

The Educator's Role in Preschool Dramatic Story Reenactments: Scaffolding in Action

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## ABSTRACT

### The Educator's Role in Preschool Dramatic Story Reenactments: Scaffolding in Action

Catherine Burns

This research study explored the role educators play in supporting Dramatic Story Reenactments. Dramatic Story Reenactments (DSRs) involve children re-creating or acting out familiar stories by themselves or with the guidance of a teacher (Martinez, 1993). It has been proposed that experiences with DSRs provide children with opportunities to practice language skills and enhance their understanding of story (Martinez, 1993).

The participants in this study were two experienced educators and their groups of ten 4- and 5-year-olds. The educators were asked to implement DSRs three times a week for four weeks with their groups of children in a daycare centre in Montreal. Prior to the DSR intervention the educators received a brief training session from the researcher. The stories read for the DSR were videotaped for analysis, as was the DSR process. Grounded theory methodologies were used to analyze the scaffolding strategies the educators used during the DSR process. The categories of scaffolding that emerged from the data were analyzed and described in order to generate a theory for best practices.

Findings from this study suggest that there were several interactive behaviours educators used when reading the story prior to the DSR that enhanced and supported the DSR process. Educator scaffolds were many and varied over the course of the DSR intervention and fell under four broad categories that included story structure supports, dramatization supports, story language supports, and positive guidance supports. Based on these findings, implications for practice are recommended and discussed.

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# The Educator's Role in Preschool Dramatic Story Reenactments: Scaffolding in Action

## Introduction

The term *emergent literacy*, coined by Marie Clay (1975), emphasizes that literacy begins to emerge at birth and continues to develop throughout life. It is believed that very young children possess the precursors of literacy, although their skills are not yet fully developed. Emergent literacy sees reading, writing, and oral language as interrelated and developing concurrently. In the preschool years the components of literacy such as talking and listening are highly emphasized and opportunities to practice these are seen as essential to later reading and writing skills. Literacy development also occurs in the child's daily contexts and in social, collaborative environments. Home, school and community are influencing factors on children's literacy development. This educational philosophy about literacy takes a social-constructivist approach influenced by theorists such as Piaget (1962) and Vygotsky (1978). Piaget's constructivist theory suggests that children actively construct their own knowledge, intelligence and morality by interpreting their experiences in both the physical and social worlds (Devries, Zan, Hildebrandt, Edmiaston, & Sales, 2002). Lev Vygotsky builds on Piaget's theories by taking into account socio-cultural influences on the child (Spodek & Sarecho, 1993). From Piaget we have learned that children must participate actively in the learning process through exploration, experimentation, problem solving and social negotiation (Spodek & Sarecho, 1993).

Vygotsky's term *scaffolding* places emphasis on the adults' or more competent peers' influence on literacy learning. Physical scaffolds are temporary structures that support workers while they finish a job that would not be possible to complete without

the scaffold. In education, scaffolding involves engaging students in collaborative ways while teaching new skills that would be too difficult on their own. The adult or more competent peer acts as the scaffold providing the necessary temporary support until the learner has internalized the content or process and can complete the task on his/her own. An important aspect of scaffolding is that the scaffolds are temporary. As the learner's knowledge and skills increase the scaffolds are withdrawn slowly. An important concept of Vygotsky's notion of scaffolding is the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The zone of proximal development is described as the distance between what children can do by themselves and the next learning that they can be helped to achieve with competent assistance (Vygotsky, 1978). The role of the teacher would be to offer the support needed to challenge the child just beyond their present understanding. The scaffolds would be the activities, materials, questions or experiences the teacher provides to facilitate a student's ability to build on prior knowledge and internalize new information.

In the educational setting, scaffolds may include models, cues, prompts, hints, partial solutions, think-aloud modeling and direct instruction (Hammond, 2002). When an adult reads out loud to a child and with a child, he/she acts as a model for reading and can support the child at the child's level. The interaction between the adult and the child during literacy experiences may involve using a number of scaffolds to support the child and challenge the child to go beyond their current understanding. Based on these theoretical constructs, a framework for literacy learning has been outlined by Botel, Botel-Sheppard, and Renninger (Spodek & Saracho, 1993) that suggest certain classroom practices. "It focuses on four precepts: that literacy learning occurs (1) in meaningful and

functional contexts, (2) through social interaction in varied contexts, (3) through active involvement with literacy experiences and materials and (4) through the integration of reading, writing, speaking and listening in all content areas.” (Sodek & Saracho, 1993, p. 181).

Acting out stories is a practice that encompasses all four of these precepts, yet it is seldom practiced in preschool environments. There is a great deal of literature written on the benefits of reading and sharing stories in interactive ways with young children in order to make stories meaningful, dynamic and memorable (Sawyer, 2004). “The type and amount of verbal interaction among children and teachers during story reading are major contributing factors in literacy development” (Morrow, 1992, p. 253). During story reading the adult can help the child make sense of the story and text in a meaningful way. The adult can help the child interpret the text based on the child’s individual experiences. It has been suggested that the talk that takes place during these interactive reading times is key to literacy growth (Heath, 1980; Roser & Martinez, 1985).

Since young children benefit from hearing and experiencing stories over and over again, educators should find a variety of ways to share stories with young children. A powerful tool that can be used to spark preschool children’s interest in stories and reinforce their story comprehension has been to use dramatic story reenactments. Dramatic story reenactment (DSR) is defined as children re-creating or acting out familiar stories by themselves or with the guidance of a teacher (Martinez, 1993). Most of the studies that use acting out stories have been conducted with kindergarten and school-aged children. There is a need to examine this process with preschool children since this is a time when young children’s dramatic play is at a peak. Role-enactment guides

pretend play at this time and becomes the dominant play of 4- and 5-year olds (Johnson, Christie, & Yawkey, 1999). Therefore, acting out stories is a natural and enjoyable experience at this age. The following literature review examines critically the literature addressing the connection between early literacy and dramatic play and specifically the impact of acting out stories. The teacher's role in facilitating dramatic reenactments with young children is also examined.

## Literature Review

### *Read-Alouds*

Since helping children develop a wide variety of oral language skills is a crucial component to literacy development in the preschool years (Snow & Tabors, 1993), reading stories is one of the key group-time experiences in early childhood centres. It is commonly agreed that reading to young children and helping them become interested in books is one of the most important practices early childhood educators can do to foster literacy skills (Sawyer, 2004). Reading books aloud to children exposes them to a wide variety of written styles and grammatical forms (Snow & Tabors, 1993). Engaging children in discussion after read-alouds is also a common practice in most quality early childhood centres. When children are allowed the opportunity to take an active role in talking about books after a shared reading experience this results in higher gains on a variety of language measures (Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992). Book reading and discussion can have a powerful effect on complex oral language development, vocabulary and story understanding, which are critical skills for later literacy tasks (Spodeko & Sarecho, 1992).

The way adults read to young children seems to be an important factor in early literacy (Whitehurst, Arnold, Epstein, Angell, Smith, & Fischel, 1994). Studies have demonstrated that the method of reading adults use has an impact on children's early language skills (Arnold, Lonigan, Whitehurst, & Epstein, 1994; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992). When adults implement interactive behaviours such as listening actively, asking open-ended questions, adding information, and prompting, the child becomes more skilled in the role of storyteller. Research has shown that children from



low-income families seem to be lacking in skills critical to school readiness (Peterson, 1994). Mothers of these children have been found to be less likely to engage in interactive behaviours during story time, have fewer books in the home and smaller productive vocabularies than children in mid to upper SES levels (Ninio, 1980). A study by Whitehurst et al. (1994) examined the effects of an interactive reading program on children from low-income families attending subsidized daycare centres in New York. The subjects for this study were 73 3-year-old English-speaking children from low-income families attending five subsidized daycare centres in Suffolk County, New York. The mother was the primary or sole wage earner in most of the families participating in the study. Standardized tests were used to measure the vocabulary and expressive skills of Standard English use of children upon entry into the study. Results from these tests were significantly below average. Children were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions for six weeks. The three conditions were: *school reading*, where children were read to by a teacher in an interactive way; *school plus home reading*, children received school reading under the same conditions plus reading at home by a parent or primary caregiver in an interactive way; *control*, children engaged in play sessions with constructive toys (lego, blocks) in small groups with a teacher. The results indicated that the children from both shared reading groups performed better on the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (Dunn & Dunn, 1981) in posttest and follow-up sessions. The results of this study were in keeping with previous studies that showed that children acquire new vocabulary in the context of shared and interactive book reading (Whitehurst et al., 1994). This study would be more revealing if the control group had received story-time, but without the interactive scaffolding strategies used in

the other groups. Thus, it would be a stronger argument for how active story reading improves children's literacy skills beyond exposure to books. Becoming a competent reader requires active involvement as well as practice and motivation. Activities that extend the reading experience and allow the child to take an active role in discussing and playing with literacy materials such as storytelling with felt-boards, puppets and props attract children to books and accommodate different learning styles (Rowe, 1998).

### *Play and Literacy*

The significance of children's play has been well researched in the literature since the 1920's, however its role in young children's literacy development has only been a topic of interest and investigation for the past 15 years or so (Korat, Bahar, & Snapir, 2003). Both play and reading are symbolic activities and involve the process of using symbols. Piaget and Vygotsky draw a direct relationship between representation in make-believe and reading. They use the terms *symbols* for the representation in play and *signs* for the representation in reading (Wolfgang & Sanders, 2001). When children play they will use a block or any available object and substitute it for something else. The block becomes a symbol for something else that they express through actions and language. The child uses symbols to express meanings in their imaginative play. This skill of being able to see one object as standing for another is also required for reading. Children need to interpret *signs* that are socially agreed upon representations (i.e., letters) and used in written and spoken words.

Pretend play—sometimes referred to as symbolic, make-believe, dramatic, fantasy, and imaginative or socio-dramatic play, is recognized as serving a crucial role in young children's social and cognitive development (Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983).

Pretend play is defined as the ability to transform objects and actions symbolically (Fein, 1981). Children do this when they pretend to be a person other than themselves or use an object for pretend, (e.g., pretending to eat imaginary food with a bowl). This ability to transform is furthered by interactive dialogue and negotiation with others and involves role-taking, script knowledge and improvisation (Bergen, 2002). Many cognitive processes and strategies are involved when children engage in pretend play. For Piaget (1962), pretend play was an indicator of the emergence of representational thinking. Vygotsky (1967) saw play as the vehicle for facilitating symbolic thought. The transformational activities that take place during play—such as substituting make-believe events with real life ones and becoming make-believe characters—are essential practices that can enhance higher levels of thinking. Studies suggest that role-enactment in fantasy play is an important step towards higher levels of thinking because children need to transform throughout their pretense (Pellegrini & Galda, 1993). This ability to assimilate and manipulate symbols is essential to reading and writing. “Reading... is a process of deriving meaning from the printed page or written words. Understanding of meaning is related to cognitive development and the ability to understand representation” (Wolfgang & Sanders, 2001, p. 116). Dramatic play is defined by pretend behaviours and, therefore, has received the most attention among researchers interested in the play and literacy connection (Rowe, 1998).

Other cognitive strategies are also developed during pretend play such as planning, negotiating, problem-solving and goal seeking (Bergen, 2002). Social competence and social-linguistic skills are also practised and refined during pretend play. When children are involved in pretend play they discuss their roles, speak in role, and

define the objects they are using and what they represent. Pretense takes place in social contexts and involves language. This social atmosphere enables play to become more collaborative as children negotiate roles and consider other perspectives. This ability to take others' perspectives is crucial to the child's ability to empathize (Umek & Musek, 2001). The ability to empathise can only be achieved when children can "transcend their egocentrism" (Umek & Musek, p. 56).

Researchers have demonstrated that a range of skills that develop during the preschool years serve as precursors to children's reading abilities. Lack of prosocial skills has been identified as a potential risk factor for poor emergent literacy skills (Doctoroff, Greer, & Arnold, 2006). However, only a small number of studies have focused on this relationship. Doctoroff et al. (2006) investigated the interaction between social behaviours and emergent literacy with preschool children from ethnically and socio-economically diverse backgrounds. They found that increased levels of solitary play as well as negative affect were related to poor emergent literacy skills. Children who have limited social skills have fewer opportunities to practice language that leads to less play with peers, therefore fewer opportunities for socio-dramatic play.

Lewis, Boucher, Lupton, and Watson (2000) found that symbolic play was related to preschool children's linguistic skills. In this study the authors examined the relationships between different levels of cognitive play and expressive and receptive language with normally developing children between one and six years of age. A standardized assessment called the Test of Pretend Play developed by Lewis, Boucher, and Astell (1992) was used to measure children's level of symbolic play. Two different standardized tests were used to measure the children's expressive and receptive language.

The results of this study indicated that symbolic play was significantly correlated with expressive language. Since pretend play and language are both symbolizing activities, the symbolizing activity involved in pretense can contribute positively to language development and literacy.

#### *Literacy-enriched Dramatic Play Environments*

Researchers interested in emergent literacy development have studied the connection between dramatic play environments and literacy. This research is based on the theory that the environment can be embedded with rich and authentic language experiences that would provide children with opportunities to become naturally involved in literacy-related events (Einarsdottir, 1996; Morrow & Rand, 1991; Neuman & Roskos, 1990; Neuman & Roskos, 1997; Rowe, 1998; Rybczynski & Troy, 1995). These researchers were interested in the ways children pretended to read and write while they participated in dramatic play. They emphasized not only the physical environment and materials but also the impact of human relations. Dramatic play was viewed as an important context where children can demonstrate their knowledge of the everyday uses of print. In these studies the environment was manipulated in order to promote literacy behaviours and allow children opportunities to practice and extend emergent literacy abilities.

In two of these studies conducted by Neuman and Roskos (1990, 1997) naturalistic observations of preschool children were coded in order to examine how changes in the play environment influenced children's print activities in play. The participants in the first study included two half-day preschool classrooms with 37 racially mixed children, four and five years of age (25 boys; 12 girls). The teachers in these

classrooms displayed a non-interfering attitude toward play in that children were allowed to self-select among various free-play activities. Both classrooms included identical play areas with wide-open spaces and few partitions. The researchers redesigned the play areas for literacy enrichment in the following ways: play centres were separated to distinguish them from one another, they substantially increased the amount of labeling in the environment (labeling storage bins, etc.) and four play areas were sharply defined for literacy development: the Post Office, the Library, the Office and the Kitchen. These environments were selected based on the children's experiences with real-life, literacy-related routines. Lastly, the physical arrangement of the play environments was changed to facilitate movement between centres and encourage the development of ongoing themes. Literacy props such as paper, pen, books, calendars, envelopes, file folders, and other materials were added to each centre to encourage authentic use. In this exploratory study they analyzed the effects of these literacy-enriched play centres and how these changes influenced the children's print activities in play.

Prior to the intervention two measures of literacy behaviours during play were obtained over a 2-week period. Running records were used to record all of the children's behaviours and language on four separate occasions for a total of 40 minutes per child. Two observers recorded the behaviours and inter-coder reliability was established at 98% agreement. The data were analyzed for literacy demonstrations during play, behaviours such as: scribbling, marking on papers and pretending to read, were identified as literacy behaviours. The coding system they used to identify and keep track of these behaviours was not indicated.

The second observational tool used videotaped recordings of play activity in the targeted play areas (housekeeping, book corner, and art/drawing) for 30 minutes, four different times, for a total of two hours per play area. Literacy-related play frames were isolated and numbered for further analysis. There is no explanation about how they did this in this report, which is an important omission.

After the children had experienced the new play centres for one month the measures used prior to intervention were repeated to record the children's play behaviours in the new play areas. A qualitative analysis was conducted using typological analysis to code behaviours. Categories of changes in literacy-related play were established and coded as well as literacy behaviours in play.

The analysis found that the children's literacy in play became more purposeful in the new centres. The children used reading and writing in more purposeful and complex ways. Prior to intervention, children's literacy play was more exploratory, but in the new centres the children showed purpose (i.e., writing out grocery lists or pretending to be police officers writing tickets). Literacy in play became more situated (in context). Prior to the changes the children had few cues or props (i.e., pads of paper to take an order when role-playing a waiter) to scaffold their literacy interactions. The new enriched areas provided more contexts for the literacy behaviours. These environments supported play themes that were more connected with more complex literacy activities in that children's play was more role-defined playing roles like librarians, postal workers and mail carriers. Literacy activities were also more interactive in the new settings as interaction between the children and between children and adults increased.

This study does not prove that playing with print with a purpose results in increased literacy learning. Better-controlled studies across varying groups are recommended by the authors. The authors do suggest that literacy-enriched play centres influence children's literacy behaviours in play. The examples provided in these studies demonstrated how children play with print with a purpose when they are provided with an appropriate context. The children observed in these studies seem to believe they are readers and writers when the appropriate materials are available to them.

In a subsequent study by Neuman and Roskos (1997), similar dramatic play settings were manipulated in order to study children's literacy knowledge in practice. In this study the aim was to examine "domain-specific knowledge," meaning examining children's specific literacy knowledge displayed in activities. They studied "declarative knowledge" (i.e., "I know that"), "procedural knowledge"—how to carry out literacy routines (i.e., mailing a letter) as well as "strategies knowledge" not bound by a particular domain (i.e., correcting others).

The subjects were thirty 3- and 4-year-old children from an EvenStart preschool (multicultural preschool environment designed for children from non-English or bilingual homes). For this study three literacy-related play settings were designed to reflect their real-life environments. The themes for these settings were selected based on the principle that authentic areas for literacy action should reflect what children see and encounter in everyday contexts and they should include relevant and familiar literacy objects and tools within their experiences. The settings selected included a post office, a family restaurant and a doctor's office. Videotapes and observations were recorded over a 7-month period. Preparing the children for the settings was accomplished through fieldtrips to actual



settings like the post office and teacher-led activities of shared reading and discussions. The biggest difference in methodology in this study compared with the previous one was a greater emphasis on the role of the teacher. Teachers in this study acted as co-players with the children, implementing scaffolding techniques such as modeling, coaching, and fading (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989). This process involves teachers using play support techniques such as inside intervention (i.e., taking on a role) and outside intervention (i.e., asking questions to support play) as needed, but withdrawing from play as the children progressed.

In this study, details about the categories selected for coding behaviours were more defined in the analysis than in their previous study. Once again qualitative measures were used to code literacy-related play episodes. The authors defined this “as an interrelated set of goal-directed actions and dialogue in literacy play activity (Neuman & Roskos, 1997, p.19). They eliminated play episodes prompted by a teacher from their analysis but included some that might have involved the teacher in a minor role. Episodes were transcribed verbatim.

The authors found that by looking at the children’s behaviours across three settings allowed for more generalization of how children used literacy practices across contexts. The intentional and purposeful set-up of the literacy play centres resulted in more intentional literacy play in children. This can be an important bridge to more formal instruction where children will be required to read and write, as they will already have a variety of legitimate reading and writing experiences. When given the opportunity to play in a familiar and pressure-free environment with many literacy tools and props, children

can display and extend their knowledge of literacy. In these environments children can learn the important phase of reading and writing practices.

The researchers discovered that children did not become more elaborate in their literacy play over the 7-month period, but they did not examine the adult's influence or scaffolding techniques and how this might have influenced literacy learning in a purposeful way. There is a need to study the effects of the modeling, coaching and fading techniques used in this study.

In a similar study conducted by Morrow and Rand (1991), the importance of the teacher's role in guiding and modeling literacy behaviours in dramatic play settings was emphasized. In their study they used four different settings to examine the literacy behaviours in the play of 170 middle-class preschool and kindergarten children from 13 different schools. Random assignment was used to divide the classrooms into the four different groups. The first group was the *paper, pencil, and books with adult guidance group*. In this group teachers introduced literacy-related materials in the dramatic play and block areas, they pointed out the materials and explained their uses and they also made suggestions as to how the materials could be used and modeled these behaviours at first. The second group was the *thematic materials with adult guidance group*. This was a dramatic play area set up to reflect a veterinarian's office with relevant literacy materials. Teachers guided children by reminding them to read signs and the teachers participated and modeled play at first. The third group was called the *thematic materials without adult guidance group*. In this group the dramatic play area was set up identically to the veterinarian's office described, however the children received no adult guidance. The fourth and last group was called the *traditional curriculum control group*. In this play

area no changes were made to the dramatic play areas, nor were any literacy behaviours suggested to children.

Thirty minute free-play periods were scheduled where children selected their own activities. Pre-intervention data were collected by teachers who recorded the number of children participating in literacy activities and the types of activities they engaged in. Four observations were conducted each day for approximately five to seven minutes.

Literacy behaviour was defined as “a) *reading*: browsing, pretending to read, storytelling, reading aloud to one self or others; b) *writing*; drawing, scribbling, tracing, copying, dictating, writing on a computer, writing related to thematic play, story writing, and writing using invented writing forms; and c) *paper handling*; sorting, shuffling and scanning” (Morrow & Rand, 1991, p. 399).

Data were collected twice a week for three weeks at three separate times throughout the study. Once prior to the study, the second time one week after the implementation of the new centres to allow for novelty and finally after a one month lapse to evaluate the effects over a longer period of time. The overall time of the study took place over 14 weeks.

The instrument they used to record the literacy behaviours was not provided. Statistical analysis revealed that the groups that included the paper, pencil and books with adult guidance and the thematic play with adult guidance groups demonstrated significantly greater literacy behaviours than the control group and the thematic play with no guidance group. The authors concluded that children were more likely to engage in voluntary literacy behaviours when they were introduced and supported by teachers. Unfortunately, specific strategies and guidelines were not provided and this makes the

findings vague and the validity of the statistics questionable because scaffolding techniques can vary widely from teacher to teacher. This once again points to the need for further research in the area of teacher's role in literacy play.

### *Thematic Fantasy Play and Literacy*

Although there is some research indicating that adults can be very effective tutors in children's play and can support and model play, many preschool teachers are not aware of the value of play-based literacy, nor are they familiar with adequate ways to support it (Korat, Bahar, & Snapir, 2003). The benefits of fantasy play have been well researched in the literature. When children engage in fantasy play they are able to explore new situations and actions. The situations and actions they reenact become themes for their play. These themes can be repeated and elaborated on, which helps children to assimilate and accommodate scenarios and develop schema (Singer & Singer, 1990). During fantasy play children form a representation of their world while experimenting with roles in pretense. This enhances their vocabulary as they speak out loud and play a variety of characters. Emotions and fears are also addressed while children explore in fantasy worlds. As they explore fantasy roles they discover their fears and confront them. In imaginative play the child reduces the outside world to manageable sizes, which allows the child to work through the many complexities of the outside world. With practice the children learn that they can control the uncontrollable in their play (Singer & Singer, 1990).

Socio-dramatic play is considered to be the highest level of social and cognitive play during the preschool years (Rubin, 1977), which is followed by games with rules. The latter usually emerge towards the end of the preschool period and is the dominant

play of school-aged children. Thematic-fantasy play is similar to socio-dramatic play in that it involves role-enactment in a group, however in thematic-fantasy play the teacher plays a much more active role than in socio-dramatic play. In thematic-fantasy play (TFP) children often dramatize traditional folktales and fairytales. Several authors believe that fairytales also help children to confront their fears (Bettleheim, 1976; Paley, 1990).

The fairytales, in one way or another, hit squarely at the single most important issue for any child: Will I be abandoned? Will it happen to me as it does to the pigs? How will I recognize when it's about to occur/what can I do to forestall the inevitable? (Paley, 1990, p.157).

Fairytales reassure children that life can be good despite adversity. In fairytales and folktales the protagonist always succeeds, this can give children hope and a feeling of empowerment.

TFP is more structured than socio-dramatic play because a teacher with a structured play theme or story plot usually initiates it. There are very few studies that have examined the effects or impact of TFP, even though it is so highly regarded in the literature (Christie, 1991). It could be that the terminology has changed and been updated to Dramatic Story Reenactments (DSRs). Another reason for this may be that teachers lack the skills to scaffold TFP and DSRs effectively so it is not widely practiced.

An early study conducted by Saltz and Johnson (1974) examined the effects of TFP training on socially and economically disadvantaged preschoolers. The motivation for this study was based on research by Smilansky (1968) who determined that socio-dramatic play was directly taught and encouraged in middle-class homes but absent in most socially disadvantaged homes. Saltz and Johnson (1974) hypothesized in their study

that by providing children with the opportunity to enact story sequences, they are helped to see that events are inter-related and ordered in time and space. The authors distinguish TFP from socio-dramatic play in that TFP involves real fantasy. Children imagine and perform actions from story narrations that never actually happened in real life. This demands more of children than imitative behaviour because the children need to transition from the symbolic story to perform their actions. The aim of Saltz and Johnson's study was to teach TFP to disadvantaged preschool children and study its effects on the children's social and cognitive development. Their study also examined the children's understanding of story sequence and storytelling abilities.

For this study two experimental groups and two control groups were used in a 2 X 2 factorial research design. The subjects for this study were 75 preschool children (44 males, 31 females aged 34 months to 66 months) from lower-economic backgrounds in Detroit. The children were from classrooms of 20 children. In each classroom the subjects were divided into four research groups of five children. The matched research groups were then randomly assigned to one of the experimental groups or to one of the control groups. Group A received a TFP curriculum only. Those in Group B received dimensionality training only (labeling and classifying activities taught to identify, describe and classify). Group C received a combination of TFP and dimensionality training, while Group D experienced the same stories as Group A but did not dramatize them. Group D participated in other story-related activities such as singing or cut-and-paste activities.

