process, and where the learner is as a growing-toward-competency writer (Parr et al., 2009). In this study, teacher interactions with the case study students were also influenced by the specific curriculum expectations for grade two writing. For example, the curriculum sets out punctuation goals for end for the grade two, and these, in turn, became teacher directed goals for the students’ writing development. These competing factors can create a tension for teachers — responding to a case study student’s
current writing competencies and their knowledge of the child as a developing writer, or responding from their knowledge of the specific expectations of the curriculum for all grade two students.

5.2.3. The Classroom Community Provides Give-and-Take Social Interactions During Writing

In classroom writing there is potential to make use of classmates as an immediate and responsive audience (Parr et al., 2009). Students working together during composing was identified in the literature as an element of a supportive writing environment (Graham et al., 2016). A classroom environment for writing has also been described as one that encourages risks and where students feel safe and supported (Fletcher, 2017; Peterson & Portier, 2014). This study found that classmates also served as an external resource or source of help during writing. As discussed in Chapter Three, at the beginning of the study both classrooms were organized so that students had assigned space in table groups of four to six. After classroom reorganization there were options for pairs, standing and quiet spots, which created a more flexible space to accommodate students’ preferences (Fletcher, 2017). Both classroom communities included an adult other than the classroom teacher with whom the students interacted. The types of interactions between the members of the classroom community and the case study students during independent writing are found in Appendix 24. Consistent with the findings of this study, the students interacted with others in ways that reflected their unique profiles as developing writers within the lively social community of their classroom.

The types of interactions the students did and did not engage in were equally revealing of who they were as writers and classroom citizens. While help-seeking was evident in interactions with others, none of the students were observed engaging in help-giving interactions. In Mrs. Kit’s classroom, Jack’s profile reflected his sociable nature, willingness to share, interest in what was going on around him, and what others were writing. Relatively few of his interactions were help-seeking. Aaron too engaged in conversational interactions with classmates and others, but he also used them as a source of help in a variety of ways. In Mrs. Zee’s classroom Sally planned and exchanged ideas during organized activities. Her self-directed interactions with others were primarily focused on surface features, specifically asking for help with spelling. She was not observed engaging in any table conversation around the content of her messages. Cam also asked
for help from classmates, but unlike Sally, he engaged in table conversations and shared ideas with classmates.

Knowing when help is needed and where to seek that help can be interpreted as signs of independence (Clay, 2016). A comparison of the help that students received from a classmate to that of an adult or classroom teacher showed that classmates were generous problem-solvers. For example, when Sally asked for help to spell a word her classmate spelled the word for her. In comparison, the kind of help the students received from a classroom volunteer or educational assistant generally required that student to do some of the problem solving. It was never a direct tell. Adults in the classroom community gave help in the form of encouragement, questioning, comments or breaking down the task into a more manageable pieces which required some work on the part of the student.

5.2.4. Case Study Students Made Use of Classroom Resources and Supports During Writing

In addition to the help of others, Appendix 25 shows how the case study students made use of resources and supports in the classroom environment during writing. Resources were items that the students used in the development of an idea or in constructing a message. Supports were items that students used to regulate their attention to a writing task and avoid distractions or interactions with others.

Sally and Aaron were observed using supports to manage distractions. Aaron set up his writing folder as a screen or make-shift study carrel. They both used headphones to block out the classroom noise, and after the reorganization of Mrs. Zee’s classroom, Sally made use of a quiet one-person spot during free writing.

All of the students made use of charts as an external resource. The differences between Sally and Cam in Mrs. Zee’s class and Jack and Aaron in Mrs. Kit’s class are explained by the differences in access the students had to charts. There were more charts created and therefore available to the students in Mrs. Zee’s class. As noted in Cam’s profile in Chapter Four, charts provided him with a way to get started, and which became less reliant on over the course of the study. His use of a book about fish and the idiosyncratic way he used his spelling practice book gave him a
repository of words he could copy. Searching for a word by using a classroom resource was not always helpful. As described in Chapter Four, Aaron was observed using a dictionary to find words for his acrostic poem. Conversely, I also observed how the teachers redirected the students to use a resource rather than be that source of help. As noted by Mrs. Kit in Aaron’s pre-study interview, “The writing is not their own if you give it to them.”

5.3. Conclusions

This qualitative study adds to a body of research on the progress of former Reading Recovery students after the intervention by taking a collective case study approach. It followed the written language development of four grade two students who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery with a specific focus on writing. The tentativeness of the early success following Reading Recovery (Clay, 2001, Jesson & Limbrick, 2014), and the lack of research on classroom writing beyond Reading Recovery defined the purpose for this study.

5.3.1. Characterizing Progress in Writing

The degree of independence a child achieves is a key to their success with two transitions beyond Reading Recovery:

- progress with classroom instruction only, and
- literacy processing that is “effective, flexible and tentative enough to learn to work with more and more of the complexities of language from all kinds of literacy experiences” (Clay, 2016, p. 194).

Characterized by these two standards, each case study student exhibited an extensive repertoire of composing, constructing and monitoring actions for communicating their ideas in written language. I observed how the students drew from internal resources as well as external resources within the classroom environment — classroom materials, classmates, classroom volunteers or assistants, and their teacher.

What constitutes an adequate foundation for future writing progress? Observation of the students during writing and an analysis of their writing samples resulted in a more complete profile of each student than observation or samples alone. Analysis of the students’ writing showed control of directional movement for written English language with lingering lapses in the spacing
between words. Letter knowledge was not complete, but moving toward conventional forms. Letter knowledge in this study included identification, formation, and conventional use of capital or lower case. A vocabulary of writing words appeared to be part of but not an adequate foundation for future progress (Clay, 2016). All of the case study students demonstrated the ability to solve unknown words with varying efficiency. These differences related to their word knowledge, but also to their awareness that word knowledge is a source of information while writing text as well as reading text. Mrs. Kit reminded Aaron to draw on his knowledge of the word was when she sent him to find it on the word wall, thereby linking his reading knowledge with his writing needs. Applying punctuation was the least developed aspect of the case study students’ writing, and, influenced by the curriculum expectations for grade two, a main subject of both teachers’ focusing interactions.

These findings raise questions about writing development during Reading Recovery and to what extent teaching addresses all aspects of writing. Children in Reading Recovery are expected to “compose longer and more complex sentences daily” (Clay, 2016, p. 188). Consequently, a Reading Recovery teacher “needs to become a good judge of increasing complexity in the daily writing” (Clay, 2016, p. 79). This judgement requires knowledge of the processing challenges to translating one’s ideas into the syntax of a written sentence which varies by genre (Berninger, Nagy & Beers, 2011). Young writers tend to write what is familiar (Spandel, 2012), and stay with specific genres. However, as Appendices 17 and 18 show, the case study students were required to write for a variety of purposes with the majority of writing tasks assigned by their teachers. Children in Reading Recovery write daily, but within that daily experience they need to be invited into the many forms writing can take, composing messages of different genres for a variety of purposes. Exploring different genres would also support motivation and engagement.

Spelling and letter formation were areas of concern in all case study students. Integrating handwriting instruction with reading, spelling and composing was identified in the literature as an effective form of instruction (James, et al., 2016), and fits with how a Reading Recovery lesson is structured. Letter identification is a short but daily activity in a Reading Recovery lesson. Teachers take a few minutes to build fast recognition of known letters and introduce new letters. Reading Recovery procedures for teaching new letters include demonstration, sensory input, and motor movement on different surfaces. This activity is positioned between reading
books and writing a message with great potential for applying the learning in both contexts. Research on the connection between reading and writing found that teaching handwriting and spelling transfers more to word recognition than the reverse (Berninger et al., 2002). Therefore, it would be most helpful for Reading Recovery teachers to consciously link letter learning and practice to message writing.

Reading Recovery procedures for the development of ways of solving words for writing address different ways of getting to words. The explicit teaching of a new word requires paying attention to word detail, serial order, and pattern recognition (Clay, 2016). The children in this study had very unique writing vocabularies that reflected their interests. If teachers tap into a child’s “pool of personal knowledge” (Clay, 2016), it may be very motivating to learn how to write a word – capturing something the child knows, (such as Aaron’s interest in learning how to spell the names of countries), while taking them to new territory. Analysis of writing samples revealed how all case study students produced partially correct words that had the right letters in the wrong order. This points to the need for teachers to be vigilant to letter order during the acquisition phase of learning a word, and pay careful attention to prevent errors of letter order during opportunities to practice and use the word in subsequent messages. A large vocabulary of words is a body of knowledge a child can draw on in constructing new words. If a child knows a word very well it can be used to get to a new word. Consequently, Reading Recovery teachers need to keep track of the words a child knows very well in order to teach how that knowledge can be a link to something new.

Hearing and recording sounds in words is another way to get to new words, and all case study students were able to use this way of solving. However, in Reading Recovery lessons it must change over time. Once a child can hear the phonemes well the teacher must shift the learning to attending to orthography as well as phonology, ensuring it is clear to the child that now the search is for spelling sequences (Clay, 2016). Words with alterations to phoneme-spelling are not suitable to sound analysis alone. Relationships must be learned in specific word contexts and represented correctly in memory (Berninger et al., 2002). The implications for Reading Recovery lie with the teacher who “acts as the authority when she demonstrates particular features of printed English (the orthography) that the child could not be expected to work out for himself” (Clay, 2016, p. 87).
Findings from this study raise the following question: Does daily message writing in Reading Recovery lessons include sufficient teaching of transcription skills in a thoughtful way that reflects a teacher’s knowledge of the child’s competencies, writing challenges, and an understanding of how language processes are orchestrated?

Within the one-to-one setting of a Reading Recovery lesson writing is a co-constructive activity with the teacher supporting the child’s efforts.

The teacher chooses which words the child will work on and which words she will contribute because she judges they are too challenging for him at this time. The teacher is governing the difficulty level of the task by making those judgements. She may contribute by writing part of or all of a sentence to increase writing production. The teacher writes more at the beginning of the lesson series, and less as the child take over more of the task. (Clay, 2016, p. 82)

This direction to teachers fits with research on effective instruction for struggling writers. Children need considerable scaffolding during acquisition of an item, skill or strategic activity. Scaffolding is gradually withdrawn in subsequent sessions to help promote mastery, but teachers are alert and ready to intervene to avoid confusion. Fluency and generalization are supported by opportunities to practice, and maintenance is supported by opportunities to apply knowledge across writing sessions (Graham & Harris, 2005).