Six different measures were used to evaluate the effects of the interventions. Pretest measures included the Picture Completion subtest of the Wechler preschool

Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI) and the Visual Reception and Visual Association subtests of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic abilities (ITPA) to provide indicators of nonverbal and verbal intelligence. Posttest measures included: 20 minute observations to record instances of socio-dramatic play and TFP differences between groups—these were analyzed using chi-square analysis; the WPPSI and the ITPA were re-administered after intervention; the Interpersonal Perception Test (IPT) to evaluate for empathy in children; a picture versus object memory task, a story memory task where children were told a story using six pictures that were then shuffled and given back to the children where they were asked to put them in the correct order; and finally a story telling task where children were asked to retell stories using pictures and were also asked questions pertaining to the story.

The authors found that in most measures the groups that received TFP training scored significantly higher than groups who did not. TFP had a significant positive effect on the children's subsequent participation in dramatic play and they used more fantasy subjects in play. Teachers also reported more frequent and sustained socio-dramatic play after the intervention. On the interpersonal tests the TFP group demonstrated an increased ability to understand and identify affective states of others. The story memory task proved quite difficult for all the groups, however an analysis of variance indicated that the effects of TFP training were significant. In the story-telling task the TFP play group made more of an attempt to connect and integrate events in story-telling and gave more reasons for the characters' behaviours.

Through the implementation of this study and the TFP training, the authors suggested certain strategies to support effective TFP sessions with young children. They

discovered that children functioned better with minimal props and that realistic props tended to distract the children. The children also needed the locations and space defined for the action, for example they needed to know where the forest was located. They also discovered that children sometimes acted out scenes how they would have liked them to happen rather than how they actually happened. For the purposes of this study, this was discouraged as the researchers were studying the children's ability to reenact accurately. Future studies might examine the significance of children's adaptations to these stories as it may provide insights into how young children assimilate and accommodate these stories to meet their needs. As a result of this study the authors recommended some practical strategies for TFP training. Follow-up research on whether or not these strategies are applicable with various populations and age groups is needed.

Connections between emergent literacy and TFP were examined in a study by Pellegrini and Galda (1982). The study looked at the effects of three different styles of story reconstruction on the development of children's story comprehension. In this study 108 children (54 boys, 54 girls) from kindergarten through Grade 2 were assigned randomly to three different training conditions: thematic-fantasy play, adult-led discussion, or drawing. The same book was used and read to all three groups.

The theoretical underpinnings of this study were based on research that children's story comprehension is facilitated when children are asked to reconstruct the story (Brown, 1975) and that story comprehension may be a function of children actively reconstructing the story themselves during play (Sachs & Rubin, 1980). Results of the Pellegrini and Galda (1982) study found that the youngest children (K-1) benefited the most from the fantasy play in areas related to story comprehension such as story recall



and story sequence. The extent to which the children were involved in the TFP process seemed to affect their ability to recall stories. Engaging in discussion was less effective than play but more effective than drawing. They discovered that the need to negotiate roles and define settings and props for stories gave children a better understanding of the story. Through their discourse the children became more aware of many aspects of the story. To engage in fantasy play they needed to accommodate their views to others' views. The children who played key roles in the TFP, which required more active involvement, had better total recall and sequential recall of the story. This finding justifies the need for all the children to be actively involved in TFP and support the practice of multiple children playing key roles.

The second aspect of story comprehension measured judgmental intelligence. Children were required to judge the appropriateness of characters' actions in the story. Again, children in the fantasy group out performed other groups, but older children (Grade 1 and 2) did better than the kindergartners. In this study the authors discussed differences in age groups, with the oldest children having significantly better story-retelling abilities. There was a lack of significant differences between the discussion and drawing groups on both retell tasks. This finding places an emphasis on the influence of group and interaction; children in the drawing group did not get to share their views of the story. This could be a weakness in the study as it may have created an unfair bias for the drawing-only group.

Silvern, Taylor, Williamson, Surbeck, and Kelley (1986) studied the impact of TFP on children's story recall abilities. They based their study on Piagetian theory. "Piagetian theory suggests that younger children, whose thinking is still preoperational in

nature, need first experience with phenomena in order to construct schemes for dealing with such phenomena..." (Silvern et al., 1986). It would follow that active experiences with stories in TFP gives children the opportunity to construct schemes about stories such as the fact that all stories have a beginning, middle and end, and that all stories have characters and that things happen in a certain way in stories. They hypothesized that participation in TFP would allow the child to perform better on story recall in general and not just on stories they acted out. The authors tested this hypothesis in two experiments with K-3 subjects.

Both experiments examined the effects of TFP on children's story recall abilities. In both experiments TFP had a positive impact on children's story recall ability and the younger children benefited the most from the intervention. The second experiment will be discussed in detail for it focuses on the impact of the teacher's role in facilitating TFP.

The second experiment examined the role of the teacher specifically in scaffolding TFP. The subjects were 340 children from intact classrooms from kindergarten to grade three. The sample was from eight schools in the United States where the children's economic status was from low to middle income. Teachers were trained in two types of teacher intervention strategies for TFP based on what was compatible with their teaching style. Five teachers were instructed in the *directive group* in which they were told to make sure the reenactments of the children's stories were accurate. They were not instructed to take roles but rather were instructed to narrate, prompt, and direct the action. The five teachers in the *facilitative group* were asked to help children establish the situations for reenactment and to allow the children to control the reenactment. Teachers were not to narrate, prompt, or direct in this group. The control

group for this experiment was a *discussion only* group; they experienced stories without reenactment but with discussion. All three groups experienced a discussion period in order to control for the effects of discussion.

Analysis of videotapes, audiotapes, and on-site observations were conducted to determine the consistency of the procedures used by the teachers. Two forms of pretest and posttest story recall tests were developed and used before and after treatment. Both tests involved listening to a story and then immediately responding to test questions. The tests were administered orally to the children. The tests were administered to the various age groups separately and the group size varied according to the age of the children. The story recall test consisted of a simple story with 10 multiple-choice questions addressing the stories key points. An example of the test questions is not provided with the study report. Kindergarten children were tested in groups of five, while children in grade three were tested as a class. Pre- and post-testing was done during the first and eighth weeks of the treatment. None of the children acted out the stories used for the testing and recall tests were administered immediately following the story.

The teachers reviewed the stories selected for this study in order to evaluate whether the stories were understandable and interesting for the three grade levels. Other criteria for story selection included opportunities for several children to be involved in the reenactment and unfamiliar stories so that actions used during reenactment would be based on the child's attention to the story rather than past experiences.

Teachers were trained for the two different treatment groups. Five teachers were trained to use facilitative intervention during TFP and five were trained to use directive intervention during TFP. The procedures used for the treatment groups involved a pretest

week of TFP training with the children. During the pretest week, teachers used familiar stories to help children become accustomed to the process. During the treatment each group, including the control group, was exposed to the stories twice. Each treatment group was read a story and then half the group selected roles and acted out the story while the other half observed. The same story was read to both groups on alternating days and the children who observed the first time participated in TFP the second time. The control group listened to each story twice on alternating days, but engaged in regular classroom activities afterwards, rather than in TFP.

Data were analyzed using an analysis of covariance where the dependent measure was the raw score of the story recall posttest; the covariate, the raw score on the pretest; and the independent variables were treatment and story type. The three levels of treatment conditions were facilitative TFP, directive TFP and story discussion; the two levels of story type were familiar and unfamiliar.

In both treatment groups children performed better on story recall than did children in control groups. The authors did not find any significant differences between the facilitative or directive play conditions. They did find that children's story recall was highest in the facilitative condition when the story was familiar and in the directive condition when the story was unfamiliar. This indicates that different scaffolding techniques are required under various conditions. It would appear that when children need to accommodate new information then they may need more guidance from the teacher.

The authors concluded by discussing the limitations of this study. They recognized that although each teacher acted as her own control, teacher effects might still

have influenced the results. The need to examine the influence of the teacher's role further was recommended by the authors of this study.

There is a major gap in the literature from the 1980's until recently regarding TFP. Reasons for this are unclear and might be attributed to trends in early childhood education. A more recent study looked at the effects of integrating TFP with phonological awareness activities with children with speech/articulation problems (Constantine, 2001). In this study, TFP was combined with phonological awareness instruction and its effects were examined. Research suggests that expressive/phonological speech articulation difficulties are related to phonological awareness (Constantine, 2001). Decreased phonological processing abilities at the preschool level can hinder early reading for children both with and without communication disorders. The author wanted to find a developmentally appropriate way to teach early phonological awareness as he found many of the activities labeled in a previous study as "highly engaging" were more along the lines of drill and practice. The new approach of integrating TFP with phonological awareness instruction was more in keeping with the balanced approach described by Cassidy and Cassidy (2004). A balanced approach suggests that the best literacy practices provide both holistic and instructional methods of teaching literacy.

It is difficult to generalize from this study as there were only four 4-year-old participants with phonological disorders participating, however all four children seemed to benefit from the TFP sessions. This is particularly significant because these children had previously shown no improvements in rhyme discrimination or rhyme producing skills after eight weeks of traditional therapy. After a 10-week TFP intervention the four children showed substantial improvements in rhyme discrimination, rhyme production,

story elaboration, and directives. TFP sessions also seemed to facilitate creativity as the children were given the freedom to adapt stories and change events in the story.

TFP and phonological awareness was blended in a number of ways. During the TFP sessions, rhyming words were emphasized and added to the narrations to target phonological awareness. Graduate students who led the sessions would also ask questions throughout the enactments such as “Huffed and puffed, do those words sound the same?” (Constantine, 2001, p. 11). Color-coded print cards were also used to highlight visually rhyming words. Unlike the earlier study conducted by Saltz and Johnson (1974), the children were encouraged to adapt stories and to change characters and story events. Stories were combined and elements of known stories were used to scaffold the children’s creative combinations such as “Goldilocks, the Two Pigs, and the Wolf” (Constantine, 2001, p. 10). Creativity, problem solving, and conflict resolution were encouraged throughout the TFP sessions.

To sum up, this study provides a good example of how a balanced approach to literacy can be integrated effectively and with positive results. It supports the argument that play-based curriculum focuses on the sub skills required for literacy such as: phonic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These skills can be taught in a holistic way supporting several areas of development at the same time, rather than in isolation.

### *Children’s Narratives*

Giving children the opportunity to retell or rewrite a story offers active participation in a literacy experience. Retelling stories can help a child develop language structures, comprehension and a sense of story structure (Morrow, 1985). While retelling

stories, children demonstrate their comprehension of the story details and sequence. Through retelling, the children can also interpret the characters from the story with sounds and character voices (Morrow, 1997). Studies have shown that the way an adult reads a story has an impact on the child's literacy skills and understanding of story (Bloome, 1985; Heath, 1982; Morrow, 1988; Peterman, Dunning, & Mason, 1985). During story reading the adult helps the child make sense of the text by relating the events in the story to experiences. A number of interactive reading behaviours have been identified as important to children's understanding of stories. These behaviours include questioning, scaffolding dialogue, scaffolding children's responses, providing positive feedback, extending information, directing discussion, sharing personal reactions and relating concepts in the story to children's real life experiences (Morrow, 1988).

Children's narrative ability is developmental (Applebee, 1978; Gardner & Gardner, 1971; Selzby, 1985). Children's narrative ability is dependent on experiences with several stories (Galda, 1984). These story experiences can take on many forms that include shared story readings, listening to people tell stories, engaging in sociodramatic play and participating in reenacting or retelling activities (Martinez, 1993).

Child-generated stories have been used to examine associations between development and school readiness (Goldberg & Phillips, 1992; Oppenheim, Emde, & Warren, 1997; Snow, 1991). While children tell stories, their understanding of life situations is revealed (Wells, 1986). Children's narratives can also provide insight to language and cognitive competence (Goldberg & Philips, 1992; Williams et al., 2002). Children who experience difficulties producing narratives may also have difficulty

following and participating in the more formal question and discussion aspects of the school classroom environment (Peterson, 1994).

Understanding narratives and having the ability to tell stories is an important indicator of later school success, as teachers typically use narratives as a method of instruction (Peterson, 1994). When children arrive at school with the ability to tell stories in a way that conforms to teachers' pre-existing notions of story structure, then they easily communicate and collaborate with the teacher. If children's story structure does not match the valued narrative structure in school then these children will struggle and are more likely to be coded for learning disabilities (Roth, 1986). Thus, helping children to understand and tell their own stories is a very important objective for early childhood educators.

#### *Paley's Storytelling Curriculum*

Vivian Paley's main contribution to early childhood education is her focus on storytelling as the mainstay of her kindergarten language arts curriculum (Cooper, 2005). In TFP, the stories children reenact are commonly based on folktales and fairy tales. Although Paley does use fairytales and supports their use—"(t)hey caution me about using fairytales, but there is an avalanche of excited responses whenever we discuss them—as if the children have been waiting for someone to unlock the gates to their dream." (Paley, 1990, p. 155). Most often in Paley's kindergarten class the children are the authors of the re-enacted stories. Paley's curriculum consists of two interdependent activities. During the first stage the child dictates his/her story based on what is meaningful to the child. The second stage involves the children in the class dramatizing the dictated story. The teacher's role is very important in both these stages and is to



support story formation, ask questions while the child dictates the story for clarification, read the story back to the child at the end of dictation so the child can verify and elaborate. During the dramatization the teacher facilitates role taking and scaffolds the enactment by asking questions that enhance the dramatization such as, “How can you show that you are very angry now?” However, the emphasis is not on the performance, but the process and the children’s self-expression and understanding and appreciation of the story.

Cooper (2005) defends Paley’s play-based story telling curriculum in a recent article for the *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*. In light of the Bush administration’s “No Child Left Behind” Act of 2001 and its influence on direct instruction of literacy skills in early childhood environments, Cooper found the need to defend the holistic nature of storytelling. In her article, Cooper rejects the notion that the sub-skills of literacy (phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) require direct instruction over play-based curriculums. The role of phonics in learning to read is somewhat controversial and has been for over a century (Cooper, 2005). Currently the research seems to support a “balanced literacy” approach that combines instruction in skills with language-based, meaningful activities. Phonics is recognized as an important aspect in reading acquisition. Cooper’s defense of Paley’s storytelling curriculum is based on this philosophical foundation. Cooper explains how each step in the process of storytelling and reenactment practices the six essential tasks of a balanced approach found in the literature: “oral language, narrative form, conventions of print, code, word study, and reading for meaning” (Cooper, 2005, p. 238). Cooper stresses the importance of the dramatization stage even though the relationship between the goals of “balanced literacy” are not as

clear as they are in the dictation stage. Dramatization is indispensable to children's literacy learning, as it is a powerful motivator for dictating the stories. Many children only want to dictate their stories so they can see them acted out. "If in the press of a busy day I am tempted to shorten the process by only reading the stories aloud and skipping the dramatizations, the children object. They say "But we haven't done the story!" (Paley, 1990, p. 25). Dramatization links dialogue and descriptions to action as children internalize the nuances of language; they create pictures in their heads. This makes an abstract activity more concrete for children and is essential for deep reading. As the children see their stories acted out and interpreted in action they can have a deeper understanding of their story and see new perspectives. Teachers can scaffold this understanding by asking questions of the author of the story, for example, "Were you scared when you arrived at school and nobody was there?" The connection to print is made clear to children during the dramatization because the teacher reads the child's dictation verbatim, giving credibility to the words on the page.

Paley's storytelling curriculum meets the child's need to search for meaning and narrative understanding in a highly meaningful and enjoyable way. It does not replace academic learning and opportunities, but rather supports academic learning with holistic learning experiences.

#### *Dramatic Story Reenactments*

There is a great deal of current literature on the use of drama as a tool to enhance literacy skills with school-aged children. One of the important features of drama is the wealth of communication opportunities it offers children. Several studies have examined the impact of drama on the subsequent writing skills of school-aged children (Crumpler

& Schneider, 2002; McNaughton, 1997; Schneider & Jackson, 2000). In these studies, process drama was used as the tool to motivate children's writing. Process drama is focused on learning through drama, rather than learning drama. In other words, the focus is on what the children can learn while they explore roles in drama. Process drama often explores literature through the use of role-playing and other activities that invite children to interact and to use their imaginations. In all of these studies process drama was found to contribute to higher quality writing and fluency in the children's subsequent writing.

An important element of drama, play, and literacy is the value of including dramatic story reenactments (DSR) in the curriculum. DSRs are when children re-create or act out familiar stories by themselves or with the guidance of a teacher (Martinez, 1993). DSRs differ slightly from thematic-fantasy play where fairytales and folktales are commonly used, whereas DSRs incorporate any story including stories created by children. There are only a few studies on the usefulness of DSRs as a powerful literacy tool and none of these involves preschool children. There are a few articles that discuss practical strategies to use when facilitating DSRs with preschoolers (Curenton, 2005; Howell & Corbey-Scullen, 1997; Ishee & Goldhaber, 1990), these articles focus on suggestions based on teachers' observations and practices. The strategies are consistent with earlier studies (Saltz & Johnson, 1974) that suggest using minimal props and defining the setting and space for action. Other suggestions are also recommended such as: choosing the right book, choosing the right time, and observing the children carefully in order to determine when and how to support the children's DSRs.

One study points out the significance of drama, and particularly of DSRs, as an effective teaching tool to promote children's interest and skills in literacy. Martinez

(1993) found that when DSRs were incorporated regularly in the classroom, children were highly motivated to read. The children developed a natural desire to act out stories; they actively looked for books that would be good to act out. DSRs helped emergent literacy skills because they sparked a child's curiosity in books. In her study Martinez (1993) found that preschoolers who reenacted stories did better on memory tasks and were more likely to connect and integrate events in their storytelling than a control group who did not experience story reenactments.

Martinez (1993) investigated three kindergarten classes in a school in an older urban neighbourhood where the children were mostly Hispanic, African-American, Anglo and Asian-American, from varying socioeconomic backgrounds. In only one of the three kindergarten classes did children choose to do DSRs spontaneously and with "unbridled enthusiasm" (Martinez, 1993, p. 683). Martinez was interested in examining the collected key factors that influenced the spontaneous use of DSRs in this kindergarten class. Qualitative data were collected for one whole school year and consisted of classroom library observations, teachers' logs, book lists and a teacher journal. Some quantitative data were collected such as frequencies for number of stories read, number of times stories were repeated, and number of stories available to the children in the classroom.

In analyzing the data, Martinez (1993) found that the teacher in this class read predictable books often; had an abundance of books available to the children; read aloud to the children regularly; repeated stories; used puppets, felt boards and stuffed animals to act out stories; did a variety of responsive activities related to stories using art, music, writing and choral reading; acted out words from stories with the children; set up

dramatic play areas with themes from stories and modeled dramatic reenactments herself. Another interesting influence was the use of modeling by children in older grades. This teacher invited older children to read and act out stories for her kindergarten class. All of these rich experiences connected to the literature in the class seemed to influence the children's natural desire and ability to do engage in spontaneous story reenactments

Martinez (1993) points out several factors that contributed to the frequency of spontaneous DSRs initiated by the children in this classroom. Stories that were read frequently throughout the year were more likely to be the ones chosen for spontaneous DSRs initiated by the children. Predictable books and stories that were accompanied by several response activities (reenacting with the teacher, drawing about the story, writing responses, puppet shows related to the story) were especially likely to be acted out by the children. Martinez calculated that 70.5% of the DSRs children initiated in the classroom occurred with stories that included one or more response activities.

The author does not conclude that DSRs alone contributed to children's sense of story structure in this classroom, however, it was one of several literacy experiences that may have influenced the children's abilities. Unfortunately, this study did not measure the child's narrative ability in any way. In conclusion Martinez (1993) stresses the need to examine the link between children's involvement in DSRs and their development of narrative competence.

This study reveals that the educator drew on several scaffolding strategies that seemed to have an impact on the children's interest in DSRs. It seems that the great abundance of story-related activities that took place in this classroom contributed to the children's interest in books and to their ability to act them out. What is lacking in this

study is a description of how the teacher supported the DSR process. No descriptions are provided for how to initiate DSRs, or how to best scaffold the DSR while it is taking place.

## Statement of the Problem

In our culture, attaining literacy is highly valued and is at the forefront of every curriculum in North America. There is no debate on the relevance and need for developing literacy skills in young children. "... (I)n our culture literacy has become an imperative." (Gardner, 1990, p. 23). Reading picture books and early literacy development is fostered by various interactive forms of play, including dramatic story reenactments. Acting out stories provides children with the opportunity to explore books' meanings not only through oral language but also with concrete props and physical movement and expression. Playing with literature provides children with numerous opportunities to revisit book events that will deepen their understanding of the story. Children's narrative abilities are dependent on experiences with several stories (Galda, 1984). These story experiences can take on many forms that include shared story readings, listening to people tell stories, engaging in sociodramatic play and participating in reenacting or retelling activities (Martinez, 1993).

Story comprehension is an important early skill in school performance for children (Flake, Lorch, & Milich, 2006). Understanding story and schemas seem to be crucial to school success—children with difficulties reading in grades one and two continue to experience difficulty in school (Roth, 1986). Effective story comprehension requires using a number of cognitive abilities that include focusing on important story information, gathering relevant background information, generating inferences in order to interpret information and encoding important story information (Flake et al., 2006). Evaluating children's comprehension of stories is relevant to children's school

performance as it allows us to gain insight into children's cognitive abilities (Flake et al., 2006; Peterson, 2004; Roth, 1986).

Providing children with many ways to experience a book will enhance their understanding of stories and provide them with opportunities to practice several language skills. Preschoolers have an egocentric story concept (Piaget, 1962); they have difficulty seeing roles and viewpoints other than their own (Pellegrini & Galda, 1982). Participating in DSRs will improve story concepts, because children who play out a story will have a better understanding of the story as a result of experiencing it in several ways. The children have the opportunity to be in the story rather than passively listening to it. Research suggests that children's story comprehension is facilitated when they are involved in reconstructing stories (Pellegrini & Galda, 1982; Morrow, 1997). While children act out stories they need to think about the individual story events and their sequence in order to reenact it. Listening to stories being read can be an abstract experience for a child; the reenactment helps to make the story experience more concrete and less abstract (Cooper, 2005).

An important consequence of linking books with dramatic play is how it helps children to see different perspectives as they play several roles with various points of view. DSRs differ from socio-dramatic play in that they are based on literature and are usually initiated and supported by teachers. Children who have been encouraged to participate in DSRs through skilled modeling, coaching and fading scaffolding techniques will have the opportunity to practice the necessary skills needed to sustain high levels of play.



The role of the teacher in play is sometimes a topic of much debate in the literature on play-based curricula (Korat, Bahar, & Snapir, 2003; Raines, 1997). In developmentally appropriate practice the teacher's role is often interpreted as being one of facilitator with a hands-off, non-interventionist approach (Korat et al., 2003). This sometimes results in teachers who do very little beyond preparing the environment. In the literature reviewed here, not only is the impact of carefully planning the environment for literacy experiences stressed (Einarsdottir, 1996; Morrow & Rand, 1991; Neuman & Roskos, 1990, 1997; Rowe, 1998; Rybczynski & Troy, 1995) but also the role of the teacher as "co-player" (Kolbe, 1993) where the teacher models, coaches and then fades away. "...(P)rograms should promote more than the child's emotional well-being and should also actively encourage the development of symbolization" (Kolbe, 1993). "Teacher in role" is a common practice used in drama where adults and children play roles. Drama enables children to interact and co-operate together in partnership with adults as they make decisions together, face and overcome difficulties, and solve problem (Warren, 1993). Taking part in the drama does not mean that the adults know everything; they are as interested as the children in discovering what happens next.

The "teacher in role" practice is supported by Vygotsky's use of the term "zone of proximal development." "It is the zone of proximal development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.68). Studies suggest that when adults assume passive roles, children's play is shorter, lacks elaboration, and can be repetitive (Smilansky, 1968). According to Smilansky (1990), teachers are hesitant to intervene in children's play even when research supports intervention. She suggests that perhaps this is due to teachers' training

where they see themselves as a facilitator of children's play rather than as a collaborator. Teachers who participate in play training usually increase their intervention and become more actively engaged with children in play (Woodard, 1984). Teachers participating in play training see first-hand how much the children welcome their involvement and the benefits derived by the children (Woodard, 1984).

The studies reviewed in the literature review (Martinez, 1993; Pellegrini & Galda, 1982; Saltz & Johnson, 1974; Silvern et al., 1986) point to the need to examine the scaffolding techniques teachers select when implementing TFP or DSRs, however, there has been very little follow through. Research indicates that children who participate in DSRs are highly motivated to read, have a stronger sense of story schema and story comprehension, and develop a natural desire to act out stories which then encourages them to seek out more reading experiences (Martinez, 1993; McMaster, 1998). For these reasons it is important to analyze the teachers' scaffolding techniques. The studies reviewed here have found that acting out stories made more of an impact on the youngest children participating, mainly kindergarteners (Pellegrini & Galda, 1982; Silvern et al., 1986). An examination of the impact of DSRs with preschool children is warranted based on this literature review. The current literature on the topic only addresses school-aged children, however, earlier studies on thematic-fantasy play were conducted with preschool children (Saltz & Johnson, 1974), but those studies date from the 1970's. Since that time, studies on TFP have focused on kindergarten and school-aged children (Pellegrini & Galda, 1982; Pellegrini, 1984; Silvern et al., 1986). It is time to revisit this issue with preschoolers.