From a sociocultural perspective, written language development is characterized by periodicity, unevenness, and “the most unexpected metamorphoses” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 106). It does not follow a direct line and “intertwines external and internal factors, and adaptive processes which overcome impediments that the child encounters” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 73). Beyond Reading Recovery, it is the classroom teacher who takes the children into new territory that challenges their literacy processing abilities (Clay, 2016). This study found that the classroom teachers had influence on opportunities for students to engage in writing, the form of writing, and the content on assigned tasks. The teachers also engaged in interactions that facilitated student action while writing, focused their attention on something specific about writing, and provided feedback about their writing. The subject of those interactions was influenced by curriculum goals for a particular writing task and the teacher’s specific goals for a student which also appeared to be
related to curriculum goals. Consequently, the students were challenged to adapt their ideas and to fit their experiences into curricular frameworks (Dyson, 2003).

Classmates were “an immediate and responsive audience” (Parr et al., 2009). Responding to Sally’s Money Tree story, Cam was quite clear that his first (or even last) purchase would not be a school. And Jack’s provocative wish for his mother got an immediate negative response from his table mates. Classmates in this study were also generous help-givers. However, they would solve the problem or give the information rather than call on action by a case study student, which was characteristic of adult help.

5.3.2. Evaluating Writing Progress
Considering that students’ writing bears the characteristics of the classroom and curriculum in which they participate (Bazerman, 2016), progress could be assessed in more than one way. The students in this study were making progress in their classrooms while not meeting all of the specific expectations for writing. In our first interview, Mrs. Zee explained the constraints around reporting on progress according to the curriculum expectations.

It is hard with writing because you are expected to grow a lot. You have to improve so much to hold your grade let alone to bump it up. On paper from term two Cam and Sally look like they are kind of at the same spot. Sally has been going [up] and Cam has been going [down]. Even though she could be C in June, I am still expecting more for that C. Parents have a hard time [understanding]. They had to work hard to keep up there and not to slide down.

Beyond the constraints of measuring progress against specific curriculum expectations is a student’s performance in the classroom. While Sally and Jack came closest to meeting grade level expectations, in our final interview, Mrs. Zee acknowledged that Cam had “made a lot of progress” from the beginning of the year and from the beginning to the end of the study. Aaron progressed with the highest amount of teacher support to develop his ideas, manage his time, prevent stalling, draw on his knowledge base, and standardize his writing.

Further insights into how to assess writing progress came from the students. Interviews with them showed that developing a sense of themselves as writers was intertwined with their identity
as learners. In that way, writing had become a medium by which learning occurred. Learning was measured by the production of a written artifact that could be shared, displayed, or tucked away, and became a way to feel progress and maintain the motivation to write another day.

5.4. Limitations of This Study and Recommendations for Further Research

The questions that guided this study created a specific focus from a larger question of changes beyond Reading Recovery (Clay, 2001; Watson & Askew, 2009). The findings are limited to what can be learned about the writing development of four students in two classrooms in one school. Although care was taken to create internal validity, how the findings were presented, analyzed and interpreted were managed by me as researcher (Merriam, 1998; Miles, et al., 2014). Consequently, the body of data does not totally “speak for itself” (Merriam, 1998, p. 201). The usefulness of this study will be in providing insights into the type of resourcefulness required for independent writing and continued development. However, a lack of generalizability from collective case study design is a limitation of the study.

Guidelines for monitoring the continued writing progress of former Reading Recovery students are vague. The recommendation is for the Reading Recovery teacher and classroom teacher to discuss a student’s progress in writing by “talking over his recent work” (Clay, 2016, p. 192). If progress in writing has not continued, a student “might need a little extra help to lift the number of high-frequency words he can write, or to assist in getting more ideas in his stories” (Clay, 2016, p. 193). These guidelines limit an assessment of a student’s progress to these two areas. They do not account for how a student goes about the act of writing, nor do they direct the teachers to look for evidence of the composing, constructing and monitoring actions essential to independent writing. As well, the guidelines do not ask for evidence of how a student makes use of resources for help in the classroom or take into account the opportunities for independent writing in the classroom.

The findings of this study point to the need for a planned approach to helping students stay on track after Reading Recovery, whereby Reading Recovery and classroom teachers collaborate around individualized monitoring plans for specific students. Exemplars developed from this
study for observing student writing in the classroom (see Appendix 26) can guide the observations of classroom and Reading Recovery teachers and provide a way of talking about student behavior during writing from a literacy processing perspective.

The limitations of collective case study point to the need for more studies of children’s writing development and replication of this study. I suggest that classroom research on the writing development of all children in grade two classrooms and research on former Reading Recovery students in grade three classrooms would result in better informed monitoring practices after Reading Recovery and greater insights into what supports continued writing development.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Information Letter for Parents

Date
Dear ______________________

My name is Janice Van Dyke. I am a PhD candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto under the supervision of Professor Shelley Stagg Peterson. I am also a Reading Recovery trainer in the province of Ontario.

As part of the requirements for my PhD programme I am conducting research investigating the writing development of children who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery in grade one and are now in grade two. Your child ________________ made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery, and I am asking if he/she can take part in this study. The findings from this study may provide insights that help in monitoring student progress in writing beyond Reading Recovery. Your child’s participation in the study is voluntary and can be withdrawn at your request.

Between January, 2017 and May, 2017, I will be following the literacy development of eight students by assessing their writing and reading and getting their opinion on their writing at the beginning and end of the study. I will be observing at regular intervals during classroom writing activities, analyzing photographic reproductions of their written products, and administering the Ontario Writing Assessment followed by an informal audiotaped interview three times during the study. The identity of your child will be protected and I will not identify the school district, school or your child in any report, publication or presentation of the findings.

The study has been approved by the University of Toronto and (Name of the school board). (Name of the school) was selected, with permission from (Principal), because there are classrooms with several grade two students who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery. ______________’s teacher ____________________ has also agreed to take part in this research study.
Although the research has been approved by the university, the school district’s external research review committee and the school principal, participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw your child from the study at any time.

All identifiable electronic information will be accessed securely and encrypted, consistent with the University of Toronto’s security and encryption standards. The rights of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity will be respected for all participants. Only my supervisor and myself, the researcher, will know the actual names of participants, and we pledge not to reveal this information. There is no conflict of interest for myself to be involved in this study, and I will be happy to provide you with copies of publications resulting from this study.

This research study may be reviewed for quality assurance to make sure that the required laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, (a) representative(s) of the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) may access study-related data and consent materials as part of the review. All information accessed by HREP will be upheld to the same level of confidentiality that is stated by the researcher.

Research data will be retained as follows:
Audiotapes will be destroyed after five years.
Observational notes, interview transcripts, Running Records, Observation Survey task forms will be stored securely in a locked home cabinet and destroyed after five years.
Writing samples captured through photographic representation will be retained for an indefinite length of time. Student writing samples may be used in presentations or publication from the research to support any claims or findings. The author will at all times be anonymous.

If you consent to participation in this research, please sign and return one copy of the attached consent form, and keep a copy of this letter and the consent form for your records. I would be happy to provide further information and meet with you. You can contact me at janice.vandyke@mail.utoronto.ca or 905 715 3243. You may also contact my supervisor Shelley Stagg Peterson at shelleystagg.peterson@utoronto.ca or 416 978 0329. You may also contact the
University of Toronto’s Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or by telephone at 416 946 3273.

Sincerely,

Janice Van Dyke

**Consent Form**

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

I agree for my child __________________________ to participate in Janice Van Dyke’s doctoral research study. The letter that accompanies this consent form provides information on the researcher including contact information and the purpose and potential use of the research. The letter also makes clear that my child’s participation in the study is voluntary and can be withdrawn upon request.

I understand that the study will be conducted from January, 2017 to May, 2017. I also understand that information about my child’s literacy development, and writing in particular, will be collected as follows:

Observational information on how my child goes about a writing activity will be documented by observational note taking,

Photographs of my child’s writing,

Reading and writing assessments and my child’s opinion of his/her writing at the beginning and end of the research study,

Ontario Writing Assessment at three points in the research study,

Informal interview with my child following the writing assessment.

I understand the following data will only be used confidentially:

Audiotapes,

All notes from classroom observation and interviews,

Reading and writing assessments.

I understand that the following data will be used for broader education in the form of presentations or publications, but will remain anonymous:

Writing samples collected through the Ontario Writing Assessment,
Classroom writing samples collected through photographic representation

In any publication or presentation of the research findings pseudonyms will be used for the school district, school, classroom teacher, and my child.

I understand that research data will be retained as follows:
Audiotapes will be destroyed after five years.
Observational notes, interview transcripts, Running Records, Observation Survey task forms will be stored securely in a locked home cabinet and destroyed after five years.
Writing samples captured through photographic representation will be retained for an indefinite length of time. Student writing samples may be used in presentations or publication from the research to support any claims or findings. The authors will at all times be anonymous.

I understand that I can contact Janice Van Dyke janice.vandyke@mail.utoronto.ca or 905 715 3243, or Shelley Stagg Peterson at shelleystagg.peterson@utoronto.ca or 416 978 0329.
I have read the information letter and consent form and sign freely and voluntarily.
Date: __________________________________________
Name of Parent or Guardian (please print)
Signature: _________________________________________
I would like to receive a summary of the study Yes ______ No ________
Appendix 2: Information Letter for Grade Two Classroom Teachers

Date

Dear ____________________,

My name is Janice Van Dyke. I am a PhD candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto under the supervision of Professor Shelley Stagg Peterson. I am also a Reading Recovery trainer in Ontario.

As part of the requirements for my PhD programme I am conducting multiple case study research investigating the written language development of children who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery in grade one and are now in grade two. This research may provide insights that will help in monitoring students’ progress beyond Reading Recovery. I am asking if I can follow the literacy development of the former Reading Recovery students in your classroom who made accelerated progress.

From January, 2017 to May 31, 2017 I will be following the literacy development of eight former Reading Recovery students. Information on their written language development will be collected by assessing their writing and reading and asking their opinion on their writing at the beginning and end of the data collection period. I will be observing them at regular intervals engaged in classroom writing activities, analyzing photographic reproductions of their writing, and administering the Ontario Writing Assessment followed by an informal audiotaped interview three times across the data collection period. I also ask that you take part in two audiotaped interviews, one near the beginning and one near the end of the data collection period. The purpose for the interviews will be to get your view on the writing development of the case study students. Notes will not be taken on non-focal students.

The study has been approved by the University of Toronto and the (Name of the school board). (Name of the school) was selected, with permission from (Principal), because your classroom
has several grade two students who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery. Participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.