Examining a process drama approach to acting out stories where several children can play the same role at the same time is needed. This method is recommended based on the findings from Pellegrini and Galda (1982), who found that the children who had better recall and sequential recall scores in story retelling tasks were the children who had more active roles in the TFP reenactment. This points to the need for all children to experience the main characters in a story. It is developmentally appropriate to focus on the process rather than the product with preschool children. Active participation with their teachers and peers is appropriate to the level of development of preschoolers (Spodek & Saracho, 1993). Educators' whose practices reflect a constructivist philosophy easily embrace a process approach where the child assumes a key role in the learning process. A constructivist approach to education sees the child as an active participant who is naturally curious about how the world works and learns best when motivated (DeVries, 2001). I have been using this process oriented approach as an educator and coaching my ECE College students to use it when conducting DSRs, however this particular process—where all children can play roles they chose at the same time rather than selecting individual roles—has not been explored in the literature.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of DSRs in order to make recommendations for best practices for implementing DSRs with preschool children. In previous studies strategies for implementing DSRs with preschoolers have been recommended (Curenton, 2005; Howell & Corbey-Scullen, 1997; Ishee & Goldhaber, 1990). These include: choosing the right book, choosing the right time, setting the stage, providing book related props in the dramatic play area and observing the children carefully in order to facilitate and support children's initiated DSRs. In the

studies on TFP and DSR, authors have described the process where children select roles they are going to play; an emphasis on selecting books where there are several characters from which children can choose is also stressed. This suggests that children are taking turns and playing roles individually as they appear in the story. In the present study, educators were instructed to act out stories with the children where all children can be playing the same role together. The intention was to give children the opportunity to participate fully and to experience all the roles in the story. The children also had the freedom to stay with one role throughout the reenactment if that is what they chose.

It was hypothesized that this approach would reduce conflict, as educators would not need to deal with children arguing over which roles to play. This strategy embraces a creative drama approach to the reenactments where educators focus on the children's process and encourage maximum involvement from the children (Way, 1967).

## Research Questions

The present study was guided by the premise of ZPD, which states that students can work beyond their current level of development with the support of knowledgeable adults or peers (Vygotsky, 1978). In order to be successful in the ZPD, Bruner (1985) cautions that first students need to be willing to learn, and teachers need to provide the necessary supports or scaffolds for learning. It is expected that students are not passive recipients of what is being taught, but rather active participants (Bruner, 1985). As stated earlier, previous research in the area of DSRs reviewed here has provided support and demonstrated a need to investigate further the teacher's role in supporting or scaffolding dramatic story reenactments (Martinez, 1993; Pellegrini & Galda, 1982; Saltz & Johnson, 1974; Silvern et al., 1986). Examining a process-oriented approach to acting out stories, where children are not assigned roles but rather play all the roles simultaneously, has not been investigated in the literature to date. This issue was explored in this study using three guiding research questions:

- 1) What is the educator's role in scaffolding Dramatic Story Reenactments using the process/creative drama approach?
- 2) How do the support structures used in DSRs alter or change over time?
- 3) What influences the type of support given during the DSR process?

## Method

### *Design*

The project was an intervention study where DSRs were implemented on an ongoing basis for one month. The intervention took place in one daycare centre with two educators three times a week for four weeks with their 4- and 5-year-old groups. The design of this study was qualitative in nature and borrows from grounded theory and case study methodologies. The purpose of grounded theory is to explain social processes, actions and interactions in relation to specific topics with the intent of developing a theory that emerges from the data sources (Creswell, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Dramatic Story Reenactment (DSR) is a social process that involves social interaction as the educator and the children reenact and retell the story collectively. In this study, the purpose of using grounded theory was to examine the educators' processes in DSRs, identifying categories of scaffolding in order to generate a theory for best practices.

Methods from grounded theory were used to analyze the videotaped recordings of the DSR process. There were three phases to the coding process, referred to as open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

A case study approach was used to collect data through a variety of means about the two educators implementing the DSRs.

### *Participants*

*Educators.* Purposeful sampling was used to select the educators who participated in the implementation of the DSRs. Two educators from the same daycare centre took part in this study. The educators were selected because both had several years experience as early childhood educators, however implementing DSRs was not a practice they

regularly undertook with their classes. Both educators were keen and excited to learn new strategies and be part of the process of this study. Two educators from the same daycare centre took part in this study. Each educator was responsible for ten 4- and 5-year-olds who attended the daycare on a fulltime basis. This is in keeping with Quebec's regulations for educator-child ratios of 1:10 for 4-year-olds. Each educator worked alone with occasional support from a special needs resource educator who helped with the integration of children with special needs in the daily program. There was one child requiring special need support in each class, however, the educators worked alone when implementing the DSRs. The educators and the director gave their consent to participate in this study (see Appendix A & B).

Educator I was a Caucasian female who was 49 years old. She was born in Poland but has been living in Montreal since 1981. Although her mother tongue is Polish she has been speaking English for approximately 30 years. She is completely fluent in English and Polish and speaks some French and Russian. She received her Attestation in Early Childhood Education from Vanier College in 1987 and has been working in daycare in Montreal throughout her studies and since graduation. The Attestation program was initially developed to provide educator education and training for daycare workers who were working in the field but who were not yet qualified. Educator I was enrolled in the program while she worked in daycare. She completed her 13 courses in the evening and was supervised at her workplace for two fieldwork experiences. A graduate from the Attestation program is considered qualified once she/he has completed all the required courses and accumulated three years of work in the field. Graduates from

the Attestation program do not receive general education courses and, therefore, need additional credits in order to continue on to university.

Since receiving her Attestation, Educator I has been working for 20 years at the centre where this study took place. This educator reported attending early childhood related workshops or conferences twice a year. Her special interests were helping children bridge the gap between preschool and kindergarten, kindergarten readiness, and facilitating the acquisition of a second language with preschool children.

Educator II was a Caucasian female who is 41 years old. She was born in Canada and her mother tongue is English. She is completely fluent in both English and French. She received her DEC (Diplôme d'Études Collegiales or college diploma) in Early Childhood Education from Vanier College in 1992 and has been working in daycares or preschools since graduation. In contrast with the Attestation, the DEC program is a 3-year program in which students must complete 30 credits in Early Childhood courses that include three supervised fieldwork experiences. The DEC program also includes 12 general education courses such as French, English and Humanities. Graduates from the DEC program are recognized as fully-qualified daycare educators and also have the necessary credits to enter university.

Educator II has been at her current centre for eight years. She has also completed 60 credits towards her Bachelors in Child Studies. This educator reported attending early childhood related workshops or conferences twice a year. A topic of interest for her was how to best support fieldwork students in her classroom.



*Children.* Nine children in the class of Educator I participated in this study. There were six girls and three boys between the ages of 4.7 and 5.3 years ( $M = 5.1$  yrs). Originally there were ten children but one girl moved away prior to the start of the DSR intervention. All were enrolled fulltime and had been attending the daycare center for a minimum of two years. All children spoke English, however English was the mother tongue and the only language spoken at home for five children. French was the mother tongue for two children, one child spoke both French and English equally in the home, one child spoke English and Vietnamese at home and one child spoke English, French, and Portuguese at home. One child in the group had global developmental delays. All children participated in the DSRs with their educator. The children were from predominately middle-class with some from working class families. Most parents had completed post-secondary education consisting of college or university degrees.

The children from the class of Educator II were slightly younger on average than the children in group I. This class consisted of five boys and five girls between the ages of 4.3 and 6.1 years ( $M = 4.8$  yrs). The 6-year-old was a child with Down Syndrome. All were enrolled full-time and had been attending the daycare center for a minimum of two years. For all but one child English was their mother tongue. French was the first language for this child. There was one child who spoke Vietnamese, English and French at home and two children spoke both French and English in the home. The children were from predominately middle class with some from working class families. Most parents had completed post-secondary education with college or university degrees. Parental consent was obtained for all participants (see Appendix C).

### *The Setting*

The intervention study took place at a licensed urban daycare centre in Montreal. The centre served 70 families and was located in two separate houses. The centre was originally a cooperative nursery school before becoming a daycare in 1979 in order to serve the needs of working families. The cooperative spirit established over 50 years ago has been maintained and is evident in the philosophy of the centre. Parents are required to fulfill a set number of hours per year in the daycare through participation in a variety of activities that may include sitting on the parent board, household maintenance, helping with fieldtrips, arranging special activities and sharing their skills with the children.

The daycare has been an inclusive environment and has a long history of successfully integrating children with special needs in every class. The daycare's policy has been to integrate one child with special needs in every class. To this end there were two special education educators who worked in the classrooms with the children to help facilitate integration.

The DSR interventions took place either in each educator's class or in the "big room". The "big room" was a multipurpose room that was used for naptime as well as for indoor gross motor activities. Dramatic play and blocks were also set up in this room and both the 4-year-old groups as well as the 3-year-old classes used it regularly. Several classes used the "big room", therefore scheduling of this room needed to be coordinated. It is important to note that none of the rooms is large in this centre. In order to facilitate DSRs in the children's actual classroom, furniture was moved to the side. It was important that the educators implement the DSRs in both environments so that it could be shown that no special space or equipment was needed to implement DSRs successfully. It

was important to demonstrate that the educators could do DSRs in their own room where they would normally be reading a story. This provided a realistic and natural environment.

### *Procedure*

Prior to the intervention and during a visit to the centre a permission letter was given to the centre director (see Appendix A) as well as the educators (see Appendix B) and the parents (Appendix C). Permission to participate was obtained from the director, the educators and all the parents. Once permission was obtained the educators were then asked to fill out a Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix D) as well as an Educator Self Report on Interactive Reading Behaviours (Appendix E).

### *Educator Training*

Once the educators had completed the Educator Self Report they were given a 30-minute video to watch at their convenience. The 30-minute video demonstrates best practices and procedures for implementing DSRs with young children and was created for ECE students. This video was initially created by the author of this thesis for a graduate level course on curriculum and was evaluated by the professor of that course. The video is currently being used in *Literature and Creative Drama*, a course requirement in the Vanier College ECE, DEC program. In this video I demonstrate educational strategies for reading books before DSRs, make recommendations for types of books to use and demonstrate DSRs in action with 3- and 4-year-old children. The practices suggested in the video are based on my own experiences and include many recommendations made by Saltz and Johnson (1974) Martinez (1993) and Currenton (2005). Recommendations included choosing the right time and place, choosing the right

book, ensuring maximum involvement, minimizing the use of props and costumes, and a discussion of guidance strategies.

After viewing the video, a workshop was held with the educators after work at the centre to review the strategies and practices they had viewed in the video. During this workshop the educators were able to ask any questions they might have had. Ways to get started, types of books best suited for reenactments, guidance issues as well as logistics and dates for the intervention and video-taped sessions were discussed. Originally, I offered to demonstrate one DSR with each group and educator in their classroom before the educators began the process with the children. It was decided that this was not necessary, as the educators felt confident that the video and workshop were sufficient. The purpose of the study was also to discover scaffolding strategies employed by the educators as the intervention took place; a demonstration might have interfered with this discovering process.

Two weeks prior to the DSR intervention two activities took place with the children. Initially the effects of DSRs on the children's storytelling abilities were also going to be examined in this study. The data collected on the children's story telling will not be analyzed here as it is beyond the scope of this study. The two activities that did take place with the children will be described, as they were part of the procedures.

### *PPVT-III*

In order to assess the children's language development the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Revised (PPVT-III) (Dunn & Dunn, 1997) was implemented with each child prior to the start of the DSR process. The PPVT-III is a widely-used measure developed to evaluate the child's receptive language abilities by asking the child to point

to a picture that best describes a word the researcher has read to him/her. The test consists of 175 test items as well as five training plates. Scores are obtained by subtracting errors from total ceiling scores. Raw scores are tallied on each child's performance; this score can be converted to a standard score equivalent. Dunn and Dunn (1997) have established high reliability of .94. In terms of validity, the PPVT-III was found to have content, construct, internal and criterion validity (Dunn & Dunn, 1997). English was not the first language for some of the children and there were also children with special needs, so the PPVT-III was used in this study to provide a baseline assessment of each child's individual receptive English language skills. Each child was shown a selection of pictures and asked to point the picture that best represented the word spoken by the researcher. A raw score for each child was calculated according to instructions provided. From the raw score, a standardized score, percentile rank, and mental age were derived for each child based on the coding scheme provided in the Norms Booklet for the PPVT-III. The PPVT-III test was useful in helping establish rapport with the children.

#### *Story Retelling Activity*

Once the PPVT-III had been administered and prior to the DSR intervention process with the educators, a story retelling activity took place with each child. Each child participating in the study was asked to retell a just-heard story with the help of a feltboard. The same unfamiliar story was read to each child individually. After the child had heard the story the child was provided with a feltboard version of the story. In order to familiarize the child with the materials, each child was given five minutes to play with and explore the materials. After five minutes the children were asked to retell the story using the felt pieces as a guide. The stories were recorded on audiotape and all physical

behaviours were noted. To get the children started with telling the story, all children were asked, "I would like to hear you tell me the story of... you can use the felt pieces to tell the story. How does the story start?" The children were only given prompts if needed. The prompts each child was given were recorded. Only one child did not participate in the story telling activity. He was happy to come and play with the felt pieces but did not want to tell the story. All of the other children were enthusiastic and willing to participate. The story retelling activity took place in the "big room" described earlier. The children were alone with me for this activity, however, their group was nearby and could easily be heard playing in the other rooms. The story used for the pre-intervention story retelling was *Anansi and the Moss Covered Rock* by Eric Kimmel. The criteria used for selecting this story is described in the material section.

#### *DSR Intervention*

The educators implemented DSRs three times a week for four weeks. The educators selected a natural time in the schedule when they normally read to children and then extended the experience immediately following the story with a DSR. The DSRs took place in the child's classroom or in the nearby "big room". Each educator was videotaped leading a DSR once a week for one month. The first, fourth, seventh and twelve (last) reenactment of the intervention were taped; they all took place in the morning. A film student was recruited to videotape the DSR process. The film student spent approximately a half an hour with each group of children prior to taping to help the children feel comfortable with his presence. The videographer was careful to place himself in the room where maximum visibility of the educator was possible with minimal distraction for the children. The educators selected their own stories for reenactment

based on the children's interests and their curriculum needs. This provided a naturalistic condition that best reflected what took place on an ongoing basis in the early childhood environment.

Two weeks following the four-week intervention DSR process the educators were asked to fill out a post-intervention questionnaire (Appendix F). After the four-week DSR process the children were asked to repeat the story retelling task. The same procedure was repeated as in the first story retelling task, however, a new story was read. The story read for this retelling was *Anansi and the Talking Melon* by Eric Kimmel.

### *Materials*

The books used for the DSRs were selected by the educators. Suggestions for the types of stories that facilitate reenactments were made during the training session (see procedures). Books with strongly delineated characters and settings, obvious plot episodes, clear themes, and definite resolutions were used as criteria for selecting appropriate books (Morrow, 1992). Predictable books where there are several repeated lines of narration such as "Clang, clang, rattle-bing-bang, gonna make my noise all day" (Munsch, 1992, p. 2) from Robert Munsch's *Mortimer*, as well as books where characters use repeated dialogue such as "Want to fight? If you insist... Oh, you're not big enough" (Carle, 1977, p. 5) from Eric Carle's classic *The Very Grouchy Ladybug* were also recommended. An annotated bibliography of the books selected for the DSRs by the educators is included (Appendix G). The educators used a variety of books for the DSRs, which included well-known fairytales and stories that were both familiar and new to the children.

Criteria for the books selected for the pre-intervention/post-intervention story recall was based on a number of criteria. *Anansi and the Moss Covered Rock* by Eric Kimmel was selected as the pre-intervention story and *Anansi and the Talking Melon* by Eric Kimmel was selected as the post-intervention story. Both stories were unfamiliar to the children; when asked, all the children had said they had never heard the stories before. This ensured that no one child had an advantage in retelling the story. Each story was similar in length, as measured by number of pages and number of words. Each story had a well-developed plot, with plot episodes that lead to the attainment of the main character's goal, well-defined characters and setting, a clear theme and resolution. Both stories contained a similar number of characters and plot episodes. The stories also contain concepts and characters with which 4- and 5-year-old children can relate (Morrow, 1988). Both stories include repeated dialogue spoken by one or more characters in the book. This made the books predictable in nature. The humour and characters in both stories also appealed to both the girls and the boys in the group.

To facilitate the children's retelling, feltboards with matching felt pieces depicting the main characters and events in the story were provided to the children. Retelling a new and recently heard story can be quite a challenging task for young children. It is common practice to use sequence pictures when eliciting children's stories (Oppenheim et al., 1997; Peterson, 1994; Saltz & Johnson, 1974; Shapiro & Hudson, 1991). It had been my experience that feltboard stories are a highly popular means to entice children to retell stories on their own. Felt pieces are very appealing to young children, because they can easily manipulate the materials and they actively involve the children in reconstructing the stories. "... holding toys may have supported comprehension by creating a more



concrete link to the child's world experiences" (Rowe, 1998). Felt pieces can also provide some distance for the children from themselves (Landy, 1994) where they can lose themselves in the stories as they manipulate the materials, rather than self-consciously retelling the story orally with no concrete support. The feltboard retelling was a holistic procedure actively involving the child in reconstructing the story and the felt pieces acted as a scaffold to support the child's comprehension and sense of story structure (Morrow, 1992). Although the procedures for the pre-test and post-test storytelling activity were implemented, the data from these stories were not analyzed for the purposes of this thesis.

## Data

The data used to analyze the DSR intervention were obtained from multiple sources that included (1) an educator demographic questionnaire; (2) an educator self-report rating scale evaluating interactive reading behaviours; (3) an interactive reading behaviour checklist; (4) eight videotaped recordings of the DSR process; and (5) post-intervention questions.

### *Educator Demographic Questionnaire*

In order to obtain demographic information for each educator a questionnaire was developed (See Appendix D). This questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part addressed personal information that included age, gender, country of birth, and mother tongue. The second part addressed educational background. The third part referred to job-related information such as years of experience in ECE and professional development. Answers to this questionnaire were used in the description of the participants.

### *Educator Self-Report*

A rating scale that asked the educators to report on their interactive reading behaviours during group storytime was adapted from Morrow (1997) for the purpose of this study. The educators were asked to rate their reading behaviours based on their perception of their own interactive behaviours during group story reading time (Appendix E). The scale consists of 15 questions describing reading behaviours. For each question the educators were asked to rate themselves on a scale that ranged from “every time”, “often”, “sometimes”, “infrequently” to “never”. Examples of the kinds of questions asked in this questionnaire included, “During group story readings do you invite the children to ask questions or make comments?” and “During group story readings do you

encourage the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read?" The self-report also included questions that provided information about how often the children were read to by the educator in a week. The purpose of this questionnaire was to examine the educators' perceptions of the types of reading behaviours they used during group story readings.

#### *Educator Reading Behaviour Checklist*

This instrument was used to provide information that addressed the interactive behaviours of the educators during group story times (see Appendix F). This checklist used the same behaviours that the educators had self-evaluated in the Educator Self Report. Prior to each reenactment the story read by the educator for the reenactment was videotaped. The videotapes were analyzed using the Educator Reading Behavior Checklist as the tool to measure how often each educator demonstrated a behaviour. To establish inter-rater reliability a colleague was trained to use the Checklist. The second rater viewed 25% of each of the educator's videotaped story readings. Inter-rater reliability was achieved at 89%. Frequency counts for each behaviour category were calculated and analyzed for each educator and are presented in graph form (Figures 1 through 12) in the Findings section. The data of each educator were analyzed to see what changes occurred over the course of the DSR intervention. The data were also used to examine how the stories read might have influenced certain reading behaviours. Similarities and differences between the Educator Self Report and the Educator Reading Behaviour Checklist are also presented in the analysis.

### *Videotapes of the DSR Process*

Procedures for grounded theory analysis were used to analyze the videotape recordings of each taped DSR. The coding process involved three phases referred to as open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

*Open coding.* In this phase, I viewed the first tapes of both educators leading their first DSRs with a general notion of scaffolding theory, and guided by the premise of ZPD described earlier. I started by writing down everything the teacher was saying and doing that was thought to be an example of scaffolding. To evaluate whether or not it was an instance of scaffolding, I asked myself several questions, including, “How is this behaviour helping the children to sustain and participate in DSRs?” “How is this behaviour helping the children to stay on task?” “How is this behaviour supporting the children’s understanding of the story?” “What is it that the educator is doing that enables the children to go beyond what they would be able to do on their own?” I then ended up transcribing everything the educator said and did throughout the DSR intervention. I also recorded as many details as I could about what the children said and did throughout the reenactments. The detailed transcriptions helped me greatly with the coding process, which involved constant comparison. Constant comparison methods were used to compare one set of transcripts with the next to analyze the various methods of scaffolding.

I viewed the first reenactments a second time, this time asking, “What is it about each instance that makes it scaffolding?” Notes and hunches were added to the original transcriptions and categories began to emerge. On the third viewing I asked, “What makes this instance of scaffolding the same as or different than other instances?” I

developed as many categories as possible and then defined each category temporarily. Using these categories, I viewed the second reenactment tape and looked not only for instances that were similar, but also for new categories that may not have been evident in the previous tapes. I transcribed each tape for each educator, capturing everything that I could that was said and done by the educators and the children during the reenactments.

*Axial coding.* In this stage, concepts emerging from one set of data were compared with the concepts emerging from the next set. Each category or incident of scaffolding that emerged in one tape was compared with other categories and incidents from the last. During this phase, initial categories (first level codes) were collapsed into broader themes. The first level codes were collapsed and grouped together as they fit together conceptually under broader categories (Harry, Sturges & Klinger, 2005). The decisions I made for selecting the broader categories will be discussed in the findings. As I proceeded through all the steps described above, I gradually refined my descriptions of scaffolding that emerged, testing their “fit” to the data.

*Selective coding.* During this phase, categories were integrated and refined until they had reached the point of saturation, that is, no other new categories emerged from the data. To do this I reviewed the transcripts along with the tapes for a third time until I was satisfied that I had reached the point of saturation. During this phase I began to formulate a theory of scaffolding practices for DSRs.

*Ensuring validity.* Qualitative research is judged as credible and confirmable, rather than valid and reliable (Merriam, 2001). In this study two methods of triangulation were used to verify the categories developed. The two methods used were (1)

Triangulation Using Multiple Perspectives (Merriam, 2001) and (2) Triangulation Using Theory (Merriam, 2001).

*Triangulation using multiple perspectives.* One method of triangulation implemented in this study was the use of various perspectives. This process of checking with experts, peers and participants helped to mediate researcher subjectivity. Peer examination was used first to verify the categories and definitions I had developed. Once the categories were defined, a colleague reviewed 30% of the videotapes. The colleague reviewed one complete DSR lead by each educator. One tape was selected because it was typical and representative of many of the behaviours used in DSRs by Educator II. The other tape was selected because it was one that was more difficult to code and also demonstrated several of the behaviours used by Educator I. Segments from other taped DSR sessions were randomly selected for viewing in order to analyze change over time. During this process I sat with my colleague and we viewed three minutes of tape together. The tape was stopped and then my colleague reviewed the categories I had described along with the corresponding operational definition. After reading all the categories carefully my colleague then selected the category of scaffolding she felt best described what was viewed on the tape. This process continued throughout the complete tape of the reenactment. Transcriptions of everything the educator and children said in order were also provided to my colleague. The transcriptions were then used along with the tapes to code all the educator behaviours using the categories defined. During the viewing we would stop the tape every few minutes and discuss how we would classify the scaffolding. This process helped me to refine and confirm my categories and operational definitions.

After meeting with my colleague and refining the categories and operational definitions, I met with my advisor to go through the same verification process in order to gain multiple perspectives. I met with my advisor and we viewed 25% of the tapes together. We followed the same procedures that were used with the colleague verification process. Once again two complete reenactments of each educator were viewed in their entirety. The tape of Educator II was the same reenactment verified by my colleague, this was done to gain multiple perspectives of the same event. The second tape viewed with my advisor was with Educator I, but was a different reenactment than the one viewed with my colleague. This provided verification of a greater percentage of the reenactments. At this meeting with my advisor, categories and definitions were refined further.

After meeting with my colleague and advisor, member checking was done with the two educator participants. At this time the tapes were not viewed but the categories and operational definitions were presented to the educators. The educators were asked if they concurred with the categories and the way they were described. These discussions with peers and participants helped refine and confirm the categories and major themes of educator scaffolds.

*Triangulation using theory.* Verifying the categories using theory was another triangulation method employed in this study to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected. The four major categories selected under which all other categories of scaffolding related were guided by previous research about early literacy. As categories of scaffolding emerged from the data I grouped them according to my key objective for implementing DSRs with young children, and examined them through the lense of

previous research related to children's understanding of story (Bloome, 1985; Heath, 1982; Morrow, 1985, 1988, 1997; Peterman, Dunning, & Mason, 1985).