All identifiable electronic information will be accessed securely and encrypted, consistent with the University of Toronto’s security and encryption standards. The rights of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity will be respected for all participants. Only my supervisor and myself, the researcher, will know the actual names of participants, and we pledge not to reveal this information. There is no conflict of interest for myself to be involved in this study, and I will be happy to provide you with copies of publications resulting from this study.

This research study may be reviewed for quality assurance to make sure that the required laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, (a) representative(s) of the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) may access study-related data and consent materials as part of the review. All information accessed by HREP will be upheld to the same level of confidentiality that is stated by the researcher.

Research data will be retained as follows:
Audiotapes will be destroyed after five years.
Observational notes, interview transcripts, Running Records, Observation Survey task forms will be stored securely in a locked home cabinet and destroyed after five years.
Writing samples captured through photographic representation will be retained for an indefinite length of time. Student writing samples may be used in presentations or publication from the research to support any claims or findings. The authors will at all times be anonymous.

If you consent to participation in this research, please sign and return one copy of the attached consent form, and keep a copy of this letter and the consent form for your records. I would be happy to provide further information and meet with you. You can contact me at janice.vandyke@mail.utoronto.ca or 905 715 3243. You may also contact my supervisor Shelley Stagg Peterson at shelley.stagg.peterson@utoronto.ca or 416 978 0329. You may also contact the University of Toronto’s Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or by telephone at 416 978 2798.
Sincerely,
Janice Van Dyke

**Consent Form for Teacher**

I agree to participate in Janice Van Dyke’s doctoral research study. The letter that accompanies this consent form provides information on the researcher including contact information and the purpose and potential use of the research. The letter also makes clear that my participation in the study is voluntary and can be withdrawn upon request.

I understand that the study will be conducted from January, 2017 to May 31, 2017. I also understand that information about my students’ literacy development, and writing in particular, will be collected as follows:

- Observational information on how my students go about a writing activity will be documented by observational note taking,
- Photographic reproduction of writing samples,
- Reading and writing assessments and student opinion on their writing at the beginning and end of the research study,
- Ontario Writing Assessment at three points in the research study,
- Informal interview with students following the writing assessment,
- Interview with me near the beginning and near the end of the study.

I understand the following data will only be used confidentially:

- Audiotapes,
- All notes from classroom observation and interviews,
- Reading and writing assessments.

I understand that the following data will be used for broader education in the form of presentations or publications, but will remain anonymous:

- Writing samples collected through the Ontario Writing Assessment,
- Classroom Writing samples collected through photographic representation.
In any publication or presentation of the research findings pseudonyms will be used for the school district, school, classroom teacher, and students.

I understand that research data will be retained as follows:
Audiotapes will be destroyed after five years.
Observational notes, interview transcripts, Running Records, Observation Survey task forms will be stored securely in a locked home cabinet and destroyed after five years.
Writing samples captured through photographic representation will be retained for an indefinite length of time. Student writing samples may be used in presentations or publication from the research to support any claims or findings. The authors will at all times be anonymous.

I understand that I can contact Janice Van Dyke at janice.vandyke@mail.utoronto.ca or 905 715 3243, or Shelley Stagg Peterson at shelleystagg.peterson@utoronto.ca 416 978 0329.

I have read the information letter and consent form and sign freely and voluntarily.

Date: ________________________________________________________________

Name of Teacher (please print)

Signature: _____________________________________________________________

I would like to receive a summary of the study Yes ______  No ________
Appendix 3: Information Letter for School Principal

Date
Dear ___________________,

As per our conversation on __________, I am a PhD student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto under the supervision of Professor Shelley Stagg Peterson. I am also a Reading Recovery trainer in Ontario.

As part of the requirements for my PhD programme I am conducting collective case study research investigating the written language development of children who made accelerated progress in Reading Recovery in grade one and are now in grade two. This research may provide insights that will help in monitoring students’ progress beyond Reading Recovery. I am asking if I can follow the literacy development of the former Reading Recovery students in (school name) who made accelerated progress.

From January, 2017 to May 31, 2017 I will be following the literacy development of eight former Reading Recovery students. Information on their written language development will be collected by assessing their writing and reading and asking their opinion on their writing at the beginning and end of the data collection period. I will be observing them at regular intervals engaged in classroom writing activities, analyzing photographic reproductions of their writing, and administering the Ontario Writing Assessment followed by an informal audiotaped interview three times across the data collection period. I will also conduct two audiotaped interviews with the case study students’ classroom teachers, one near the beginning and one near the end of the data collection period. The purpose for the interview will be to get the classroom teacher’s view on the writing development of the case study students. Notes will not be taken on non-focal students.

The study has been approved by the University of Toronto and the (Name of school board) External Research Review Committee. Participation in the study is voluntary and all participants can withdraw at any time.
All identifiable electronic information will be accessed securely and encrypted, consistent with the University of Toronto’s security and encryption standards. The rights of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity will be respected for all participants. Only my supervisor and myself, the researcher, will know the actual names of participants, and we pledge not to reveal this information. There is no conflict of interest for myself to be involved in this study, and I will be happy to provide you with copies of publications resulting from this study.

This research study may be reviewed for quality assurance to make sure that the required laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, (a) representative(s) of the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) may access study-related data and consent materials as part of the review. All information accessed by HREP will be upheld to the same level of confidentiality that is stated by the researcher.

Research data will be retained as follows:
Audiotapes will be destroyed after five years.
Observational notes, interview transcripts, Running Records, Observation Survey task forms will be stored securely in a locked home cabinet and destroyed after five years.
Writing samples captured through photographic representation will be retained for an indefinite length of time. Student writing samples may be used in presentations or publication from the research to support any claims or findings. The authors will at all times be anonymous.

If you consent for (name of the school) participation in this research, please sign, return one copy of the attached consent form, and keep a copy of this letter and the consent form for your records. I would be happy to provide further information and meet with you. You can contact me at janice.vandyke@mail.utoronto.ca or 905 715 3243. You may also contact my supervisor Shelley Stagg Peterson at shelley.stagg.peter@utoronto.ca or 416 978 0329. You may also contact the University of Toronto’s Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or by telephone at 416 978 2798.
Sincerely,
Janice Van Dyke
Consent Form for Principal

I agree for (school name) to participate in Janice Van Dyke’s doctoral research study. The letter that accompanies this consent form provides information on the researcher including contact information and the purpose and potential use of the research. The letter also makes clear that my participation in the study is voluntary and can be withdrawn upon request.

I understand that the study will be conducted from January 2017 to May 31, 2017. I also understand that information about participant students’ literacy development, and writing in particular, will be collected as follows:

- observational information on how participant students go about a writing activity will be documented by observational note taking,
- photographic reproduction of writing samples,
- reading and writing assessments and student opinion on their writing at the beginning and end of the research study,
- Ontario Writing Assessment at three points in the research study,
- informal interview with students following the writing assessment,
- interview with the participant students’ classroom teacher near the beginning and near the end of the study.

I understand the following data will only be used confidentially:

- Audiotapes,
- All notes from classroom observation and interviews,
- Reading and writing assessments.

I understand that the following data will be used for broader education in the form of presentations or publications, but will remain anonymous:

- Writing samples collected through the Ontario Writing Assessment,
- Classroom Writing samples collected through photographic representation.

In any publication or presentation of the research findings pseudonyms will be used for the school district, school, classroom teacher, and students.
I understand that research data will be retained as follows:
Audiotapes and videotapes will be destroyed after five years.
Observational notes, interview transcripts, Running Records, Observation Survey task forms will be stored securely in a locked home cabinet and destroyed after five years.
Writing samples captured through photographic representation will be retained for an indefinite length of time. Student writing samples may be used in presentations or publication from the research to support any claims or findings. The authors will at all times be anonymous.

I understand that I can contact Janice Van Dyke janice.vandyke@mail.utoronto.ca or 905 715 3243 or Shelley Stagg Peterson at shelleystagg.peterson@utoronto.ca 416 978 0329.

I have read the information letter and consent form and sign freely and voluntarily.

Date: _______________________________________________________

Name of Principal (please print)
Signature: ____________________________________________________

I would like to receive a summary of the study Yes ______ No _________
Appendix 4: Script for Requesting Verbal Consent from Students

I am very happy to meet you ___________________. I was told by _____________ that you learned a lot about how to read and write since you started coming to (school name) and now you are in grade two! While you are in grade two I will be visiting your classroom. I would like to keep track of your progress in reading and writing, especially your writing, by making notes. To do that sometimes I will visit your classroom while you are writing something and sometimes I will ask you to write and read something to see what you have learned.
Appendix 5: Script for Recruitment Conversation with the Participant Student’s Classroom Teacher

My name is Janice Van Dyke. I am a PhD candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and also a Reading Recovery trainer in Ontario. As part of the requirements for my PhD programme I am doing research on the written language development of children who successfully completed Reading Recovery and are now in grade two. This research will include following the written language development of several students over the course of the school year, from January to the end of May. It will not require any involvement in the classroom programme nor any focus on the other students in the classroom. It will include regular visits to observe the case study students while they are engaged in writing activities and collect sample of their writing. It will also include assessing the students at the beginning and end of the research period and administering the Ontario Writing Assessment followed by an informal audiotaped interview with them at three points in the research period. I ask that you take part in two audiotaped interviews, one near the beginning and one near the end of the data collection period in order to get your view on the students’ writing development.

Children’s writing development after Reading Recovery is an area with very little published research, and this study may provide insights that will help in monitoring student progress after Reading Recovery. (Name of the school principal) is willing for me to be in the school. I would look forward to being a regular visitor in your classroom, and I will organize my observations around your plans.

The information collected during this study will be secured and kept confidential according to the University of Toronto standards for data collection and storage. And all names of children, teachers, schools and school districts will remain anonymous in anything I publish or present. Your participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.
Appendix 6: Sally’s Observation Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Pre-study raw score</th>
<th>Pre-study Stanine*</th>
<th>End-of-study raw score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter Identification</td>
<td>54/54</td>
<td></td>
<td>54/54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts About Print</td>
<td>21/24</td>
<td></td>
<td>24/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Reading</td>
<td>14/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing and Recording</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds in Words</td>
<td>36/37</td>
<td></td>
<td>37/37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Vocabulary</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Reading</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
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</table>

*Stanines for December Grade Two

Appendix 7: Sally’s Burt Word Reading Test

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>EAB</th>
<th>Stanine*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>End-of-study</td>
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<td>7.07-8.01</td>
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*Stanine for December Grade Two
Appendix 8: Cam’s Observation Survey