#### *Post-Intervention Questionnaire*

Two weeks following the intervention process the educator participants filled out a Questionnaire (Appendix I). The questionnaire asked the educators to respond to eight open-ended questions based on their experiences implementing the DSRs. This questionnaire was designed to investigate educators' views on implementing DSRs. Questions asked them to reflect and make recommendations. An example of the kind of questions posed is, "Can you identify some strategies you used that seem to support story reenactments?" There was also a question that asked the educators to list all the books they used and to make recommendations for the types of books that they thought worked best. The questionnaire asked the educators to make recommendations, reflect on the children's participation throughout the process and to comment on influences of the DSR experience they may have noticed spilling over to other areas of play. The educators also were asked to comment on whether or not they would continue to implement this process in the future. Answers to these questions are presented and discussed, and served as a source of information regarding the educators' points of view and the children's responses to DSRs.



## Findings

Presented below is an analysis of each of the four sources of data collected to analyze the scaffolding techniques during the story readings and the DSRs. These include the Educator Self –Report, results from the Interactive Reading Behaviour Checklist, analysis of the scaffolds used during the DSR process, and results from the Post-Intervention Questionnaire. The children’s results from the PPVT-III are also presented.

### *PPVT-III*

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was used to measure the children’s level of receptive language. The purpose for this was to get a picture of the receptive English language skills of the children participants. This was important to know because all the DSRs were based on books written in English. It was important to know the range of English language receptive skills of the children each educator was dealing with in her class. Each child was shown a selection of pictures and asked to point to the picture that best represented the vocabulary word spoken. The test served as a good warm-up exercise and established rapport with each child on an individual basis. Every child participated in this exercise and seemed to enjoy the game. Raw scores were derived for every child; from this a standardized score as well as mental age were calculated based on the scoring scheme provided with the test. The mental age is used as a comparison against the child’s chronological age.

The standardized scores including both groups ranged from 77 (moderately low) to 127 (moderately high). Overall the children’s performance was slightly above average ( $M=104$ ). As expected the two children with special needs received the moderately low scores, 77 and 81, whereas the rest of the children received average, high or moderately

high scores. The mean standardized score for each group was comparable ( $M = 103$ ) for Educator I's group and ( $M = 103$ ) for Educator II's group. All the second language learners received average scores and one child who was exposed to three languages at home received a score that was just slightly below average.

The children's overall mental age scores ranged from 3.0 years to 7 years. The mental age range in Educator I's class was 3.4 years to 7 years of age ( $M = 5.6$ ). The chronological age range was 4.7 years to 5.3 years of age ( $M = 5.1$ ). When comparing the children's mental age score ( $M = 5.6$ ) with their chronological age ( $M = 5.1$ ), results indicate that overall the children from this group were functioning at a slightly higher age level than their actual age for receptive English language skills. These results also reveal the wide range of English language receptive skills the children possessed in this group.

The children from Educator II's class also had a wide range of mental age scores. The mental age scores for this group ranged from 3.0 years to 6.6 years of age. The chronological age range was 4.3 years to 6.1 years of age. The child with special needs was the 6-year-old. When comparing the children's chronological age score ( $M = 4.8$ ) with their mental age scores ( $M = 4.8$ ), it is clear that they are exactly even. It is important to note the wide range of scores for mental age in this group as well.

The results from this test revealed that each educator was dealing with similar challenges in terms of the children's English language receptive skills in their groups. Each educator was faced with four children in each group who were functioning above their age level for English receptive language skills and two children from each group who were functioning below their mental age level. Each educator had a second language learner in her group whose mental age scores were three months below their

chronological age. The children with special needs from each group had the widest range between their chronological age and their mental age scores. The child from Educator I's group was 5.1 years of age and scored 3.4 for mental age. The child with special needs from Educator II's group was 6.1 years of age and scored 3.1 for mental age. Both educators were also challenged with a group of children who possessed a wide range of English language skills in one class.

### *Educator Self-Report*

The first two questions of this questionnaire asked the educators to report how often they read to both the large group and small groups or individuals in their class. Answers to this questionnaire revealed that both educators read to the whole group everyday, 2-3 times a day. When asked how often they read to individuals or small groups they both reported that this occurred daily. This indicates that group reading was a daily practice and a frequent part of the daily schedule for both educators. Both educators made sure to read to individuals and small groups daily as well. This seemed to indicate that both educators valued the importance of reading aloud with children.

The remaining questions asked the educators' to rate their reading behaviours on a range from "every time" to "never" when they read to the whole group (see Table 1). Educator I reported that she used most behaviours "every time" or "often" when reading to the group. The behaviours she reported using "every time" she read a story were: inviting the children to ask questions and make comments, answering questions and responding to questions children ask, using facial expressions that reflect the meaning and feelings in the story, changing the rhythm and nature of her voice to suit the story and varying vocal expressions to suit the characters in the story. There were three behaviours

she rated as using only “sometimes”, these were: providing materials that encourage children to retell stories, encouraging the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read, and acting out the story as a group after the story reading. She did not rate any behaviours in the “infrequently” or “never” categories.

Educator II responses revealed that there were only three behaviours she reported as using “every time”, they were: talking about the book (cover, illustrator, author or source), changing the rhythm and nature of her voice to suit the characters and varying vocal expressions to suit the characters in the story. Educator II reported using several of the behaviours “infrequently” : relating children’s responses to real-life experiences, promoting further exploration of ideas presented in the story, providing materials that encourage children to retell stories, encouraging the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read, and acting our the story together as a group after the story reading.

It is clear from this Self-Report measure that both educators read often to the children and saw themselves as using several interactive behaviours during shared story times. However, behaviours that extend the story for recall purposes with materials or reenactment were reported as only being used “sometimes” or “infrequently” by both educators. Neither educator reported using reenactment during or after the story regularly. This indicates that all though the educators were comfortable using interactive behaviours during stories in order to include active participation and involvement, implementing DSRs was a rare practice in their classrooms. Thus these educators were appropriate participants for this study because facilitating DSRs was a new practice for them, yet they were confident and experienced readers.

Table 1

*Responses to Educator Self-Report*

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During group story readings do you...

	Educator I	Educator II
Talk about the book? (cover, author, illustrations or source)	Often	Every time
Introduce the story?	Often	Often
Invite the children to ask questions and make comments?	Every time	Often
Relate children's responses to real-life experiences?	Often	Infrequently
Comment on new or complex words as they appear?	Often	Often
Point to visual details throughout the story?	Often	Often
Answer questions and respond to questions children ask?	Every time	Often
Promote further exploration of ideas presented in the story?	Often	Infrequently
Provide materials that encourage children to retell stories?	Sometimes	Infrequently
Use facial expressions that reflect the meaning and feelings in the story?	Every time	Often
Use gestures related to actions in the story?	Often	Often
Change the rhythm and nature of your voice to suit the story?	Every time	Every time
Vary vocal expressions to suit the characters in the story?	Every time	Every time
Encourage the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read?	Sometimes	Infrequently
Act out the story together as a group after the story reading?	Sometimes	Infrequently

### *Educator Reading Behaviour Checklist*

In order to determine whether interactive reading behaviours support the DSR process that followed, a checklist of these behaviours were coded from videotaped recordings of the stories read to ascertain which interactive behaviours the educators used prior to the DSR. The following graphs (Figures 1 through 12) represent the interactive reading behaviours (IRBs) used by each educator while reading the story prior to the DSR (see Appendix F). The checklist matches several of the behaviours that the educators were asked to report on in the Self-Report (Table 1). The question “Provides materials that encourage children to retell the story” was omitted in the checklist as it would not be observable during the story reading prior to the DSR. The last question, “Acts out the story together as a group after the story reading” was also not included in the checklist since this was the purpose of the story reading and was done after each story reading observed. Total frequencies of interactive reading behaviours across all four stories for each educator are presented in Table 2 and Table 3. The categories: “Talks about the book” (cover, author, illustrations or source) and “Introduces the story”, are not included in the frequency count because the educator would do this only once at the beginning of the story reading. It was noted whether or not this was done and how.

*Talks about the book, introduces the story, Educator I.* Educator I consistently mentioned the author and illustrator before reading the story. For each story read she introduced the story by pointing to something on the cover and discussing what the children saw. She used the cover in a variety of ways to spark interest or begin discussion on the topic of the book. An example of this was prior to reading *Just Me* by Marie Hall-Ets she asked the children to look at the picture on the cover and guess where the child

was. When a few children responded with “the farm” she continued a discussion about who lived on the farm and all the animals they would meet in the story.

Table 2

*Total Frequencies of Interactive Reading Behaviours for Educator I across Four Stories.*

	Bear Hunt		Just Me		Bear Shadow		Big Bunny		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Total	%
a.	6	10.3	9	21	4	8	7	11.3	26	12
b.	0		2	5	0		1	2	3	1.4
c.	1	2	0		1	2	0		2	1
d.	10	17.2	8	19	12	23	9	15	39	18.1
e.	5	8.6	5	12	3	6	5	8	18	8.3
f.	1	2	1	2	0		1	2	3	1.4
g.	4	7	3	7	9	17	7	11.3	23	10.6
h.	19	32.8	6	14	5	9	20	32	50	23.1
i.	0		4	9	9	17	5	8	18	8.3
j.	12	21	5	12	9	17	7	11.3	33	15.2
k.	0		0		1	2	0		1	.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>216</b>	



Table 2 (*continued*)

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Legend:

- a = Invites the children to ask questions
  - b = Relates children's responses to real life
  - c = Comments on new or complex words as they appear
  - d = Points to visual details throughout the story
  - e = Answers questions and responds to real-life experiences
  - f = Promotes further exploration of ideas presented in the story
  - g = Uses facial expressions that reflect the meaning and feelings in the story
  - h = Uses gestures related to actions in the story
  - i = Changes the rhythm and nature of her voice to suit the characters in the story
  - j = Varies vocal expressions to suit the story
  - k = Encourages the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read
-

*Bear Hunt, Educator I.* This was the first of the stories read for reenactment with the children by Educator I. This story was read at 10:30 am in the “big room” and all 9 children were present. *Going on A Bear Hunt* is based on the classic call and response chant about a family who goes on a bear hunt. The story and illustrations depict a great deal of action. The language is descriptive and repetitive and written in a chant style rather than narrative style. It is traditional to encourage the children to repeat phrases such as “we can’t go over it, we can’t go under it, we have to go through it.” The illustrations alternate between black and white pictures that include the text as well as vivid color pictures depicting the adventure the family takes together (see Appendix G for annotated bibliography of all the books used for the DSR intervention).

Of the 58 Interactive Reading behaviours (IRBs) displayed during this story by Educator I (see Figure 1) the most frequent were (h) uses gestures related to actions in the story (32.8%) and (j) varies vocal expressions to suit the story (21%). The IRBs not used during this story were (b) relating children’s responses to real-life experiences, and (i) changing the rhythm and nature of her voice to suit the characters in the story as well as (k) encouraging the children to act out segments of the story as it was being read.

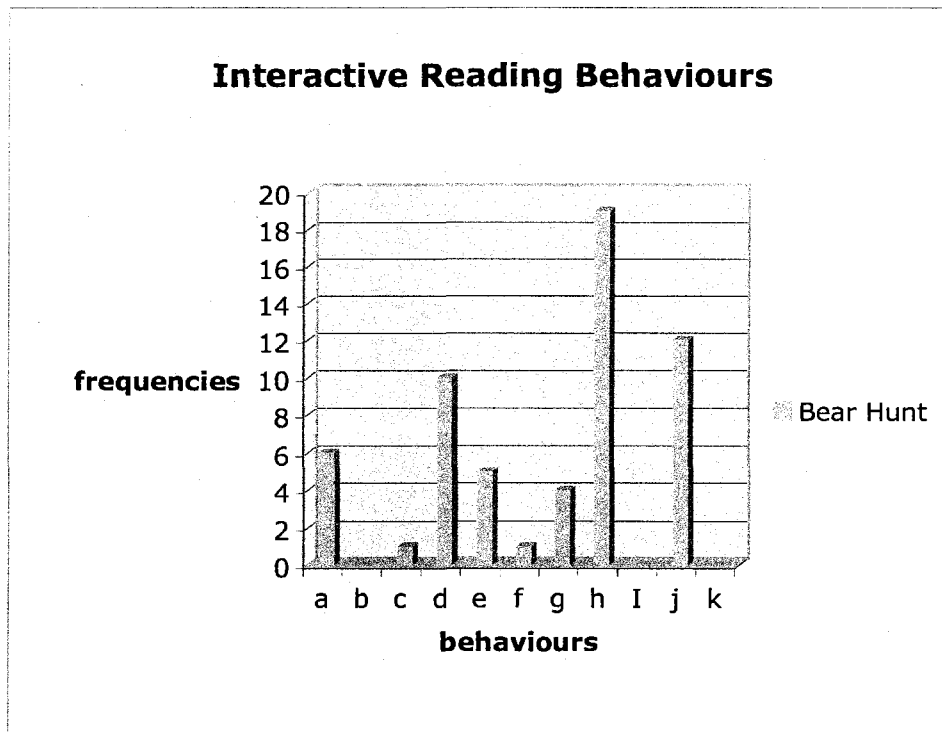


Figure 1. Frequencies of IRBs for *Bear Hunt*, Educator I.

Legend for x axis:

- a = Invites the children to ask questions
- b = Relates children's responses to real life
- c = Comments on new or complex words as they appear
- d = Points to visual details throughout the story
- e = Answers questions and responds to real-life experiences
- f = Promotes further exploration of ideas presented in the story
- g = Uses facial expressions that reflect the meaning and feelings in the story
- h = Uses gestures related to actions in the story
- i = Changes the rhythm and nature of her voice to suit the characters in the story
- j = Varies vocal expressions to suit the story
- k = Encourages the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read

\*applies to all graphs

*Just Me, Educator I.* The story *Just Me* was read by Educator I prior to the fourth DSR. This story reading took place at 11:00 am after outdoor play and was held in Educator II's class because the furniture had already been moved aside to facilitate the DSR that followed. There were eight children present for this story reading and DSR (one child was absent). *Just Me* is a simple story of a little boy who mimics the way all the animals on the farm move. The illustrations are black and white and very detailed in the depiction of the way the boy and the animals move. The book is written from the boy's point of view as he describes what animal he sees and how he tries to move just like the farm animal. There are only a few lines of narration on each page.

Out of the 43 IRBs (see Figure 2) displayed in this story reading the most frequent was (a) inviting the children to ask questions or comment (21%), and was followed by (d) pointing to visual details throughout the story (19%). The behaviours not used for this story were (c) commenting on new or complex words as they appeared and (k) inviting children to act out segments of the story as was read.

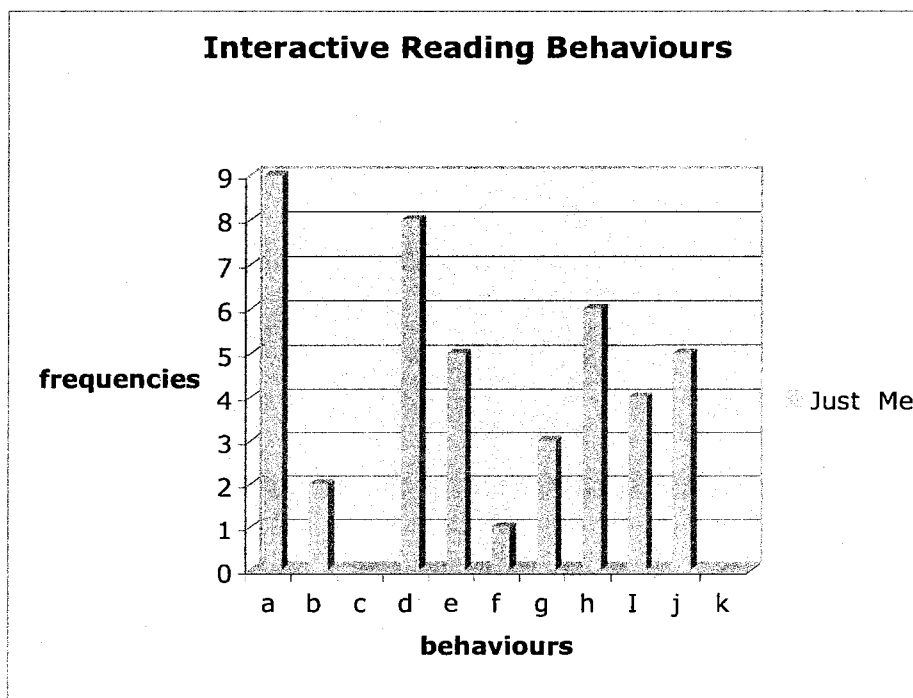


Figure 2. Frequencies of IRBs for *Just Me*, Educator I.

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*Bear Shadow, Educator I.* This story was read prior to the seventh DSR implemented by Educator I. It was read in the Educator's class at 10:30 am. There were eight children present (one child was absent). *Bear Shadow* depicts a little bear that goes fishing and finds that his shadow is frightening the fish away. The story is written in narrative form and describes the various problem solving strategies little bear goes through in order to rid himself of his shadow. The story depicts many actions but not as many gross motor movements as found in *Bear Hunt* or *Just Me*. There are approximately 30 words per page and it is 34 pages long. The pictures are simple and use four basic colors to show the action of the bear.

During this story the most frequently used IRBs (see Figure 3) were (d) pointing to visual details throughout the story (23%). Three of the IRBs occurred an equal number of times (17%) throughout the story, they included (g) using facial expressions that reflect the meaning and feelings in the story, (i) changing the rhythm and nature of her voice to suit the characters in the story, and (j) varies vocal expressions to suit the story. The behaviours not evident during this story reading were (b) relating children's responses to real-life experiences and (f) promoting further explorations of ideas presented in the story.

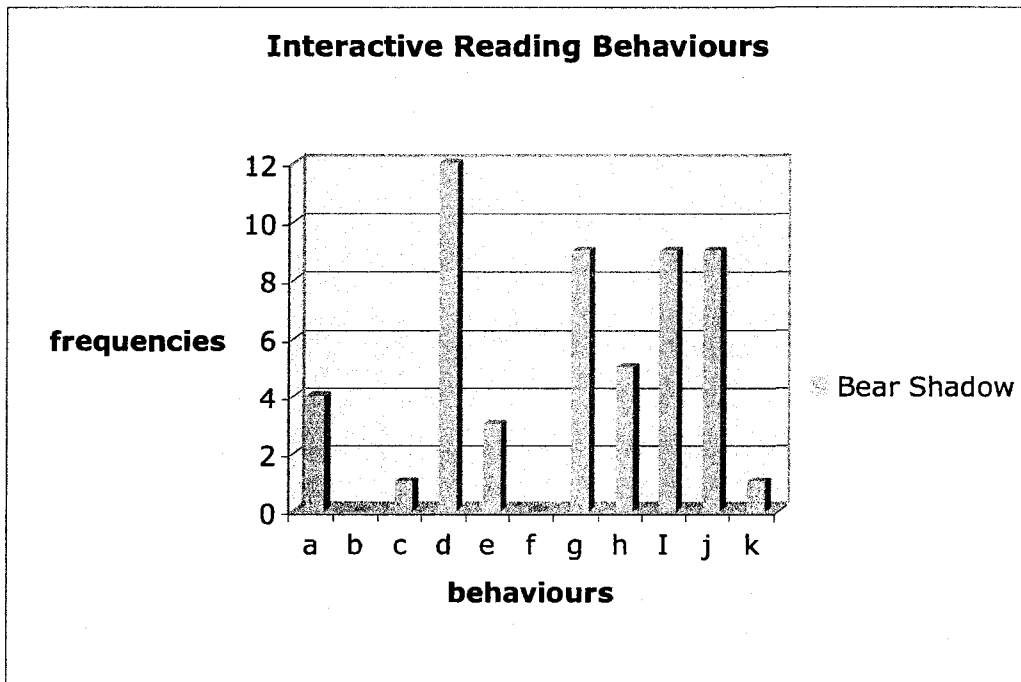


Figure 3. Frequencies of IRBS for *Bear Shadow*, Educator I.

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*Big Bunny and the Easter Eggs*, Educator I. This story was read by Educator I prior to the final DSR of the intervention. This story reading also took place in the morning at 11:00 am. There were only 5 children present for this story reading and DSR due to winter holidays and illness. This story describes Wilbur the Easter Bunny who has become sick and almost misses delivering his Easter eggs. The story describes the many creative ways Wilbur finds to ensure delivery of his eggs. The illustrations are painted using pale watercolors. The story is written in narrative form and is similar in length to *Bear Shadow*.

Out of the 62 IRBs (see Figure 4) demonstrated by the educator in this story reading the most frequently displayed were (h) using gestures related to actions in the story (32%), (d) pointing to visuals (15%), and (j) varying vocal expressions (11.3%). Educator I did not (c) comment on new or complex words as they appeared nor did she (k) encourage the children to act out segments of the story as it was being read during this story reading.

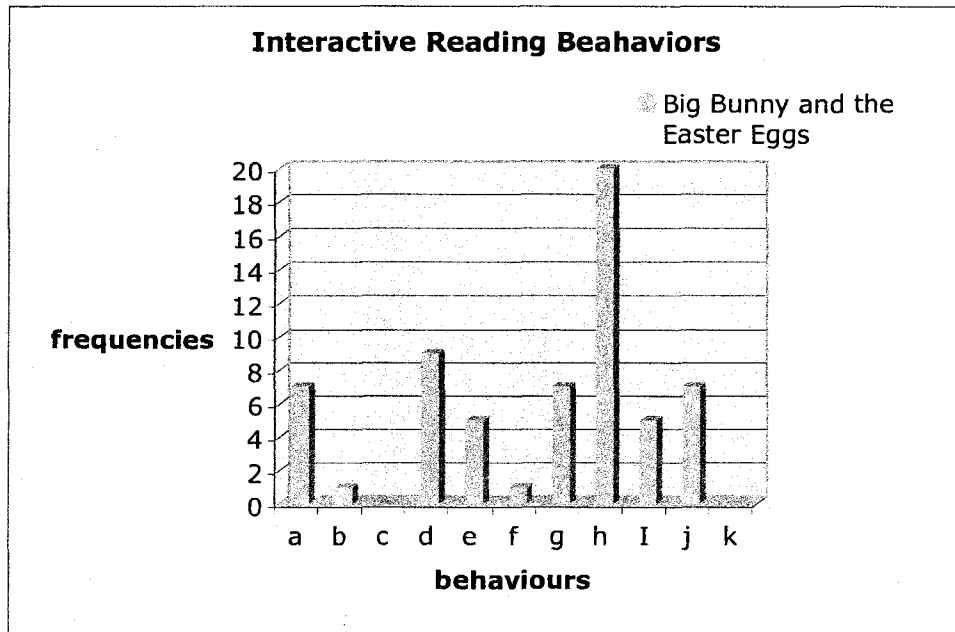


Figure 4. Frequencies of IRBs for *Big Bunny and the Easter Eggs*, Educator I.



*Total frequencies of IRBs for all four stories.* Educator I displayed a total of 216 Interactive Reading Behaviours (IRBs) over the four stories read (see Figure 5). The *Big Bunny and the Easter Eggs* accounted for 29% (62/216) of the total number of IRBs; the story *Going on a Bear Hunt* accounted for 27% (58/216); the story *Bear Shadow* accounted for 24% (53/216) and *Just Me* accounted for 20% (43/216). In examining the total frequencies of IRBs for Educator I, it is evident that 6 of 11 IRBs (a, d, g, h, i, j) occurred with a frequency of 11% or more. This indicates that Educator I used more than half of the behaviours under study for the four book readings. The IRBs this educator used most often was (h) using gestures related to the actions in the story (23%). IRBs used consistently but less frequently included, (d) Pointing to visuals (18%) and (j) varying vocal expressions to suit the story (15%). The IRBs with low frequencies were (b) relating children's responses to real-life experiences (1.4%); (f) promoting further exploration of ideas presented in the story (1.4%), (c) commenting on new or complex words as they arise (1%); and (k) encouraging children to act out segments of the story as it is being read (.04%).

When comparing the data from the Educator Self-Report with the frequencies observed from the Interactive Behaviour Checklist the findings are consistent. It seems that Educator I has a good sense of the behaviours she used. She reported using gestures (23%), varying her voice (15%), inviting questions (12%), using facial expressions (10%), and answering questions (8.3%) "every time" she read a story. Although using facial expression, answering questions, and inviting comments were not the highest frequencies observed, they were demonstrated every time a story was read. This is consistent with the Self-Report data. The behaviours Educator I reported as only

implementing “sometimes” were also consistent with the behaviours observed. The only finding that is not consistent with what Educator I reported is that she reported “often” (b) relate children’s responses to real-life experiences (1.4%) and (f) promoting further exploration of ideas presented in the story (1.4%). When comparing this with the frequencies observed these were behaviours only occasionally displayed. It is important to note that the educators were not asked to assess how many times they demonstrated a behaviour during one story reading. They were only asked whether or not they used them “every time” they read a story not how often they used a behaviour during a group storyreading.

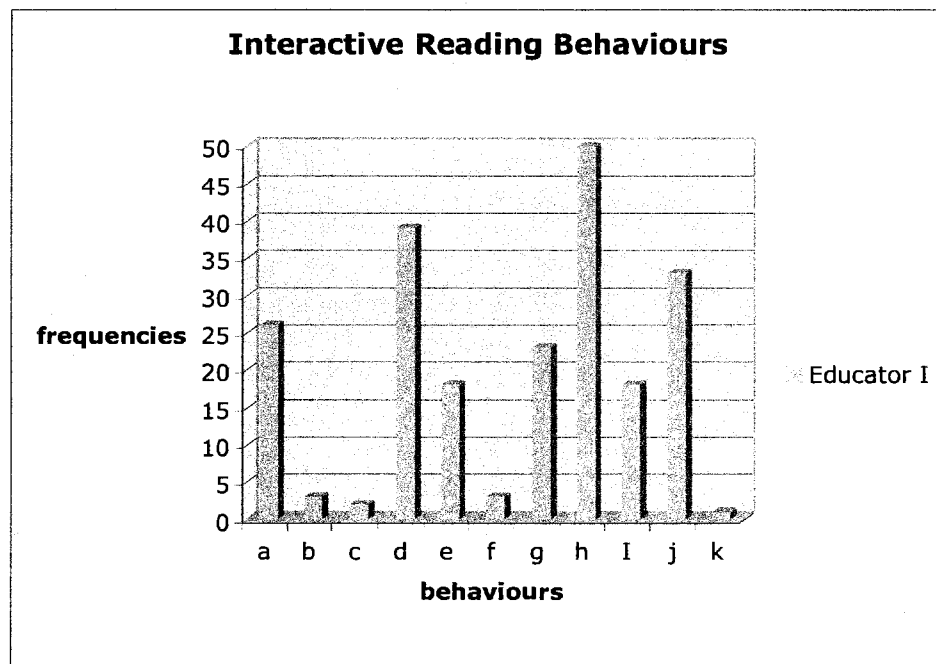
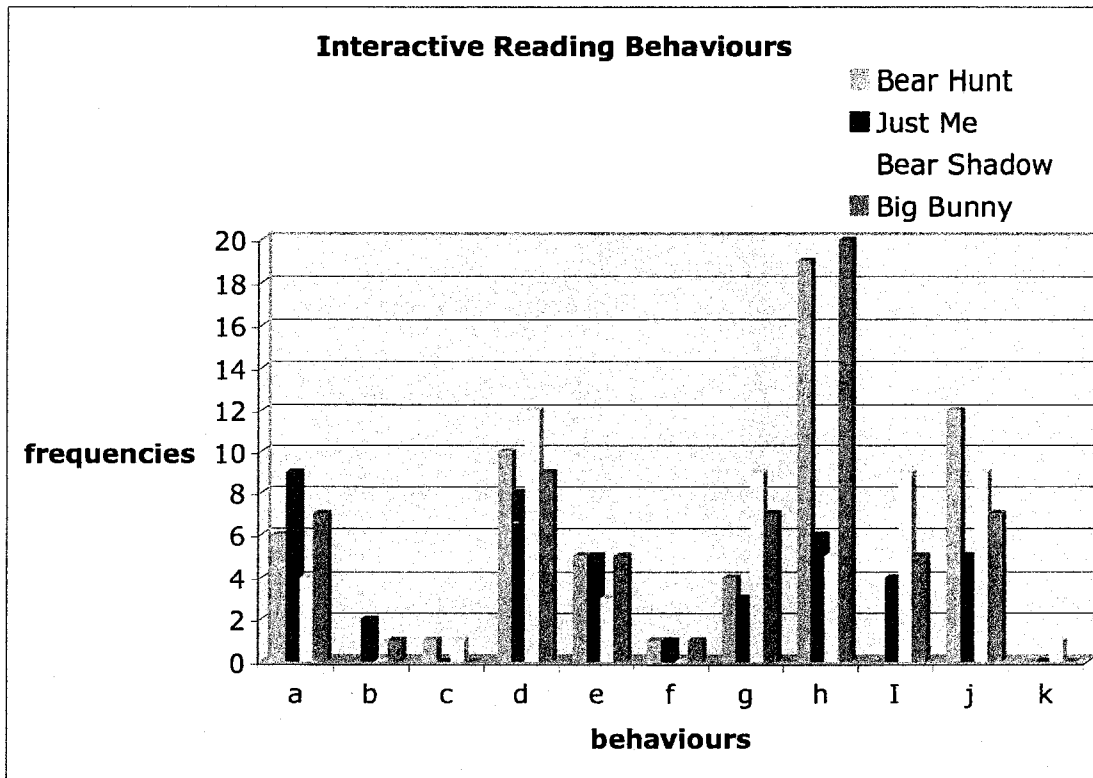


Figure 5. Total frequencies of IRBs for Educator I.

*Comparison of four stories for Educator I.* The frequencies of the IRBs used across the four stories were compared to determine whether certain stories evoked specific behaviours (see Figure 12). Over the four stories read by Educator I, 216 IRBs were recorded. The largest percentage of these occurred while reading *The Big Bunny and the Easter Eggs* (28.7%), followed by (26.9%) for *Going on Bear Hunt*, (24.5%) for *Bear Shadow*, and (20%) for *Just Me*. Educator I used (h) several gestures while reading *Going on a Bear Hunt* (32.8%) and *The Big Bunny and the Easter Eggs* (32%). Educator I frequently (j) varied her vocal expressions to suit the story (21%) while reading the story *Going on a Bear Hunt*, which was more frequently than when reading the other stories. Educator I (i) changed her voice to suit the characters in the story while reading *Bear Shadow* (17%), *The Big Bunny and Easter Eggs* (8%), and *Just Me* (9%), but did not do this when reading *Going on a Bear Hunt*. The IRBs displayed less than 5 % across all four stories were (b) relates children's responses to real life, (c) comments on new or complex words, (f) promotes further exploration of ideas presented in the story, and (k) encourages the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read.



*Figure 6.* Comparison of the IRBs among the four stories read by Educator I

*Talks about the book, introduces the Story, Educator II.* Educator II always talked about the book by mentioning the author, illustrator and only occasionally cited the source of the story. Educator II mentioned when the book came from the library or from another source. She introduced the story briefly by addressing something specific from the cover of the book. An example of how she did this was by asking what the children thought the story might be about. Most of the stories used for the reenactments were familiar to the children. The only story they had not heard previously was *Just Me*.

Table 3

*Total Frequencies of Interactive Reading Behaviours for Educator II across Four Stories.*

	Mortimer		Snowy Day		Just Me		3 Little Wolves		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Total	%
a.	10	21.7	5	21	4	14.3	6	10.3	25	15.5
b.	1	2	2	5	0		0		3	2
c.	1	2	0		0		1	1.7	2	1.2
d.	4	8.7	4	19	8	28.6	6	10.3	22	13.7
e.	4	8.7	3	12	4	14.3	7	12.1	18	11.2
f.	1	2	1	2	2	7.1	1	1.7	5	3.1
g.	4	8.7	3	7	1	3.6	5	8.6	13	8.1
h.	7	15.3	3	14	3	10.7	5	8.6	18	11.2
i.	3	6.5	2	9	3	10.7	15	25.7	23	14.3
j.	7	15.3	4	12	2	7.1	2	20.7	25	15.5
k.	4	8.7	2	5	1	3.6	0		7	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>161</b>	

Table 3 (*continued*)

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Legend:

- a = Invites the children to ask questions
  - b = Relates children's responses to real life
  - c = Comments on new or complex words as they appear
  - d = Points to visual details throughout the story
  - e = Answers questions and responds to real-life experiences
  - f = Promotes further exploration of ideas presented in the story
  - g = Uses facial expressions that reflect the meaning and feelings in the story
  - h = Uses gestures related to actions in the story
  - i = Changes the rhythm and nature of her voice to suit the characters in the story
  - j = Varies vocal expressions to suit the story
  - k = Encourages the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read
-

*Mortimer, Educator II*. This was the first story read prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> DSR implemented by Educator II. The children were familiar with this story and were able to recall the author and the illustrator. This story was read in the “big room” at 9:30 am, and all 10 children were present. *Mortimer* is about a little boy who does not want to go to bed. Several adults get involved in trying to put Mortimer to bed. Every time an adult leaves Mortimer’s room he chants a song that is repeated throughout the story. The story is written in narrative form but with several passages of character dialogue. It is 24 pages long with approximately 40 words per page. The illustrations are colorful and drawn in a cartoon style.

Of the 46 IRBs displayed during this story by Educator II (see Figure 7), the most frequently demonstrated were (a) invited the children to ask questions (21.7%), (h) uses gestures related to actions in the story (15.3%), and (j) varies vocal expressions to suit the story (15.3%). All IRBs were displayed during this story reading, however, (b) relates children’s responses to real-life experiences (2%), (c) comments on new words (2%), and (f) promotes further exploration of ideas presented (2%) were only demonstrated once during this story reading.



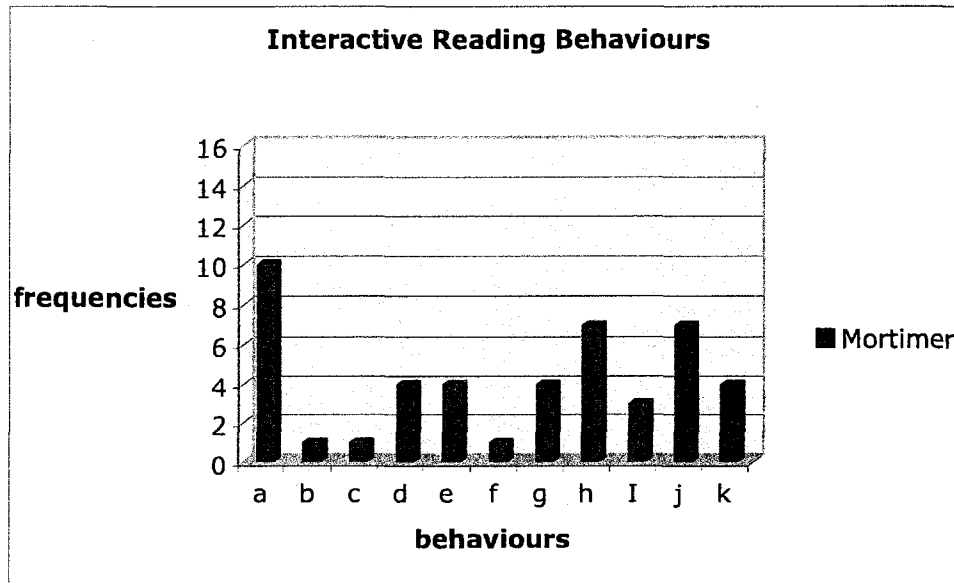


Figure 7. Frequencies of IRBs for *Mortimer*, Educator II

*The Snowy Day, Educator II.* *The Snowy Day* was read to prior to the fourth DSR. It was read in Educator II's classroom on the carpet area. All the furniture had been moved to the side in order to make room for the DSR. This story was read at 10:45 am on a very snowy day in February. There were nine of the ten children present. *The Snowy Day* is about a boy's adventure exploring snow after a big snowfall. It is written from the boy's point of view using a narrator's voice. The pictures are painted with simple bright watercolors and collage depicting the actions and the environment of the boy. The book was 40 pages long with approximately 10 words on every second page.

Of the 29 IRBs demonstrated during this story (see Figure 8), the most frequently displayed were (a) invites children to ask questions or comment (17%), (d) pointing to visual details throughout the story (13.8%) and (j) varying vocal expressions to suit the

story (13.8%). Infrequent IRBs included (f) promotes further explorations of ideas presented in the story (2%), and (k) encourages the children to act out segments of the story (2%).

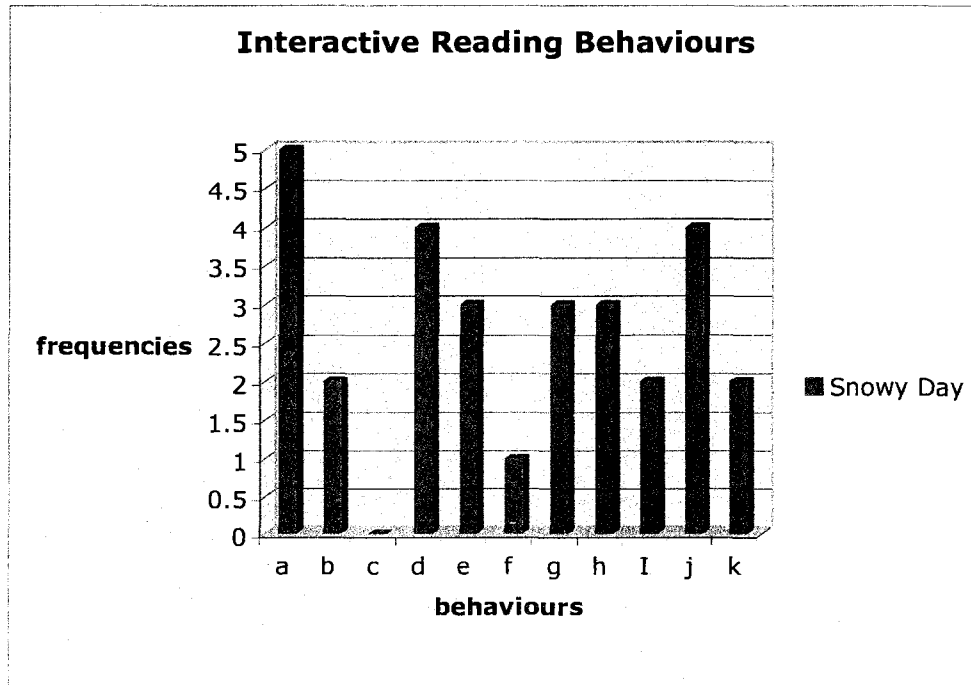


Figure 8. Frequencies of IRBS for *Snowy Day*, Educator II.

*Just Me, Educator II.* This story was read prior to the seventh reenactment implemented by Educator II with her group. Nine of ten children were present for this story reading and DSR. This story was read in the “big room” at 11:00 am. *Just Me* (described previously) was the only book used by both educators captured on videotape. The educators shared other stories during the DSR intervention process but *Just Me* was the only one recorded for analysis.

A total of 28 IRBs were displayed during this story reading (see Figure 9). During this story (d) pointing to visuals was used most frequently (28.6%), (a) Inviting questions (14.3%), and (e) answering questions (14.3%) were the next most frequent behaviours observed. IRBs not observed were (b) relates children’s responses to real life, and (c) comments on new and complex words as they appear.

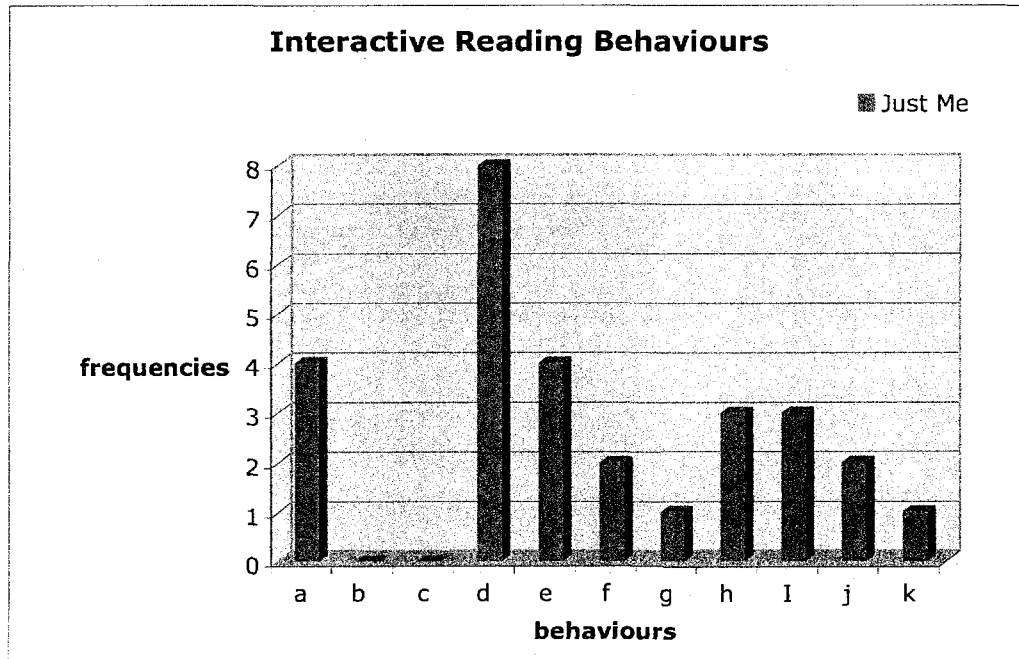


Figure 9. Frequencies of IRBs for *Just Me*, Educator II.

*Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig, Educator II.* This was the book read prior to the last DSR implemented by Educator II. This story was read in Educator II's classroom and seven of the ten children were present. *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* is a humorous take on the classic tale "The Three Little Pigs". This tale is considerably longer than the original on which it is based. The three little wolves make several houses out of various materials, while the big bad pig finds several ways to destroy the houses. Many characters are encountered throughout the story and there are several opportunities for repeated character dialogue. The book was 32 pages long with approximately 50 words per page. The illustrations used lightly colored watercolors depicting the various actions of the characters.

A total of 58 IRBS were displayed during the reading of this story (see Figure 10). Educator II, (i) changed the rhythm and nature of her voice to suit the characters most frequently (25.7%), and (j) varied her vocal expressions to suit the story (20.7%) of the IRBs displayed during this story. The educator also (e) answered questions and responded to real life experiences with greater frequency (12.1%) than the other eight IRBs under examination. Once again (c) comments on new or complex words (1.7%), and (f) promotes further exploration of ideas presented in the story (1.7%), (b) and relates children's responses to real-life experiences (0%), were infrequent behaviours displayed during this story reading.

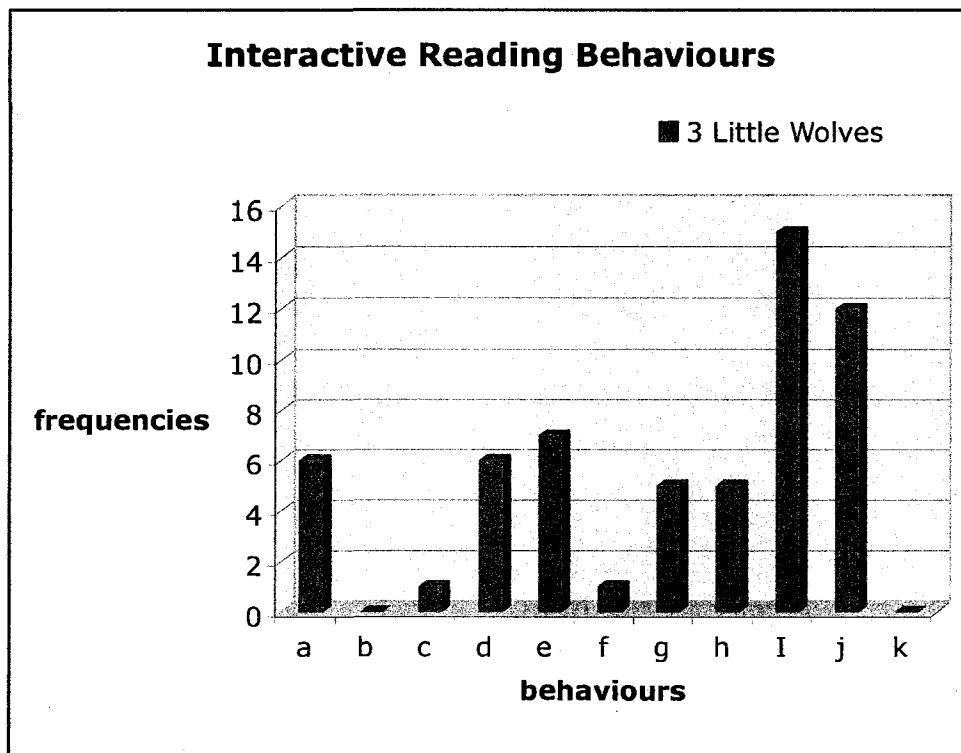


Figure 10. Frequencies of IRBS for *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*.

Educator II.

*Total frequencies of behaviours for all four stories, Educator II.* Educator II displayed a total of 161 IRBs over the four stories read (see Table 3 and Figure 11). The *Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* accounted for 36% (58/161) of the total number of IRBs; the story of *Mortimer* accounted for 29% (46/161); 18% (29/161) of the IRBs were demonstrated in the *Snowy Day*, and 17% (28/181) of the IRBs were displayed in *Just Me*. An examination of the stories read by Educator II shows that 7 /11 IRBs (a, d, e, g, h, I, j,) occurred with a frequency of 11% or more. This indicates that Educator II displayed more than half of the behaviours in the checklist for the four book readings. In examining the frequencies of behaviours exhibited by Educator II, it is evident that the behaviours most frequently used were (a) inviting the children to ask questions and make comments (15.5%), and (j) varies vocal expression to suit the story (15.5%). Changing her voice to suit characters (14.3%), pointing to visuals (13.7%), answering questions (11.2%), and using gestures (11.2%), were frequently observed behaviours. Infrequent IRBs were (f) promotes further exploration of ideas presented in the story (3.1%). (b) relates children's responses to real-life experiences (2%), and (c) comments on new and complex words (1.2%).

A comparison of the Educator Self-Report with the Reading Behaviour Checklist indicates that there were some commonalities. It would seem that Educator II had a realistic view of the kinds of behaviours she used during shared reading times. The behaviours she rated as using "every time" were (j) varies her vocal expressions to suit the story (15.5%), and (i) changes the rhythm and nature of her voice to suit the characters in the story (14.3%). The behaviours she rated as using "often" included (d) points to visual details (13.7%), (e) answering questions (11.2%) and (h) using facial

expressions (8.1%). The IRBs Educator II reported as using “infrequently” included (k) encouraging the children to act out segments of the story as it was being read (4.3%), (f) promotes further exploration of ideas presented in the story (3.1%), and b) relates children’s responses to real-life experiences 3 (2%). As was the case with Educator I, it is important to note that Educator II was only asked to rate whether or not she implemented the behaviours during each story reading, not how many times she displays interactive reading behaviours in one story.

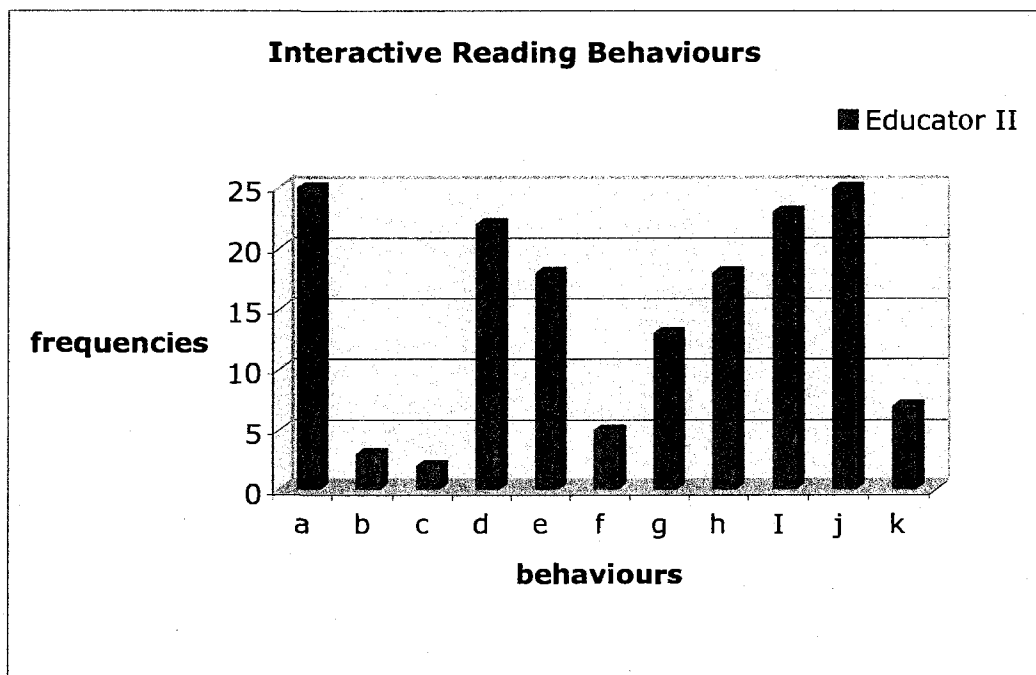


Figure 11. Total frequencies of IRBs for Educator II.

*Comparison of four stories read for Educator II.* The frequencies of the IRBs used across the four stories were compared to determine whether certain stories evoked specific behaviours. When comparing the differences and similarities between the four stories read by Educator II, dramatic differences can be seen in some areas from story to story. When Educator II read *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* she changed her voice to suit characters (i) far more frequently than when reading other stories (25.7%) (see Table 3). She also (j) varied her vocal expressions more frequently when reading this story (20.7%) than was observed while reading other stories. She varied her voice frequently during *Mortimer* (15.3%) but less so when reading *The Snowy Day* (13.8%) and *Just Me* (7.1%).

Educator II also invited far more comments and questions (a) when reading *Mortimer* (21.7%), and acted out more segments of the story (k) during *Mortimer* (8.7%) than when reading other stories. Educator II also pointed to visuals (d) more frequently when reading *Just Me* (28.6) compared to other stories.