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<th>Pre-study Stanine*</th>
<th>End-of-study raw score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Letter Identification</td>
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<td></td>
<td>54/54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts About Print</td>
<td>21/24</td>
<td></td>
<td>22/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Reading</td>
<td>8/15</td>
<td></td>
<td>14/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing and Recording</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Sounds in Words</td>
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<td>37/37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Vocabulary</td>
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<td>Text Reading</td>
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*Stanines for December Grade Two
**Below instructional level

Appendix 9: Cam’s Burt Word Reading Test

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<td>End-of-study</td>
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*Stanine for December Grade Two
Appendix 10: Jack’s Observation Survey

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<td>54/54</td>
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<td>Concepts About Print</td>
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<td>22/24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Word Reading</td>
<td>15/15</td>
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<td>15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words</td>
<td>37/37</td>
<td></td>
<td>37/37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Vocabulary</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text Reading</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24**</td>
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</table>

*Stanines for December Grade Two
**Easy level

Appendix 11: Jack’s Burt Word Reading Test

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</thead>
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*Stanine for December Grade Two
## Appendix 12: Aaron’s Observation Survey

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<th>Pre-study Stanine*</th>
<th>End-of-study raw score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>54/54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts About Print</td>
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<tr>
<td>Word Reading</td>
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<td>15/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words</td>
<td>35/37</td>
<td></td>
<td>36/37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Vocabulary</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text Reading</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16**</td>
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</tbody>
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*Stanines for December Grade Two  
**Hard level

## Appendix 13: Aaron’s Burt Word Reading Test

<table>
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<th>Raw Score</th>
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<th>Stanine*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-study</td>
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<tr>
<td>End-of-study</td>
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<td>6.06-7.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Stanine for December Grade Two
Appendix 14: Interview Questions for Case Study Students at the Beginning and End of the Study

1. What have you learned most recently as a writer?
2. How did that make you feel?
3. What do you think you want to learn next as a writer?

Appendix 15: Interview Questions for Case Study Students After On-Demand Writing Sample

1. What helped you to decide what to put into your writing today?
2. Talk about the way you decided to write about your ideas.
3. As you read over your writing, is there something that you are proud of including?
4. Was there anything that you have been learning about writing that you included in your writing today?
5. Was there anything that you found hard to do in writing today?
6. Is there anything that you want to work on as a writer? (from Ontario Writing Assessment)

Appendix 16: Interview Questions for Classroom Teachers

1. What are some of the changes you have seen in (student’s) writing?
2. What are some of the sources of help that (student) utilizes during classroom writing activities?
3. What aspects of (student’s) writing meet the specific expectations for grade level?
4. What aspects is (student) finding challenging?
5. How does (student’s) writing development compare with his reading development?
6. Is there anything else about (student) that you like to add?
Appendix 17: Writing Activities Observed in Mrs. Zee’s Classroom by Month

*January / February*

Research Report:
- Research sheet of information on a chosen topic
- Report booklet organized according to a table of contents with each page made up of a sub-title, illustration and information presented in narrative form.

*February*

Cereal Box:
- Cereal Box Planner with six headings
- Cereal Box Check List requiring rationales for choices under the six headings

Entry into Kindness Book / Free Writing

Valentine’s Day Acrostic Poem: Using the letters in the word *valentine*

Inferring: George and Martha Tons of Fun

How Pink Shirt Day Began and What I Can Do to Stop Bullying

Inferring the Characters’ Feelings: George and Martha Back in Town

Procedure writing: How to make pancakes

*March*

Organizing Ideas: Problem and Solution

Graphic organizer with a partner: Problem and Solution Story

*April*

Problem and Solution Story
- Independent Planning sheet for Problem and Solution Story
- Problem and Solution Story

Silent letter *e* word building

Narrative on Earth Day using past tense

Response to: If you were in charge of the golden egg where would you hide it and why would you hide it there?

*May*

Free Writing
Appendix 18: Writing Activities Observed in Mrs. Kit’s Classroom by Month

February

Topic: Friends
Written response to the question, what is a friend?
• Draw a picture of something you like to do with a friend
• Write about your picture
Acrostic Poem
• Using the letters in student’s name
• Using the letters in the word valentine
Letter to a friend on Valentine’s Day
• Why you would like that friend to be your valentine
Interring: George and Martha
• What you think happened next, and explaining why
How Pink T-shirt Day began: Response to a video and class discussion
Invisible Boy: Making the Invisible ~ Visible
• Describe ways Brian could become more visible and included
• Draw a colourful picture to go with your description
Procedure writing: How to make pancakes

March

Problem and solution narrative in ideas book
• Opening sentence
• Problem and solution story

April / May

Generating rhyming words using small white board
Adding onset to rime worksheet (supply teacher)
Kindness Book entry
Narrative Problem and Solution
• Planning sheet: Title, Characters, Setting, Problem, Failed Attempts, Solution
• Problem and solution story
Response to: If you were in charge of the golden egg where would you hide it and why would you hide it there?

Topic: Earth Day
• Illustrated Narrative

Topic: Wishes
• If you could have one wish what would it be?