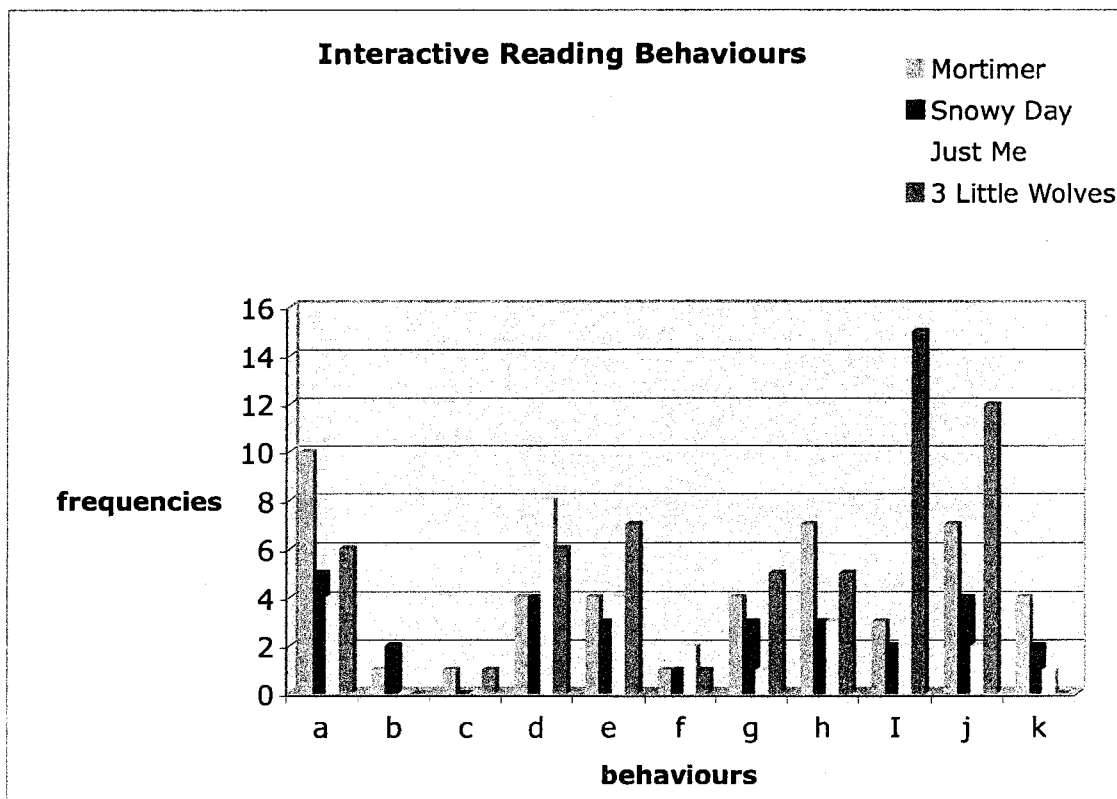


Figure 12. Comparison of the IRBs among the four stories read by Educator II.

### *The DSR Process*

As described in the procedures, the DSR intervention took place over a 4- week period. All the DSRs taped for analysis took place on Friday mornings. The educators implemented each DSR immediately following the shared reading of the story read for reenactment. My role during the DSR process was to observe. No other training sessions took place beyond the initial training session described in the procedures. The educators did not receive coaching or modeling from me at any time during the DSR intervention process. This approach was taken in order to reduce influence, as the nature of the study was to discover the scaffolding strategies as the intervention took place. Occasionally the educators asked how I thought a DSR went. I always responded positively and reinforced what they were doing. Occasionally, Educator II mentioned feeling unsure of what she was doing. She asked, "Do you think that was Ok?" She mentioned that she was never sure how much to model. My advice to the educators when they asked questions like that was to take their cues from the children. I never gave advice beyond the initial training session as to which behaviours the educators should use more or less frequently. I reassured the educators that the purpose of this study was to discover what works as the DSRs progressed. Both educators embraced the challenge of implementing the DSRs and seemed to become more comfortable leading them as the intervention study progressed.

*Coding the videotapes of the DSR process.* The purpose for creating the codes and categories of the DSR process was in order to understand the process and generate a theory for practice. "Categories in grounded theory designs are themes of basic information identified in the data by the researcher and used to understand a process" (Creswell, 2001, p. 448.) The first phase of the coding process involved viewing the first

tape of the first reenactments implemented by the educators. Using constant comparative methods (described in the method section), categories that emerged from one stage of the data (the first tapes) were compared with categories that emerged from the next. The initial categories included 20 first level codes. Each tape was viewed in order, that is starting with the first DSR and then the fourth, seventh and twelve. I continued to add categories if they seemed to be different or were not evident in previous tapes. After viewing all the tapes there were approximately 30 different categories of scaffolding. These categories were arranged and rearranged through the process of member checking and peer checking described in the methods section.

The final categories selected were eventually collapsed under broader categories (see Table 4). The broad categories emerged in examining the scaffolding categories and they were conceptually related.

The final four broad categories selected under which all other categories related were: (1) story structure supports, (2) dramatization supports, (3) story language supports, and (4) positive guidance supports.

Table 4

Definitions and Categories of Scaffolding in Dramatic Story Reenactments

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**Story Structure Supports**

<b>Sequence Question</b>	Educator asks a question to help the children recall the sequence in the story (e.g., “What happens first?” or “Then what happened?”).
<b>Prompts Story Sequence</b>	Educator begins to narrate a section of the story but then leaves a blank for children to respond verbally or non-verbally (e.g., and then he saw...).
<b>Detail Question</b>	Educator asks a question to help the children remember a detail in the story (e.g., “Was he reading a newspaper or a book?”).
<b>Narrating</b>	Educator narrates the story in her/his own words or reads a few lines from the text to accompany the story.
<b>Sets the Scene</b>	Educator describes time or place (e.g., “It’s dark and scary in the cave.”).
<b>Picture Prompts</b>	Educator shows or points to pictures in the story to help children remember the sequence.

---

**Dramatization Supports**

<b>Role-play Question</b>	Educator asks a question focusing on movement from the story (e.g., “How do we get across the mud?” or “Do you remember how he hopped?”).
<b>Models Role-play</b>	Educator models actions from story or extends movement from story (e.g., prepares for going outside by dressing in a snowsuit) or assumes a character from the story.
<b>Reinforces Role-Play</b>	Educator reinforces children’s movements/role-play (e.g., “That’s right he walked like that!” Or “You really know how to swim!”). Provides time for movement exploration before moving on to next event.

<b>Focus on Character's Feelings</b>	Educator points out a character's feelings or asks about a character's feelings (e.g., "How did that make him feel?").
<b>Reinforces Children's Ideas</b>	Educator uses or reinforces children's own ideas (e.g., "L. is being the sun, lets all melt while she shines on us."). Educator allows the children to lead the story or extends their ideas.

---

**Story Language Supports**

<b>Models Characters Voices/Speech</b>	Educator models characters' voices and speech from the story or speaks in character (not necessarily using exact text).
<b>Prompts Children's Character Voice/Speech</b>	Educator prompts children to use character's voice or speech (e.g., "Then the pig said...") Educator would not finish sentence, but allow children to fill in.
<b>Models Repeated Text</b>	Educator models repeated text not related to a character in the story (e.g., they can't go over it, they can't go under it, they have to go through it).
<b>Prompts Children's Text</b>	Educator prompts children to use text not related to characters from story (e.g., "They can't go...").

---

**Positive Guidance Supports**

<b>Boundary Setting</b>	Educator explains where reenactment will take place in the space (e.g., "We will be moving around on the carpet.").
<b>Signals</b>	Educator establishes a signal to stop, look and listen (e.g., "When I put my hand up that means stop.").
<b>Redirection</b>	Educator redirects a child or children who have wandered away or seems to be disengaged by enticing them back with an event from the story (e.g., "Join us, J., we need your help to pull the boat in.").
<b>Smooth Transitions</b>	Educator uses aspects from the story to help children end story quietly and transition to the next activity (e.g., educator has all the children pretending to sleep in the bed after running from the bear in <i>Going On a Bear Hunt</i> ).

*Story structure supports.* The first broad category “story structure supports” refers to all the categories of scaffolding the educators used that helped to support the children’s understanding of story. In selecting this category, previous research conducted by Morrow (1997) was used as a guide. Morrow developed a story retelling scale that was used in several studies to evaluate children’s story retelling abilities. Included in this scale are elements of story structure that can be evaluated when a child retells a story. A well-structured story has a setting, (a beginning, time, place and characters), theme (the main character’s problem or goal), plot episodes (a series of events where the main character tries to achieve a goal) and a resolution (the accomplishment of the goal and ending). When children hear well-formed stories they have a better understanding of story structure and this helps them tell and write their own stories (Morrow, 1985). When children participate in DSRs the story is retold and revisited as they reenact and retell aspects of the story with their teacher.

---

#### Example 1

##### *The Snowy Day*

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Educator: “Does anyone remember how the story started? What is the first thing?”

Child: “Peter woke up and then it started snowing”

Educator: “Where was Peter, in his room?”

Child 2: “In his bed!”

Educator: Lies down with the children.

---

Since the children were retelling aspects of the story during the DSR it was clear that many of the scaffolding strategies the educators used could be classified under the broad category of “story structure supports.”

The categories of scaffolding that fit under this first broad category included: sequence questions, sequence prompts, detail questions, narrating, setting the scene, and picture prompts (see Table 4). A sequence question was any question that the educator asked that helped or encouraged the children to think of the next event in the story. The educators used sequence questions to move the plot along and to involve the children in recalling the story themselves. Sequence questions also seemed to help the children focus on the theme of the story. The children focused on the theme when they answered sequence questions because they would recall what the main character wanted to do or accomplish in the story.

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## Example 2

### *Sequence questions*

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(1) Educator: “Then what happened, does anyone remember?”

Children: “He went outside.”

---

(2) Educator: “What did he do next?”

Children: “He got in his boat.” Children begin to move and get into pretend boat.

---

(3) Educator: “But the shadow did not listen to you, so you decide to do what?”

Children: “To run away!” Children begin to run.

---

Educators also used sequence prompts when they began to narrate a section of the story, but did not complete their sentence in order to prompt the children to recall it themselves through words or actions. Children would respond either physically (by miming the next action in the story), verbally (by announcing what comes next in the story), or would combine a verbal and physical response (would both act out and say the next event in the story).

---

### Example 3

#### *Sequence prompt*

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Educator: “And next he meets a...”

Some children: “Pig!” Children begin to move like pigs.

Child 3: “A pig taking a bath in the mud.”

Children: Some children crawl like pigs, others are rolling in the mud.

---

The educators implemented detail questions to focus on a detail concerning an event in the story. Detail questions were used throughout the DSRs by the educators. These details seemed to help expand on a concept or focus on an important detail in the story. These detail questions seemed to enhance the dramatization, as the children became more specific in their movements or sounds.



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Example 4

*Detail question*

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Educator: "Do bunnies make sounds or only hop?"

Children: Continue to hop around; a few make some nibbling sounds pretending to eat.

Children: Crawling like pigs.

Educator: "Was the pig actually moving around? What was the pig doing?"

A few children: "Lying in the mud!" All the children lie down and pretend to roll in mud.

---

Narrating was a strategy used by the educators seemingly to move the plot along and provide support for the reenactment. Both educators narrated segments of the story in their own words or read passages from the book while the children acted out the plot episode that was described. Narration was interspersed with questions and other scaffolding techniques and was used from time to time throughout the DSR by the educators. Narration seemed to only be used as a way to support reenactment and advance the plot.

Another strategy the educators exhibited that seemed to reinforce the children's understanding of story structure was to set the scene. This strategy provided an image of time or place as well created a mood for the story.

---

Example 5

*Sets the Scene*

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Educator: "It's dark; there might be spiders."

Children show excitement and fear in their facial expressions. A few children slow down their movements others begin to run and squeal.

---

Both educators used picture prompts in order to provide a visual aide for what was happening in the story. This strategy was occasionally used along with narration so that the children had both the visual and the auditory reminder. Picture prompts were also used alone without narration. In this case the educator would show the picture to the children and ask them to pay attention to it to see what happened next in the story.

---

Example 6

*Picture Prompt*

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Educator: "I will turn the pages and it will remind you what happened. Let's start on the first page. Pretend that you are the boy watching." Begins to read the first page of the story.

---

*Dramatization supports.* This broad category refers to all the categories of scaffolding that the educators used in order to support the children's dramatization of the story. The sub-categories that fit under this broader category centered around strategies that would enhance role-play and pretend actions. Role-play is described as a child engaging in pretend activities while adopting the role of another person (Johnson, Christie, & Yawkey, 1999). The importance and significance of role-play to children's social and cognitive development has been described in the literature review. The DSRs implemented in this study used a process drama approach to role-play. The focus in process drama is on what the children can learn while participating in drama rather than working towards a performance (Roper & Davis, 2000). Since role-play and pretending is such an important aspect of the DSR process, an examination of the videotapes showed that several of the categories that emerged from the data could be collapsed under this broader category of supporting dramatization. The categories placed under this heading were mostly related to physical dramatizations, where the children or educator would mime or gesture actions from the story.

The sub-categories of scaffolding that were collapsed under the broader heading of dramatization supports include role-play question, models role-play, reinforces role-play, focuses on character's feelings, reinforces or extends children's ideas. Focusing on character's feelings was placed under this heading because of the significance of understanding others' feelings in role-play. One of the social benefits of role-play is that it enables children to take others' perspectives. The ability to see another point of view and to take others' perspective has been recognized as crucial to the child's ability to empathize (Umek & Musek, 2001). Reinforcing children's ideas was grouped here

because it demonstrated the children's abilities to lead or initiate dramatization of certain aspects of the story.

Role-play questions were similar to sequence questions in that the two educators seemed to use them both in order to encourage a response from the children. The role-play questions were those that the educator asked that encouraged physical dramatization of the movements or action in the story. When the educators would ask a role-play question the children would often respond physically rather than verbally. That is, they would reenact the response in their own unique way. In particular, Educator I implemented role-play questions to expand children's movements and think about specific ways different characters from the stories moved. This encouraged the children to explore a wider range of movements.

---

#### Example 7

##### *Role-play questions*

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(1) Educator: "The cow didn't walk around a lot because he was busy doing something, what was the cow doing?"

Children: "Eating grass." Children change from crawling around and begin to pretend to eat grass.

(2) Educator: "Are you a turtle feeling shy and hiding inside your shell? Or are you a curious turtle peeking out and looking around?"

Children: Some children poke their heads out and look around, while others pretend to hide in their shells. A few children say, "I'm hiding."

Modeling role-play was demonstrated by the educators throughout the DSR process. Educators typically modeled in the beginning of a reenactment and then pulled back as the children took over the movements. An example of modeling was when the educator assumed a role from the story (becomes Peter in *The Snowy Day* and walks as if being Peter in the story). Educators also modeled role-play by extending the story somewhat and including a pretend action that might not have been part of the story, but was connected to the story.

---

#### Example 8

##### *Modeling Role-play*

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Educator: "Next we see the river, so let's take off our shoes and roll up our pants so we can go through the river." Educator models these actions while she describes this.

Children: Follow actions.

---

Reinforcing role-play was when the educators verbally responded to the pretend actions or role-play movements the children were using. The educator would often start by modeling the behaviour or suggesting a movement but then the children would take over and interpret the actions in their own ways. Both educators often acknowledged these pretend actions verbally. Another strategy both educators used that seemed to reinforce role-play was to address the children in role. When the educators did this the children would often respond in character. This practice of addressing the children in role

was done consistently from the first reenactment with Educator I and became a common practice for Educator II by the last DSR (see Example 9, 10 and 11).

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Example 9

*Reinforces role-play*

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Educator: "Ok now bunnies, you are feeling so sick."

Children: Begin to make sick sounds and sneeze.

---

Example 10

Children: Pretending to swim in a variety of ways through the river in *Going on a Bear Hunt*.

Educator: "You really know how to swim!"

---

Example 11

Children: Begin to initiate walking with their toes pointing in.

Educator: "That's right he walked like that!"

---

Both educators also reinforced role-play by providing time during the reenactment to explore an action or movement before moving on to the next event in the story. An example of this was when the children were hopping around pretending to be bunnies in the story *Just Me*, the educator provided some time for the children to hop around before moving on to the next sequence in the story.

Focus on character's feelings occurred when the educators would point out an emotion of one of the character's feelings in the story. The educators asked questions that seemed to help the children think about how a character might be feeling in a certain situation. This category of scaffolding seemed to help the children with perspective taking. The children were asked to think about how a character might feel in a certain situation. The children typically dramatized these feelings during the reenactment. This helped the children think beyond mimicking the character's actions in a story because they needed to reflect on how the character felt and then portray this in words and actions. The educators did not use this strategy very often, however it was included as a category of scaffolding because when it was shown it was effective at helping the children explore a character's feelings (see Example 12 below).

---

#### Example 12

##### *Focus on character's feelings*

---

Educator: "But then you start to feel sick, how do you feel when you are sick?"

Children: Some children pretend to sneeze, others are holding their stomachs and groaning.

One child says, "My ear hurts."

---

Both educators also reinforced the children's own ideas as a technique that encouraged the children to lead or take over the reenactments. A typical pattern in reenacting most stories was that the educators would start the story using several

modeling behaviours, but then by the end of the story reinforcing behaviours were more dominant as the children took more initiative in leading the story. This finding is in agreement with scaffolding patterns described by Collins, Brown, and Newman (1989) where the educator moves from modeling (demonstrating) and coaching (prompts and questions) behaviours to fading behaviours as the children gain mastery of the skill. In this study the categories of scaffolding that represented fading behaviours were the reinforcement categories.

*Story language supports.* This broad category was selected because DSRs do not only enable a child to revisit the actions in a story but also to revisit the language in a story. When children reenact the story with their educator they use both receptive and expressive language skills. When reenacting stories children do not only demonstrate their comprehension of story structure elements but also gain experience in inferring and interpreting the sounds and expressions of characters' voices (Morrow, 1997). They also gain experience in making sound effects to accompany the story and practice expressive language by repeating the text from the book. Both educators encouraged the children to revisit language used in the stories by modeling and prompting the use of characters' speech and voices and using repeated text from the story. The sub-categories that were grouped under story language supports were, models characters' voices/speech, prompts children's character voice/speech, models repeated text, and prompts children's repeated text. These strategies helped to reinforce the language from the stories as well as reinforce language typically found in most stories such as clear beginnings "One day..." and clear endings such as "The end."



Depending on the story being used for the DSR both educators would model or prompt the children to use voices and speech from the story. The educators also paraphrased what a character might say, thinking out loud as if they were the character in the story but not necessarily using speech from the text.

---

### Example 13

*Models characters' voices/speech*

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Educator: "I'll huff and puff and puff and blow your house in." (Uses deep voice).

Educator: Walking like Peter in *The Snowy Day* and says, "I see it!" (Speaking in role).

---

### Example 14

*Prompts characters' voices/speech*

---

Educator II: "And what did Mortimer say when everybody left?"

Children: "Clang, clang, rattle bing bang..."

Educator I: "Now, do roosters make any sounds?"

Children: "Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

---

Both educators also modeled text that was repeated in the stories as in predictable books. In books such as *Going on a Bear Hunt* there were several passages of text that reoccurred throughout the story such as "You can't go over it, you can't go under it, you

have to go through it". The educators modeled or prompted the children to use this language from the text during the reenactments.

---

#### Example 15

*Models repeated text*

---

Educator: "Swishy, swishy, swishy, swishy, swishy."

*Prompts repeated text*

---

Educator: "You can't go..."

Children: "Over it!"

---

*Positive guidance supports.* This broad category was selected to encompass all the guidance strategies the educators used to support and sustain the children's involvement in the DSR. The term positive guidance was selected because both educators modeled the use of positive guidance strategies that seemed to help to reduce the number of disruptions during the story. The term positive guidance is employed to describe guiding behaviours that are used to help the child demonstrate or internalize appropriate behaviours. Positive guidance is opposed to punishment, which is a negative consequence for an unacceptable behaviour and is viewed as controlling rather than guiding behaviour. Punishment may include such things as: criticizing, discouraging, blaming, humiliating, isolation and physical punishment. Positive guidance techniques on the other hand may

include: redirection (child is directed from one activity to another), transition (the movement of children from one activity to another), setting limits and boundaries (making clear expectations for an experience), and praise and encouragement. Positive guidance methods are used while maintaining the respect and dignity of the child (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

Both educators were alone when leading the DSRs, yet there were very few disruptions or conflicts observed during the month long intervention process. The strategies the educators used during DSR that related to positive guidance included: boundary setting, signals, redirection, and smooth transitions.

Educator I, in particular, used boundary setting as a way to begin the DSR and set the stage for the reenactment. Boundary setting involved explaining to the children exactly where they could move around to reenact the story. This was done more often when the educators used “the big room” for the DSRs because the space was larger and it helped to define the “stage”. In the smaller classrooms, particularly in Educator II’s classroom, which was used by both educators for certain DSRs, furniture was moved and the whole floor space was used. Educator I used boundary setting to remind the children to give each other a little space so they would not bump into each other. The signal was also explained at this time and is described below.

---

Example 16

*Boundary setting*

---

Educator I: “When we act out the story we are going to stay on the carpet area, remember to give yourself a little bit of space, it is important not to bump into your friends.”

---

Signals is the category selected to describe the signal the educators established with children regarding when to stop, look, and listen. A common signal used by both educators was turning the page in the book, this alerted the children to a picture in the story, which they needed to stop and pay attention to. Prior to the DSR, Educator I consistently established the signal as part of her boundary setting instructions. In contrast, Educator II never established a signal prior to the DSR but one would often evolve through the process of the reenactment.

---

Example 17

*Signals*

---

Educator I: “When I say ‘Stop’ and hold my hand like this, we all stop and listen to see what comes next.” Demonstrates hand signal.

---

Redirection was the strategy practiced throughout the DSRs to help the children focus on the story or get back on task. Both educators used redirection mostly for one or two children who had wandered away or who seemed disengaged from the reenactment. There was one child in each group who seemed to benefit from this strategy and each one usually responded by joining the group and becoming involved in the story. If children did not respond to the redirection both educators accepted their behaviours. This is viewed as positive because the children were encouraged, but never forced to participate. Children were often enticed to rejoin the story by the educator pointing out that their participation was important to the reenactment. Educators also found elements of the story they thought might interest that particular child and pointed this out to the child to encourage her/him to join in with the story enactments. This demonstrated to me that both educators understood the interests of the children in their group (see Examples 18 & 19).

---

#### Example 18

##### *Redirection*

---

Child: J. is playing with something on the shelf.

Educator II: “ Join us J. we need your help to pull the boat in”.

Child: J. gets up and joins educator in pretending to pull boat in.

---

---

Example 19

Child: C. is hiding under a table.

Educator I: “ C., you like to be the bunny, show me how you hop!”

Child: C. comes out from under the table and hops like a bunny.

---

Smooth transitions is used to describe the guidance strategy the educators used in order to move the children from the end of the DSR to the next activity. Once again this strategy was used consistently by Educator I for every story, and less so by Educator II. Educator I consistently used elements from the story to help the children end the story quietly and move on to the next activity. She would typically end the story with the children lying on the floor and would extend the reenactment by using guided imagery techniques to help the children stay in character as they transitioned to the next activity. Educator II did not always end the story with the children lying down but did often end quietly leading the children to sit down on a carpet and would often follow-up with a discussion.

---

Example 20

*Smooth transitions*

---

Educator I: “Now lie down and you can pretend you’re a fish and you are not expecting anything and I come with a fishing line (picks up a plastic fishing rod). When my fishing line touches you I will fish you out of the water and you will line up at the door.”

---

#### Example 21

Educator II: “So they walk hand in hand to end the story.” Educator II leads the children to the carpet area of the class and sits down with the children and asks, “Did you like acting out the story?”

---

It was typical to find more than one strategy of scaffolding occurring at the same time. For example, educators would often model role-play while asking a detail question, a sequence question or a role-play question. In the following example the educator is setting the scene while she models role-play and asks a detail question.

---

#### Example 22

Educator is standing with the children and miming picking up a fishing rod. “ We are at the pond, let’s pick up our fishing rods and what do we need to put on our hook?”

---

Combining strategies was a common support structure implemented by both educators throughout the DSR interventions.

### *Patterns of Scaffolding*

The scaffolding categories have been defined, and what is described here are the patterns of scaffolding that evolved during a single DSR, as well as the patterns that evolved over the month-long DSR intervention.

*Getting started.* Educator I began each DSR using “boundary setting.” She would typically begin the reenactment by defining the space and “setting the scene.”

---

#### Example 23

##### *Starting pattern*

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Educator I: “When we act out the story it is important not to bump into your friends. Give each other some space. When I say ‘Stop’ and hold up my hand like this, we all stop.”

(Demonstrates hand motion).

Educator: Stands up. “We are at the pond...”

---

Educator II did not set boundaries as clearly as Educator I prior to the reenactment, but always began by asking a sequence question, inviting the children’s participation right away.

#### Example 24

Educator II: “Does anyone remember how the story started. What is the first thing?”

---



*Role assignment.* The educators never assigned roles before starting a DSR. There were no long discussions, debates or negotiations about who was going to play what role and when. In every case the reenactment began immediately following the story reading with very few directions prior to getting up and becoming part of the story. Educator I would typically begin the story by setting the scene and boundary setting (see Example 23). This helped define the physical space for the reenactment. Educator II would typically begin the reenactment with a sequence question (see Example 24), encouraging the children to think about how the story started (see Appendix H for complete transcriptions of *The Snowy Day* (fourth DSR with Educator II), and *Just Me* (fourth DSR with Educator I)).

*The scaffolding dance.* Throughout the DSRs both educators alternated between a combination of story structure supports, dramatization supports, story language supports, and positive guidance supports as the DSR unfolded. The scaffolds the educators used seemed to be influenced by the type of story used, as well as the responses and initiatives of the children. The way the children responded to the scaffolds the educators implemented influenced the next scaffolding strategy the educators would use. The “dance” was improvised in that the educators and children did not plan ahead of time everything they said and did. Although the book was the basis for the reenactment, there was no script (see Examples 25 & 26).

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Example 25

*Scaffolding dance, Bear Shadow, Educator I*

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Educator I: “When we act out the story it is important not to bump into your friends, give each other some space. When I say ‘Stop’ and hold up my hand like this, we all stop” demonstrates hand motion. (Story Structure Support: boundary setting).

Children: Stand up facing the educator.

Educator I: Stands up. “We are at the pond, let’s pick our fishing rods and what is it that we need to put on our hook?” (Story Structure Support: setting the scene).

Few children: “Food! Worms!”

Educator I: “Yes, food, worms for our bait. So we put our bait on the hook.

(Dramatization Support: “reinforces children’s ideas”). Now what do we do with our fishing rod?” (Story Structure Support: detail question).

Children: Pretend to put worm on hook.

Educator I: “Ok, let’s throw it as far as we can.” Pretends to throw line. (Dramatization Support: models role-play and reinforces role-play).

Children: Pretend to throw line and make splashing and water sounds.

(Later in the reenactment)

Educator I: “Look, there is an obstacle in your way. There is a little stream and you have to jump over the stream.” (Story Structure Support: narrating and Dramatization Support: reinforcing role-play).

Children: Pretend to jump over stream except V. who is observing.

Educator I: “Now you come to a tree, that gives you an idea V.” (Story Structure Support: narrating and Positive Guidance Supports: redirection).

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Example 26

*Scaffolding dance, Mortimer, EducatorII*

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Educator II: “One night... what do we have to do first?” (Story Structure Supports: detail question).

Child 1: “ One night his mother put Mortimer to bed”

Child 2: “ Go upstairs”

Educator II “Alright let’s go upstairs.” (Dramatization Supports: reinforces children’s ideas).

Educator: Models thumping up the stairs and says “thump, thump, thump.”

(Dramatization Supports: models role-play).

Children pretend to march upstairs saying “Thump, thump, thump.”

Educator II: “And then what happens?” (Story Structure Supports: sequence question).

Child1: “Then she throws him in bed?”

Children are standing and looking at educator not moving.

Educator II: “How are we going to do that? (Dramatization Support: movement question

We are going to pick Mortimer up and ...” (Dramatization Support: models role-play and prompts role play).

Several Children: “Throw him.” They, along with educator, pretend to throw Mortimer.

(Dramatization Supports: reinforces role-play and models role-play).

Child 2: "And then she says Mortimer be quiet!!!" others join in "be quiet!"

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The above examples demonstrate the interactive nature of the scaffolding strategies the educators implemented.

*Peer scaffolds.* The children also acted as models to their peers and provided scaffolds for the success of the DSRs. Throughout a DSR the children would not only look to the educator for support but would often follow the actions or suggestions of their peers.

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#### Example 27

*Peer scaffolds, The Snowy Day*

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Educator II: "Do you know what Peter was thinking in his bubble bath?"

Children: Splashing in a pretend bath and playing with bubbles.

Educator II: "He was thinking about his day and then he remembered something."

L: "I remember something, I put something in my jacket" L. jumps up and runs to imaginary jacket. Other children follow.

Educator II: "Ok, let's get up and check our pockets." She is following the children now rather than leading the action.

Educator II: "And then what happened?"

Z.: "There is something in mine!" The children pretend to cry or some call out "Oh, no" as they pretend to find melted snow.

Educator II: "In the story, Peter's snowball melted, and then what happened J.?"

Z.: "He's sad." Pointing to J. who is pretending to cry.

J.: "He went to bed and he dreamed of the sun melting the snow."

Educator II: "And he dreamed! Come, come S."

All the children are lying on the floor except S. who is playing with something on the shelf.

Educator II: "Did you hear that S.? He was dreaming the snow melted!"

K.: "You have to sleep."

Educator II: "We have to sleep?" Pretends to sleep.

L. is standing up over the children and making a large O with her arms.

Educator II: "What are you doing L.? Tell us."

L.: "I am being the sun!"

Educator II: "So we are going to dream and L. is going to be the sun."

L. spins around in her sun dance, all the other children lie on the floor and pretend to sleep.

---

The above example demonstrates how the children took initiative for the action and led in moving the plot forward. In the above example, the educator and other children followed the lead and initiatives of a few key players. It was a typical pattern during the progression of one DSR to see the children take more and more initiative in leading the plot and the actions as the DSR progressed. The educators then would use reinforcing behaviours such as reinforcing role-play and reinforcing children's ideas' as the DSR progressed and the children took more initiative. The following example took place

towards the end of the fourth DSR and demonstrates the children's initiatives that were reinforced by the educator.

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### Example 28

#### *Peer scaffolding, Just Me*

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Educator: "Ok, now stop. Daddy heard you and now together what should you do?"

Children: "Get in the boat." Two children pretend to get in the boat and begin rowing together.

Educator: "You step into the boat. That's a great idea! You can get in a boat with a friend. If you don't have a partner let me know."

Children: Children pair up. One child is looking for a partner.

Educator: Gets up from the chair where she has been throughout the reenactment and offers to be one child's partner.

Educator: "How should we do this?"

Child: "Like this!" demonstrates legs crossed facing her partner.

Educator: "With our legs crossed? I'm going to do it like G. & E."

Children: Rock back and forth, one child is acting as a helper for C. and partner. All begin to sing "Row, Row, Row your boat."

Educator: Sings "Row, row your boat" with children.

Children: Begin to move faster.

Educator: "Can we go a little faster? Faster but not louder."

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*Modeling.* Patterns of modeling emerged throughout the DSR process. During the first reenactment with Educator I, the children did not get up and move right away until Educator I modeled this saying “Let’s pretend we are walking through the tall grass.”

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Example 29

*First DSR, Going on a Bear Hunt*

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Educator I: “I am going to read the book again and this time we will pretend that we are the family in the story.”

Children: Children are sitting down and looking at the educator.

Educator I: Starts to read first page. Children are still sitting. Educator stands up and continues to read the first page.

Educator I: “Let’s pretend we are walking through the tall grass...” Models walking and moving tall grass out of the way and makes “swishy, swishy” sounds.

Children: Stand and begin to pretend to move through the tall grass making sounds.

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By the fourth reenactment (the second taped reenactment) the children rose to their feet right after the story was read and did not seem to need modeling to know what was expected.

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Example 30

*Fourth DSR, Just Me*

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Educator I: “So let’s start on the first page. I will turn the pages and it will remind you what happened. Let’s start on the first page.”

Children: Move from sitting position and spread out on the floor taking the first position of the boy in the story.

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During the whole reenactment of *Just Me*, Educator I remained in her chair and used narrating, questions and prompts to scaffold the reenactment. Educator I only joined the children at the end of the story, when she joined a child who did not have a partner to row the boat (see Example 28).

A similar pattern was observed with Educator II. During the first reenactment of *Mortimer*, the children stood and looked at the educator in between action sequences in order to get cues for movement.



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Example 31

*First DSR, Mortimer*

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Educator II: “And then what happens?”

Child1: “Then she throws him in bed?”

Children: Children are standing and looking at educator not moving.

Educator II: “How are we going to do that? We are going to pick Mortimer up and ...”

Several Children: “Throw him.” They, along with educator, pretend to throw Mortimer.

Child 2: “And then she says Mortimer be quiet!!!” others join in “be quiet!”

---

Once Educator II began modeling a few actions, the children caught on and followed the movements, initiating their own as well. By the fourth reenactment (the second DSR taped) the children did not look to the educator for as much guidance about getting started in movement. This time during *The Snowy Day* reenactment, Educator II asked how the story started; the children initiated the action of lying down in bed before Educator II modeled it.

Both educators implemented modeling role-play in every DSR, however, the pattern of modeling altered as the month long DSR intervention progressed. As the DSR intervention progressed, brief moments of modeling were demonstrated by the educators throughout the DSR process. The children would then take the initiative to lead the role-play movements (see Example 31).

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Example 32

*Modeling role-play, 7th DSR, Bear Shadow*

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Educator I: “Go away shadow.” She waves her arm at pretend shadow.

Children say: “Go away shadow.” and wave their arms to shoo shadow away.

Educator I: “But the shadow is not listening so you decide to do what?”

Children: “To run away!” Children begin to run, Educator I follows.

Educator I: “Look there is an obstacle in your way. There is a little stream you have to jump over the stream.” Educator I does not model action.

Children pretend to jump over imaginary stream.

---

*Ending the DSR.* Each educator established a definite pattern for ending the DSRs. This routine remained consistent throughout the DSR intervention. Educator I ended each DSR with a “smooth transition” strategy. This ensured that the reenactment ended quietly and calmly.

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Example 33

*Ending the DSR, Just Me, Educator I*

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Once the song “Row, row, row your boat” is finished. Educator one gets up and turns out the light and says, “After your big adventure you are very tired so lie down and rest. C.

Look at your friends and if they really are sleeping you can tap them on the shoulder. When you feel a light tap on your shoulder you can wake up and line up at the door.” The children lie down on the floor and wait for their turn.

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Educator II did not have as defined endings to her DSRs, but was consistent in bringing the group together at the end, usually for a short discussion.

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#### Example 34

*Ending the DSR, The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig, Educator II*

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Educator II: “They start to play monkey in the middle all together.”

Children: The children are speaking to each other in role.

Children: “Come into my house”, “You can come in and play with us!”

Educator I: “When you are finished playing come and join me on the carpet”.

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#### *Post-Intervention Questionnaire*

The post-intervention questionnaire provided insights into the educators’ points of view regarding the DSR process. The questionnaire was also valuable in learning whether or not the educators observed influences in other areas of play, resulting from the children’s involvement with DSRs (see Appendix I).

In the post-intervention questionnaire, both educators reported strategies that they used that helped to support the DSRs. When asked, “Can you identify some strategies you used that seem to support reenactments?” Educator I answered, “Modeling, using

illustrations in order to remember sequence of events, asking questions, and welcoming children's input." It is important to note that the educators answered this questionnaire before the member checking process was done with the categories of scaffolding, so they were not familiar with how the strategies had been described. When comparing Educator I's answers with the categories of scaffolding that emerged from the data, many similarities were evident. Educator I mentioned several story structure supports (using illustrations, asking questions) and dramatization supports (modeling, welcoming children's input) in her response. She did not mention any guidance strategies or story language supports.

Educator II's responses indicate that she recognized several dramatization supports and story language supports as helpful to the DSR process. Educator II reported that changing her voice to suit the characters' voices, using sound effects, being expressive, and modeling reenacting were important strategies for the DSRs.

When asked if they still had questions about how to best support DSRs, it is clear that they both had questions. How much to model was an issue for Educator II, who said "I'm still not sure how much to model and how much to step back and let the children lead. I am sometimes worried I am doing too much. It seems that if the children know the story well then they don't need me to model and lead so much." Although she was still ambivalent about this issue, her response indicated that she did have some insight and answers to her own question. The fact that she mentioned that she recognized that familiar stories require less modeling on her part is indicative of her insight.

Educator I mentioned some concern about the best stories to select. She stated, "I am not always sure if the book is going to work. I have chosen books that the children

really enjoyed, but if they don't have enough action then they don't seem to work as well." This answer clearly indicated that book selection is an important element for successful DSRs for Educator II.

The questionnaire also asked for the educators' observations about the children's participation and influences in other areas of play. Both educators reported that the children gradually took more initiative in leading the stories, contributing their ideas, and taking on roles. Educator I found it especially helpful for children who otherwise had a difficult time staying engaged in the story. The DSRs seemed to spill over into other areas of play. For example, Educator II stated, "I observed on many occasions children bringing their DSR experiences into their pretend play in the dress up corner, outdoor play, and in the block corner with toy animals and little people. Many bridges got crossed and homes blown up by big pigs. It has also spilled over during free-play art. The children drew and cut out characters to make stick puppets and put on puppet shows." Educator I said, "During outdoor play I was frequently asked to take on a role of 'someone bad' (e.g., the big bad wolf, Miss Viola Swamp), which lead to further experimentation with reenactment of those stories."

The final question posed was whether or not the educators will continue to implement DSRs. Answers provided in this questionnaire indicated that both educators will continue to implement DSRs with their groups and that they were met with enthusiasm and energy by the children. Educator I answered, "Most definitely! They are a useful tool to keep children engaged and interested. They invite creativity and innovation and generally provide a very enthusiastic response." Educator II responded,

“Yes, I will and have been continuing since the intervention ended. I would like to do it more often.”

This questionnaire was very helpful in helping to understand the educators’ perspective. The educators were able to observe their children all day and were able to provide invaluable feedback that confirmed my own impressions from my observations.

## Discussion

The following discussion addresses the research questions and findings examining three issues: the educators' role in scaffolding story readings prior to a DSR, the educators' role in scaffolding DSRs, as well as the patterns and influences of scaffolding in DSRs. The purpose of this study was to examine the educators' role in scaffolding DSRs and to make recommendations for practice. The findings from this study suggest that there were several interactive reading behaviours educators could incorporate during a story reading that may enhance the DSR process. Key findings from this study suggest that there were several practical scaffolding strategies that were implemented before, during, and after DSRs, which appeared to be helpful in ensuring the children's maximum participation and enthusiasm while engaging in DSRs. Specific patterns and influences of the scaffolding that took place during the DSRs will be discussed, as well as the children's and educators' responses to the DSR process.

### *Interactive Reading Behaviours for DSRs*

The educators who participated in this study both had more than 15 years experience in the field. Their educational training qualifies them as early childhood educators in Quebec and is representative of most English-speaking early childhood educators in Montreal. What sets them apart from other educators typically found in the field is the number of years they have stayed in the profession. Due to their experience and passion, they were interested and motivated to participate in this study. They both commented on how their participation was like free "professional development" and, as mentioned previously, they were excited about "trying something new." They both implemented story readings regularly throughout the day in their classrooms and were

confident in their abilities to lead group time story readings. Their confidence and experience provide a way to describe scaffolding strategies that model best practices. Although the educators might have been more experienced than other educators typically found in daycare centres in Montreal, the scaffolding strategies they employed in this study can be implemented by any qualified educator with a little practice.

The data from the Interactive Reading Behaviour Checklist were helpful in examining the scaffolding techniques the educators used during each story reading prior to the DSR. It was evident from the observations that both educators incorporated several interactive reading behaviours that have been identified as helpful in stimulating language development. It has been suggested that the talk that surrounds the reading of the text may be a key factor in literacy development (Morrow, 1992). Both educators in this study displayed behaviours that have been recommended previously such as active listening, asking open-ended questions, adding information, and prompting (Valdez-Menchea & Whitehurst, 1997). This demonstrates that the educators were both skilled in implementing a variety of interactive behaviours during their storytellings and that the children were not expected to sit passively during the shared reading experience. Other interactive reading behaviours discussed during the training session, such as using gestures and changing voices to suit different characters in the story, have been recommend previously by other authors (Morrow, 1997). The findings suggest that the educators used several of these behaviours in all the stories they read.

It was clear from the results of this checklist reported in the findings that different stories seemed to evoke certain behaviors in the educators. The way a story was written was a good indication of whether or not particular behaviours would be evident and the



frequency with which the behaviour would be demonstrated. Stories such as *Mortimer* and *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* included several passages where various characters spoke in role. When Educator II read this story, she changed her voice to suit the characters (25.7%) far more often than she did in the stories *Just Me* (10.7%) and *The Snow Day* (9%). The latter stories were written in a narrator's voice with little or no dialogue between characters (see Figure 12). It seems that the way Educator II used her voice during the story depended on the nature of the story. The strategy Educator II displayed during the story reading was also evident during the reenactment of these stories. Educator II used several prompts to encourage the children to use character voices and dialogue during the story reenactments of *Mortimer* and *The Three Little Wolves*. During the DSR of these stories she modeled the voices less frequently than when she read it, instead she encouraged the children with prompts. Thus, she employed modeling while reading the story prior to the reenactment and then implemented prompts to reinforce the child's own expression and role-play during the reenactment. Based on the results in this study it is possible that when modeling for story language is done during the story reading then educators can pull back on the modeling during the DSR. Educators can then move towards coaching strategies to encourage the children to take initiative in trying out the voices and speech from the story (see Example 14 in Findings). Modeling the language in a story and encouraging the children to repeat character voices and rhyming words has been recommended in previous studies (Constantine, 2001).

The way Educator I varied her voice and expressed the language during a story reading also seemed dependent on the style of the book. Frequencies indicate that Educator I would either change her voice or vary her expressions when reading stories

during every story reading (see Figure 6). Whether she chose to add more variation in her expressions, or to change her voice to suit a character depended on the story being read. The story *Going on a Bear Hunt* is written very descriptively and includes many sounds to describe the actions in the story. It follows then that Educator I varied her voice more frequently when reading this story (15.2%) compared to the other stories read. Using gestures was the behaviour most frequently observed in Educator I's IRBs, however there is an increase in the percentage of gestures demonstrated when reading *Going on a Bear Hunt* (32.8%) and *The Big Bunny and Easter Eggs* (32%) compared with *Just Me* (14%) and *Bear Shadow* (9%). A reason for this may be attributed to the stories. *Going on a Bear Hunt* is typically sung in call and response and the story is written in the same style. Educator I gestured every time the phrase "we can't go over it, we can't go under it, we have to go through it" passage was repeated throughout the story. Gestures also accompanied the various sounds to describe going through the obstacles such as "swishy, swashy, swishy, swashy" to get through the tall grass. Gestures may have been implemented frequently during *Big Bunny* because it was a new story for the children and there are several actions that the big bunny goes through.

The type of stories read also seemed to influence other interactive behaviours as well. Pointing to visual details was a behaviour demonstrated often by Educator I (18.1%) and less so by Educator II (13.7%), however, when Educator II read *Just Me* she pointed to visuals more frequently than she did in other stories (28.6%). This difference is probably due to the nature of the story. In the story *Just Me* the illustrations depict a boy physically imitating how the animals move by using his body to mimic wings, turtle shells, antlers and various other animal parts. The position that the boy takes in the

pictures is important to point out if the children are expected to dramatize the boy's movements in the DSR following the story. This story also seemed to influence the scaffolding techniques the educators used during the DSRs. Although some stories were read by both educators during the intervention process, the one story read by both and recorded for analysis was *Just Me*. The DSR scaffolding technique called "picture prompts" was used frequently by both educators during this story to encourage the children to observe how the boy was moving and what animal he was imitating on the next page.

The results of this study indicate that children's responses and behaviours also played a role in the educators' IRBs demonstrated. Some IRBS were quite consistent from story to story for both the educators: (a) inviting the children to ask questions and (e) responding to children's questions and comments only varied slightly from story to story with each educator (see Figure 6 & 12). This indicates that the educators are similar in how often they ask questions and respond to the children during a story reading. The IRBs in these categories seem to be more dependent on the children's responses and behaviours than on the type of story read. Asking open-ended questions and inviting the children's responses are interactive reading behaviours that have been shown to benefit children's language skills (Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992) and story understanding (Morrow, 1990).

The IRBs infrequently demonstrated by either educator included (b) relates children's responses to real life experiences, (c) comments on new or complex words, and (f) promotes further exploration of ideas presented in the story. It is reasonable to expect that these behaviours would not be seen as frequently as others as there may be

few opportunities in the whole story to relate a children's response to a real life experience, or there may be only one or two new words to explain. As far as promoting further exploration of ideas presented in the story is concerned, this is typically done through discussion after the story. In this case the reenactments took place directly following the story; the DSR was the vehicle for exploring the story further. Therefore, a rich and detailed exploration of the ideas from the stories were promoted and explored by the children through the DSRs and not during the story period. It is important and relevant to examine the context under which the educators used these interactive behaviours in order to understand why certain behaviours might have occurred with greater frequency than others.

The last behaviour examined in the checklist was (k) encourages the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read. This item was included on the checklist because it may be a behaviour that would help the children practice and prepare for the reenactment. Had the educators implemented this IRB, they would have been helping the children to build a repertoire of movements or gestures that they could draw on when standing up and reenacting the story after the story reading. This behaviour was only displayed once by Educator I (0.4%) and seven times by Educator II (4.3%). A reason for this low frequency is that the educators were instructed for the purpose of this study to act out stories with the children after the story reading. Educator I always told the children that they were going to act out the story after the story was being read; this may have reduced how often she incorporated acting out segments during the story. During the reading of *Bear Shadow*, however, an interesting occurrence took place. When Educator I began reading, the child with special needs stood up right away and began reenacting the

bear's actions. Educator I allowed her to do this and never redirected this behavior. Typically, during story time this child would interrupt the story on every page to ask a question or comment. By providing her with the opportunity to reenact the story while it was being read she did not interrupt the story and she listened very carefully as she acted out the story accompanied by Educator I's narration. This enabled the other children to hear the story without as many interruptions and it provided the other children with more opportunities to make comments and ask questions than they usually had. It was interesting to see how the other children were able to listen to the story and wait for their turn to reenact afterwards. They did not seem bothered in the least by the child's reenactment nearby. Once again, it is difficult to compare frequencies in this category with other IRBs because in this case the child was encouraged to act out throughout the whole story, so the educator only got one check for an occurrence that lasted for the whole story. It is important to examine the context where these less-frequent behaviours occurred. Even though they happened less often, they may have been important scaffolding strategies that help the children sustain their interest in the story and might have helped to make the reading experience meaningful and enjoyable for all the children. Allowing this particular child to act out the story while it is being read may be an appropriate practice to meet her individual needs, while still meeting the needs of the other children participating. Educator II occasionally encouraged acting out during the story (4.3%), especially in the case of *Mortimer* (see Figure 7). Educator II did this by encouraging the children to stamp their feet while running up the stairs, and calling out "Mortimer, be quiet!" In *The Snowy Day* she encouraged them to point their toes in once and to throw a snowball once. Acting out during the stories was not used frequently in

any of the stories read by either educator. It is difficult to determine whether or not this is a behaviour the educators use more often when they are not reading a story for reenactment, as only reenactment stories were recorded. Observation of shared story readings prior to the intervention would have been needed to determine this. It may be that both educators saved the reenacting activity for after the story because they were instructed to implement DSRs after the story reading. Both educators consistently told the children that they would be acting out the stories after they were read. This may explain why there was a low frequency for this behaviour. Acting out segments of the story during the story reading may be an interactive reading behaviour that helps the children rehearse for the reenactment and might help the children to be more independent with the pretend actions when they revisit the story during the DSR. This would enable the educators to model during the story and then use more prompts and reinforcing strategies during the reenactment. It is a strategy that would be recommended namely for educators to use more often when reading prior to a DSR, and could be a topic for further research.

To conclude, the data collected about the interactive reading behaviours the educators used during each DSR story reading demonstrate that their behaviours were influenced by many factors. The type of book selected seems to be a crucial factor, in that it influences how often an educator has the potential to change her voice to suit characters or use expressive tones and gestures. Educator I reported using many traditional fairy tales for the DSR intervention (see Appendix I). Unfortunately, the stories that were taped for analysis did not include any of these stories. Although Educator I used several voices when the story called for it, no doubt this would have been modeled more in stories where there was more repeated character dialogue. Based on these findings, an

important aspect of the educator's role in supporting DSRs is to select appropriate books. If the educator's goal is to encourage children to practice the language provided in a story or to speak in role using various voices and appropriate dialogue, then picking stories that meet this criteria can facilitate a richer language experience. The story reading that takes place prior to the reenactment can act as rehearsal for the DSR, as the educator models the voices and language used.

### *The Process Drama Approach*

An important aspect in examining the DSR intervention used in this study was to observe what happened when a process drama or creative drama approach was used with young children during DSRs. In earlier studies on Thematic Fantasy Play (Pellegrini & Galda, 1982; Saltz & Johnson, 1974; Silvern et al., 1986) there was an emphasis on encouraging children to select roles and take turns enacting them. The educators in this study were asked to use a process/creative drama approach where the focus of the scaffolding would be helping children learn and practice several skills through the process of the reenactment rather than how to reenact correctly. "The creative drama process integrates mental and physical activity, engaging the whole child in improvisational and process oriented experiences." (Pinciotti, 1993, p. 24). The educators did not assign roles or ask the children to take turns playing roles; instead they encouraged the children to play all the roles together at the same time.

It was clear from the scaffolding techniques used by the educators in this study and described in the findings that there were several strategies helping to support this process-oriented approach. The educators stayed focused on the process by never assigning roles to the children. There were no long discussions, debates or negotiations

about who was going to play what role and when. As discussed in the findings, the different strategies the educators used to begin the story such as boundary setting and sequence questions helped to facilitate an immediate start to the story, which involved all the children at once. This resulted in no conflicts in any of the DSRs over role taking (see Appendix H). If a child preferred to stay with one character rather than move on to the next character, he/she could. Several of the stories such as *The Snowy Day*, *Just Me*, and *Bear Shadow* had only one main character to follow and this type of story may be a good place to start reenactments with young children. Recommendation were made to use stories with only one main character during the training process prior to the intervention with the educators. Starting the DSR process with stories featuring one main character may also have helped to reduce conflict, as everyone played the same role at the same time. The children may have found it easier to follow the actions of one character when beginning the DSR intervention.