Free Writing
Mother’s Day Message
Kindness Book
• Today I will show kindness by…
## Appendix 19: Case Study Students’ Composing Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composing Action</th>
<th>Sally</th>
<th>Cam</th>
<th>Jack</th>
<th>Aaron</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draws</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looks at illustration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks about idea while drawing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generates ideas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks about idea during writing</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicates thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looks up</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makes word writing movements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makes pencil movements</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talks to self while writing</td>
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<td>Invents detail not written</td>
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Appendix 20: Case Study Students’ Constructing Actions

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<th>Constructing Action</th>
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<th>Jack</th>
<th>Aaron</th>
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<tr>
<td>Asks how to spell</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looks in practice spelling book</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Looks in idea book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks in planner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks in previous message</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Copies letter cluster</td>
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Appendix 22: Analysis of Writing Samples from Case Study Students

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**Message Clarity**

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**Punctuation**

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Appendix 23: Interactions with Classroom Teacher for Case Study Students

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**Editing**

Instruct where to place a period 1 3
Instructs where to place caret 1
Assists with line spacing 1

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## Appendix 24: Interactions with Others for Case Study Students

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<td>Redirected back to task by classmate</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacts with class volunteer</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks for adult help with spelling</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks for classmate help with spelling</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks classmate to read chart work</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks classmate to identify a word</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks classmate for direction</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks for help (general)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks classmate to sit together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks for eraser</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans with classmate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens to classmate read message</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens to classmate &amp; teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covers message</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares message</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>
Appendix 25: Use of Classroom Resources and Supports by Case Study Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Sally</th>
<th>Cam</th>
<th>Jack</th>
<th>Aaron</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chart</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling Practice Book</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall display</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supports</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headphones</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet spot</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Appendix 26: Exemplars for Composing, Constructing and Monitoring Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Exemplar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composing</td>
<td>Draws</td>
<td>Creates a message through art or drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looks at an illustration</td>
<td>Looks at art from a book or illustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talks about idea while drawing</td>
<td>Talks to another about a message in drawing or art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generates ideas</td>
<td>Talks to another about an idea for a message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans</td>
<td></td>
<td>Makes decisions about the content of a message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talks about idea during writing</td>
<td>Solicited or spontaneous talk during writing about a message idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
<td>Remarks that indicate how the composing is going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicates thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tells someone he/she is thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks up</td>
<td></td>
<td>Looks up with not particular focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes word writing movements</td>
<td>Makes word writing movements across a page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes pencil movements</td>
<td>Tapping, poking, manipulating pencil in an unconscious way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talks to self while writing</td>
<td>Oral composing of any part of a message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Invents detail not written</td>
<td>Oral composing of detail that is not encoded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks around room</td>
<td>Looks at something in the classroom related to writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks how to spell</td>
<td>Asks for help with the spelling a specific word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks in practice spelling book</td>
<td>Looks for a word already written in a personal spelling practice book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks in idea book</td>
<td>Looks for a word already written in a personal idea book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at planner</td>
<td>Looks in planning material for assigned writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks in previous message</td>
<td>Looks at a message written prior to today’s writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies letter by letter</td>
<td>Copies a word from a classroom resource into a message and looks at the resource before recording each letter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies letter cluster</td>
<td>Copies a cluster of letters in a word from a classroom resource into a message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies word</td>
<td>Copies an entire word from a classroom resource into a message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies sentence starter</td>
<td>Copies a sentence starter to an assigned task into a message from a classroom resource</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulates phoneme</td>
<td>Makes a distinct sound of a phoneme in speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulates cluster</td>
<td>Makes a distinct sound of a group of two or more letters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulates word</td>
<td>Slow pronunciation of a word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covers eyes</td>
<td>Covers eyes to support visualization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes mouth movements</td>
<td>Makes mouth movements with no distinct sound while writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records letter by letter</td>
<td>Deliberate recording of a word or word part one letter at a time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records cluster of letters</td>
<td>Deliberate recording of two or more letters in a word without pause</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Says word aloud</td>
<td>Says word aloud before or while writing into text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spells orally</td>
<td>Spells a word out loud that is recorded in text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writes single word</td>
<td>Fluent production of a single word without pausing regardless of accuracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writes multiple words</td>
<td>Fluent production of two or more words without pausing regardless of accuracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inserts period</td>
<td>Adds period into a message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inserts quotation marks</td>
<td>Adds quotation marks into a message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draws after writing</td>
<td>Creates a drawing following a written message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicates finished</td>
<td>Verbal indication a message is complete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Monitoring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicates verbally</td>
<td>Comments on message production, e.g., “Oops, forgot something”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicates non-verbally</td>
<td>Action indicates noticing something, e.g., shakes head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erasing actions</td>
<td>Erases a letter, letter cluster, word or multiple words in text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicates reading back</td>
<td>Eye movement indicates reading back into a message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks back into text</td>
<td>Gaze indicates looking back into a message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finger points</td>
<td>Finger points to a word in a message or finger points word by word while reading a message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves pencil along text</td>
<td>Move pencil along a message while reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pencil points</td>
<td>Uses pencil to point to words in a message while reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads aloud</td>
<td>Reads a message or part of a message out loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrects letter spacing</td>
<td>Corrects spacing between letters in a word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrects letter</td>
<td>Makes a correction to the formation of a letter in a word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrects word</td>
<td>Makes a correction to some part of a word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adds to message</td>
<td>Adds a word or words into previously written text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traces a letter</td>
<td>Traces over a letter already written into text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses finger for spacing</td>
<td>Uses finger to measure space between words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts lines of text</td>
<td>Uses pencil or finger to count the number of lines in a message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments on length</td>
<td>Verbal comment about the length of a message, e.g., “look how much I did”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>