An important aspect of the process approach is that it enables every child to participate in a variety of ways at his/her own level. When examining the results from the PPVT-III tests, it was clear that the children in both groups had a wide range of English receptive language skills. Each educator had a child with special needs in her class as well as children whose first language was not English. In spite of these differences, the process approach enabled all the children to participate actively in the DSRs. The educators demonstrated this approach when they implemented strategies such as sequence prompts or sequence questions. A sequence prompt or sequence question (see Example 2 & 3) enabled the children to respond either physically or verbally to the prompt or question. When an educator asked what came next in the story, the children



would respond either verbally or physically or would often integrate both (see Examples 2 & 3). These scaffolding strategies made it possible for children with various verbal skills to participate and respond nonverbally. The process approach allowed for flexibility so that children can contribute in various ways to the reenactment. The educators' various scaffolding techniques of modeling, questioning, prompting, positive guidance and reinforcing all focused on the process of exploring the roles and actions in the story collectively.

Thus, the educator's role in scaffolding DSRs is to remain focused on the process and not the product while leading DSRs. Although the DSRs were teacher-directed activities, the support structures the educators used clearly reflected a constructivist approach where the children were encouraged to think for themselves, problem solve, make choices and cooperate and collaborate with the educator and their peers.

### *Patterns of Scaffolding*

It was expected that the patterns of scaffolding techniques would change over the month-long intervention. In actuality, the patterns of scaffolding techniques appeared to change during one reenactment. The scaffolding techniques that the educators used with each DSR were influenced by several factors that included how familiar the children were with the story, the type of story used for the DSR, the children's responses and ability to initiate, and lastly guidance issues.

*Beginning and ending the DSR.* Both educators began and ended the DSRs using a consistent pattern each time. As described in the findings Educator I's use of "boundary setting" (Example 23) helped to define the physical space and set the scene for the DSR. In earlier studies, Saltz and Johnson (1974) also recommended clearly setting the space

for reenactment and keeping the space consistent. Educator II did not set boundaries as clearly as Educator I prior to the reenactment but always began by asking a sequence question (Example 24), inviting their participation immediately. Starting the story in the same way helped the children know what was expected and provided guidelines for safety and guidance. Starting and ending the DSR consistently made the experience a predictable routine for the children and created a ritual for the DSR. Rituals have long been associated with drama and theatre (Way, 1967). With very young children the ritual provides a structure and routine that is familiar to the children. Predictability and routines are important for establishing trust and security with young children and is recommended developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

Similar patterns for ending the reenactments were also observed for both educators. Educator I ended the DSR consistently with a smooth transition strategy (see Example 20). Educator I consistently used elements from the story to help the children end the story quietly and move on to the next activity. This also provided routine and ritual to the DSR process. It ensured that every DSR ended calmly regardless of how active or chaotic the DSR process was. Ending the DSR session in a calm fashion tended to bring the group together and ground them before heading out of the fantasy world into the real world (see Example 33).

Educator II did not have as defined endings to her DSRs but was consistent in bringing the group together, usually for a short discussion (see Example 34). The gathering place was always the carpet where the story was initially read. Bringing the group together in some way is a common ritual after drama exercises and can serve several objectives. Coming together at the end of a DSR can be used to calm the children

down, to bring them to a relaxed state and can also serve as a means to discuss feelings and reflect on their shared experience. “Most closing rituals or techniques are designed to facilitate giving and receiving between group members, sharing their perceptions, collective creativity, and review and celebration.” (Emunah, 1994, p. 83). Although the educators used different strategies to begin the DSR and to bring it to closure, both styles seemed to establish a predictable routine where children seemed to know what was expected. Beginning and ending the DSR in a similar fashion helped to establish a structure for the DSRs, which seemed to help make the DSR routine predictable and reduced conflict and chaos. It can also help to reduce educator anxiety as the structure provides them with the confidence to control the potential chaos.

*Modeling.* During the first reenactment with Educator I, the children did not get up and move until Educator I began to model this by saying “Let’s pretend we are walking through the tall grass.” (see Example 29). By the fourth reenactment (the second taped reenactment) the children rose to their feet right after the story was read and did not appear to need modeling to know what was expected; the routine was well established by then (see Example 30). During this whole reenactment Educator I remained in her chair and used narrating, questions, and prompts to scaffold the reenactment. Educator I only joined the children at the end of the story to join a child who did not have a partner with whom to row the boat. It would seem that already by the fourth reenactment with this particular story the scaffold of modeling role-play could be dispensed with. The children did not seem to need it as they initiated the movements in the story (see Appendix H). They knew the routine and knew that as the story was narrated a second time that they could get up and interpret their own way of moving through the story.

A similar pattern was observed with Educator II. During the first reenactment of *Mortimer*, the children stood and looked at the educator in between action sequences seemingly in order to get cues for movement (see Example 31). Once Educator II began modeling a few actions, the children seemed to catch on and follow the movements, and initiated their own as well. By the fourth reenactment (the second DSR taped) it was observed that the children did not appear to look to the educator as much for how to get started in movement. This time during *The Snowy Day* reenactment, Educator II asked how the story started and the children initiated the action of lying down in bed before Educator I modeled it (see Appendix H). Both educators implemented modeling role-play in every DSR, however it was more evident in the first reenactments where the children seemed to need a model for what was expected. As the DSRs progressed the pattern of modeling changed and the children only seemed to need brief moments of modeling in order to take the role-play in to their own hands.

*The scaffolding dance.* In order to discuss how the scaffolding techniques evolve and changed over time by remaining focused on the process it is important to describe what I call the “scaffolding dance.” The scaffolds the educators seemed to be influenced not only by maintaining a process approach and the types of books they explored for DSRs, but also by the responses and initiatives of the children (see Example 25). The way the children responded to the scaffolds the educators implemented influenced the next scaffolding strategy the educators would use. This improvised “dance” demonstrated the educators’ ability to follow the children’s lead and to support their understanding and interpretations of the stories (see Examples 25 & 26).

How the educator proceeded and determined which strategy she used appeared to be dependent on the responses and initiatives of the children (see Examples 25, 26, 27, & 28). During the member checking process the definitions and categories of scaffolding were brought back to the educators; both educators were amazed at how many different things were going on while they supported the DSRs. They both agreed with the categories and thought they made sense but admitted that they were not aware of all that they were doing. Educator II responded, “Wow, I really did all those things! I was really faking it! I was never sure how much to lead; I tried to let them have as much say as possible.” Educator I said “I was aware of the guidance supports I was using and conscious of moving the story forward. I also tried to allow the children to lead with actions and saying what came next in the story as much as possible. It was never planned specifically though; I would support based on what was happening in the moment.” These responses as well as the actual scaffolds the educators used reflect a constructivist philosophy where both educators kept the children actively involved and provided just enough support to help them move to the next sequence, action or language in the story. Various scaffolds were removed or used less often as the children took over and initiated more and more of the action and language of the story on their own (see Appendix H, for a full transcription of *The Snowy Day*, fourth DSR).

The children acted as models to their peers and provided scaffolds for the success of the DSRs as well. The *Mortimer* DSR (Example 26) demonstrates the “scaffolding dance” that took place during a DSR. This was the first DSR initiated by Educator II. She had indicated that the children knew the story well and that it was one of their favorites. The Educator was able to start the reenactment right away by asking the children what

happened first. It was clear in the beginning of this reenactment that there were one or two key players (Child 1 and 2) who responded to the questions and prompts, thus helping to move the DSR forward. The reactions and initiatives of these children clearly influenced the next strategy the educator used. This was the children's first reenactment and they had not yet caught on to the idea of acting out all the actions. Child I said, "She throws him in bed." The children just stood and looked at the educator, then the educator initiated a role movement prompt by asking "How are we going to do that?" and then proceeded to describe picking up Mortimer and mimed this action. Once the children began to act this out the educator pulled back and allowed the children to finish the sentence she narrated, thus removing the scaffold when it was no longer needed. This back and forth dance occurred consistently throughout all the DSRs (see Examples 25, 26, 27, & 28). The amount and type of scaffolds used were dependent on the children's responses, their familiarity with the DSR process, and how well the children knew the story being reenacted. Although the children were familiar with the story of *Mortimer*, they needed more modeling support because this was their first experience with a DSR.

The scaffolding dance is also dependent on the educators' knowledge of how to act in the zone of proximal development as described by Vygotsky (1978). The examples described in the findings illustrate how the educators were able to assist the children throughout the DSRs by encouraging their problem solving skills for how to dramatize the story in a sequential manner, while making the experience meaningful for all the children participating. The interactive nature of the scaffolding dance is similar to the kinds of interactions that foster language development (Trousdale, 1990). The kinds of interactions that have been found to foster early language development are ones in which

the child is an active participant and is encouraged to take turns in conversations (Bruner, 1990). Extending and expanding on young children's language has been found to have positive effects on language development (Trousdale, 1990). The scaffolds used here by the educators during the DSR process kept the children involved as active participants, welcomed and encouraged their input, and extended and expanded on their ideas while fostered turn taking.

*Peer scaffolds.* The importance of the peer scaffolds to the success of the DSRs is evident and was very much a part of the scaffolding dance. One of the strengths of using a process drama approach is the group nature of the experience. The children were not only responsive to the educators' initiatives of role-play and story retelling but also reacted and interacted with each other during the DSRs. Although the children may have seemed to be role-playing alone as if in their own story by themselves, they may have also been influenced by the modeling of their peers. This finding is consistent with the work of Martinez (1993), who found that kindergartners were inspired to act out stories after viewing older children engaged in DSRs. There were several instances observed of children working together. "Through creative drama activities, young children come to value and develop ways to move from a practical personal experience into the shared affect and group image." (Pinciotti, 1993, p. 22). The children adjusted their images and actions in response to their peers as well as the educator, thus enhancing their abilities to negotiate and collaborate. When reenacting *The Snowy Day* (Example 27), one girl began to dance around in a circle making an "O" shape with her arms. The educator noticed this and asked what she was doing. When the child explained that she was being the sun melting the snow, the other children then integrated this into their reenactment. Another

example of the children taking initiative and working together was during the *Just Me* DSR (see Example 28). During this DSR, a few children initiated the idea of pairing up and playing “Row, row, row, your boat” as part of the reenactment when the boy meets his father with a boat during the story. The educators reinforced these ideas initiated by the children as they picked up on the children’s ideas and helped to integrate their ideas into the reenactment.

### *Influences of Scaffolding*

*Story familiarity.* How well the children knew the story before the reenactment seemed to be an influencing factor in the scaffolding supports the educators used. If the children knew the story well then it seemed to have an impact on how much narration was needed. *Mortimer* and *The Snowy Day* were well known to the children so these seemed to require less narration and more sequence questions and detail questions for story structure supports. Since the children knew the story well they only seemed to need a sequence question like “What happened next?” or were given a short prompt in order to recall the next event. By contrast, a story that less familiar to the children such as *Bear Shadow* and *The Big Bunny and the Easter Eggs* required more narration and longer passages of the story described by the educator in order to support the DSR. It seems that the children are better able to narrate the story themselves if they are familiar with it, therefore sequence questions and sequence prompts are more appropriate strategies when the story is familiar, as these strategies encourage the children to provide what comes next in the story.

Dramatization supports were also influenced by story familiarity, the children were able to initiate and recall more actions from the story if they were familiar with the



story. At the end of *The Snowy Day* reenactment (see Appendix H), the children were pretending to talk on phones to their imaginary playmates; others were calling each other and pairing up and asked if they want to go play outside. A few children held hands and pretended to go outside. Educator II said, “That’s right, they were holding hands.” She took hold of two children’s hands and walked with those children. Thus, the educator used reinforcement of role-play strategies by following the children’s initiatives rather than modeling the role-play for them.

Story familiarity also seemed to have an impact on the picture prompts used in story structure supports. Both educators implemented picture prompts often in a story that was less familiar to the children. In the story *Just Me* the pictures would serve as a scaffold to remind the children of what happened in the story (see Appendix H, *Just Me*). If the children were familiar with the story they did not seem to need as many picture prompts.

*Story type.* The type of story used also seemed to influence the scaffolding techniques educators used during the DSRs. The stories where story language supports were used often by the educators were stories that were written with many opportunities for character dialogue or where repeated text and phrases occurred as in *Mortimer*, *The Three Little Wolves and Big Bad Pig* and *Going on a Bear Hunt*. Several of the stories provided many opportunities to practice dramatization and movement, but not all the stories evoked story language supports due to the written style of the book. Role-play was encouraged in every story as the children became the characters from the story, however not every story offered the children the opportunity to speak in character. The stories that seem to evoke opportunities for role-play were plentiful in the stories *Just Me*, *Going on*

*a Bear Hunt, The Big Bunny and the Easter Eggs and The Snowy Day.* These stories evoked several dramatization supports from the educators and provided many opportunities to reinforce role-play. Story structure supports were used frequently in all stories as all the stories had clear beginning, middle and endings. This category of scaffolding did not seem to be as influenced by the written style of the book. This category of scaffolding was influenced by how well the children knew the story. As mentioned earlier, if the children knew the story well then questions and prompts worked well for both sequence and role-play, therefore the educators would use more reinforcement supports. If the stories were unfamiliar then more narrating and modeling seemed to be needed.

*Guidance issues.* The positive guidance supports both educators used helped to sustain children's involvement and participation in the DSRs, making it an enjoyable experience where children had the opportunity to participate at whatever level they chose. This is especially relevant based on the various levels of English language skills present in both groups. The type of guidance support provided by the educators seemed to be dependent on the situation and needs of the children.

Children were never corrected or told that their way of dramatizing was not correct. The guidance scaffolding techniques described in the findings and used by both educators seemed to encourage full participation. In reviewing the videotapes of all the DSRs, there were very few instances recorded of children choosing not to participate. All the children participated in all the reenactments taped. Occasionally one or two children would wander in and out of the reenactment briefly, and they were usually redirected successfully back in by the educators when they used the redirection positive guidance

strategy (see Examples 18 & 19). By remaining focused on the process and using positive guidance techniques like redirection, signals, and smooth transitions, conflicts and disruptions to the DSR process were minimal (see Appendix H). The positive guidance supports, which included: boundary setting, redirection, signals, and smooth transitions the educators implemented were key to helping the children sustain their involvement in the DSR and maintain a positive atmosphere throughout the DSR experiences. There were no conflicts between children recorded in any of the DSRs. There were two instances of bumping that occurred briefly causing only a brief interruption in the DSR. The strategies the educators used in this area were specific to the context of DSRs and can be used as guidelines for future DSRs in order to reduce conflict and disruptions.

### *Children's Enthusiasm*

Based on the educators' feedback provided in the Educator Post DSR Intervention Questionnaire (see Appendix I), it is clear that the educators found DSRs to be a valuable experience for themselves and the children. Feedback from the educators also confirmed my own observations that the children embraced the DSRs with much energy and enthusiasm. When I was in the daycare to observe the DSR process, both educators commented frequently on how the children were responding so positively to the experience. Throughout the intervention time period when a story was brought out for shared story reading, it was common for the children to ask "Are we going to act this one out?" On occasions when I arrived at the daycare on a non-DSR taping day, the children would become excited to see me and say "Cathy's here we are going to act out a story!" The educators then tried to incorporate a DSR that day even if one was not planned because the children were so enthusiastic. On one occasion, when one child saw me she

immediately ran to her cubby, pulled out two books she had brought from home, showed them to me and said “Look Cathy, I brought these from home, they would be good for acting out!” These examples helped to confirm the enthusiasm I had witnessed in previous experiences implementing DSRs with young children. DSRs are an experience that children find so natural and enjoyable and are met with much enthusiasm. Children love the opportunity to engage in pretend play, and playing alongside an adult they trust that both supports and encourages them is meaningful and pleasurable.

### *Educators' Enthusiasm*

One of the goals of this intervention was to train educators to implement DSRs so that they could experience first hand their value and impact. My objective was for the educators to discover alongside with me the strategies that support the DSR process. One intent was to help these educators feel confident and successful so that they would continue to use DSRs with groups of children in the future. This goal was met with the two educator participants in this study. They both expressed their desire to continue to implement DSRs and have continued to use them in their classrooms since the intervention. Both educators reported feeling more comfortable leading DSRs as the intervention progressed, and discovered strategies that worked for themselves and their groups. Although they continued to have questions regarding best practices they both expressed the desire to keep discovering, improving, and trying out DSRs. When conducting the member checking with each educator, the categories and definitions of scaffolding were presented to the educators (see Table 4). As described earlier, the scaffolds chosen were not always planned, and both educators were not always conscious of how they were supporting story understanding, dramatization, and story language. The

scaffolding categories and definitions can now be used as a tool to guide their decisions in the future. Defining and describing the categories also confirmed for them all the valuable supports they were already providing. Both educators were enthusiastic about receiving this tool in order to guide their DSRs in the future. This finding supports previous research where it has been found that teachers who participate in play training become more actively engaged with children in play (Woodard, 1984) and witness first-hand how much the children welcome their input and participation (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1999).

#### *DSRs and Play*

Studying the impact of DSRs on the children's dramatic play was beyond the scope of this study, however the educators did provide some interesting anecdotal observations of the children's play during and after the month long intervention. The DSR process seemed to influence the choices for play themes and roles they selected for dramatic play during free-play situations. Educator I reported an increase in story related role-play during outdoor play. The children would often ask Educator I to play the "bad guy" from the stories. In these cases the reenactments were initiated by the children and not by the educator. Educator II reported influences of the DSRs in the block corner, dramatic play area, art and outdoor play where the stories would spill over and influence the themes and roles they would take on. On one specific occasion I observed a direct link from the DSR experience to the dramatic play that followed. This observation took place directly following Educator II's class DSR of *Just Me*. In the story the main character is miming the way the animals on the farm move. On one page a farm goat is imitated. Immediately following this reenactment a few children asked if they could take

out the bridge and play *The Three Billy Goat's Gruff*. Educator II turned the rocking boat over to act as a bridge and the children initiated a spontaneous reenactment of the story of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. The children themselves negotiated turn taking and who would play each billy goat. Almost every child in the group participated collectively in this dramatic play event, including the child with special needs. These observations suggest that DSRs can influence the dramatic play of young children. When children are engaged in DSRs they are given the opportunity to practice the play skills necessary for sociodramatic play. The DSRs also inspired and motivated the children to try out different roles and to incorporate story related themes in their dramatic play.

To conclude, this study points out the need to define the scaffolding strategies educators use to support DSRs. This close examination of DSRs in progress has helped to do just that. Based on the findings from this study specific strategies can be implemented that support a process/constructivist approach, which enables the children to be actively involved in retelling and reenacting stories. The structure and patterns discovered here can be used as guidelines to support the success of future DSRs as a regular practice in early childhood environments.

## Implications for Practice

This applied research study provided the educators an opportunity to implement a new experience in their classrooms. Through the implementation of DSRs, the educators were able to review and improve upon their practices and scaffolding strategies. These strategies can be shared with other educators who are interested in providing dynamic and enriching literacy experiences in their classrooms. The findings from this study will be used to educate preservice early childhood educators in my capacity as teacher and supervisor in the ECE department at Vanier College. Based on the discoveries made in this study several recommendations for scaffolding DSRs successfully with preschool children can be made.

### *Story Selection*

The findings in this study indicate that story selection is an important factor in the success of DSRs. Story selection seems to be especially important when first implementing DSRs. It is important to select stories that the children are familiar with at first; this will support the children's ability to recall events and dramatize key actions in the story. Morrow (1997) recommends using predictable books in order to encourage active participation during shared story readings. Predictability is ideal for DSRs because it allows children to guess what will happen next. Thus, predictable books where catch phrases are repeated as in *Going on a Bear Hunt*, *Mortimer*, and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, predictable sequences as in *Just Me*, and well-known fairytales also facilitate the dramatization. The catch phrases in predictable books are rehearsed during the story reading, thus supporting the dramatizations during the following DSR.

When first implementing DSRs, one should also consider choosing stories with one main character to follow. This supports the process approach where everyone can be the same character at the same time. As the children and educators become more familiar with the process of DSRs, stories with more characters can be introduced. Books with strongly delineated characters and settings, clear plots and themes, and definite resolutions were recommended criteria presented to the educators during the training session (Morrow, 1992). These criteria are important for scaffolding children's understanding of story structure. The stories selected by the educators in this study met these criteria and provided the educators several opportunities to use story structure supports during the reenactment. By reenacting high-quality literature with their educators, the children not only heard how stories work, but were able to be a part of the story as they were immersed in it.

It is recommended that educators select stories where there are several opportunities to practice characters' voices and speech. The stories that seemed to facilitate this were the traditional or adapted fairy tale or folk tales. The children knew these stories well and had the opportunity to practice the characters' voices with their educator during the shared story reading. Books that are written in a more narrative style where there is little character dialogue do not allow as many opportunities for children to practice speech and character dialogue from stories.

#### *Interactive Reading Behaviours*

Using several interactive behaviours during the shared reading prior to the DSR can enhance the reenactment. Children should be encouraged to participate by joining in with actions, gestures, voices and speech during the story, thus providing a model for the



reenactment that follows. When the children have the opportunity to practice these behaviours during the story reading then they are more prepared for the reenactment that follows. The interactive reading behaviours that educators use during the story readings can support the children's story understanding, making the experience meaningful and acting as a rehearsal for the DSR. Encouraging the children to practice the language used in a story by inviting the children to join in or repeat character dialogue and repeated phrases from predictable books gives the children the opportunity to become familiar with the language and dialogue used in the stories. Educators can model gestures and voices during the shared story reading, then pull back and use coaching strategies during the reenactment, thus the children can interpret the roles and actions themselves. Providing children with the opportunity to act out certain segments of the story while it is being read is also recommended. This will enhance the children's understanding of the actions and sequence of events in the story.

#### *Scaffolding the Start of a DSR*

Based on this applied examination of DSRs, recommendations can be made about how to begin DSRs. Defining the boundaries and setting the scene for the reenactment is important in supporting the children's understanding of where the reenactment can take place. Providing a few details about the setting can facilitate the child's immersion in the setting of the story. Setting boundaries helps to reduce guidance issues, as the children know where they can move. Defining the space for reenactment is supported and recommended in earlier studies by Saltz and Johnson (1974). Paley (1999) also defines the space for children when reenacting stories; she often uses masking tape to mark the stage space for reenactment. In the reenactments examined here, carpets were often used

to define the space, especially when the “big room” was used. Paley also uses carpets to define spaces for reenacting “Because if you run off the rug, you’re no longer in the story” (Paley, 1999, p. 41).

### *Ending the DSR*

Ending the DSR on a quiet note is recommended to help the children return to a calm state after leaving their fantasy play and prior to re-entering the real world. Using smooth transitions where the educator uses aspects of the story to guide the children in either coming together for discussion (Educator II), or relaxing with guided imagery (Educator I), helped to support the children’s transition to the next activity. This enabled the DSRs to end in a calm and orderly fashion no matter how chaotic the reenactment became.

### *Scaffolding the DSR Process*

The process approach used in this study is recommended and suitable for preschool children. Allowing the children to experience role-playing collectively removed the need to wait to take a turn in a role. This approach facilitated active involvement from all players regardless of their play skills. It is common in sociodramatic play episodes to find key players who lead and dominate the play (Smilansky & Shefatya, 1990). This can result in less opportunity for the children who are not as assertive when selecting roles. In this study, all the children playing roles simultaneously allowed the children to learn from each other and use each other as models while interpreting the actions in their own unique ways.

There were no props or costumes used in the DSRs in this study; this was a recommendation made during the training process, based on my own experiences with

DSRs as well as recommendations from Saltz and Johnson (1974), who found that props and costumes tend to distract the children. Adding objects to the DSRs can result in children focusing more on setting up the scenes physically and playing with the props rather than focusing on dramatization of the story and role-play. The lack of props and costumes used in this study also confirmed that it is sound practice not to complicate the process with these objects. It especially appropriate with 4-and 5-year olds who are not as dependent on props or objects for imaginative play (McLoyd, 1983). Props and costumes are recommended in the dramatic play centre in order to facilitate children's independent story reenactments after the guided DSR.

The scaffolding dance described in this study involved educators moving from story language supports, dramatization supports, story language supports and guidance supports depending on her knowledge of the group and the children's needs. These strategies supported the children's ability to participate, contribute and sustain their involvement in DSRs. These strategies embraced a constructivist approach where the children are actively engaged and encouraged to lead and initiate their learning as much as possible. When educators used these scaffolding supports, the children were able to communicate their understanding of the stories through language, sound, gestures and pretend actions. Alternating between modeling (models role-play, models voice/speech, models repeated text), coaching (sequence questions, detail questions, narrating, picture prompts and prompts text) and fading (reinforces role-play, reinforces voice/ speech) techniques throughout the DSR is appropriate scaffolding for this process.

The amount of modeling needed is dependent on the children's skills and experience with DSRs as well as knowledge and familiarity with the story being

reenacted. Based on this study it is recommended that several modeling strategies be used while the story is being read and then the educator can move to more coaching strategies during the DSR. Modeling is also needed in the first few DSRs until the children are comfortable and catch on to the process. If the stories are complex and unfamiliar to the children then the educator will be required to do more modeling. Educators need to be observant and receptive to how the children respond and contribute in order to make the appropriate choices for scaffolding. The scaffolding strategies used in this study can be referred to as guidelines, however the appropriate strategy is bound by the context of the situation. What is most important is to remain focused on the process and create a positive atmosphere so that the children can take over the reenactment as much as possible.

Finally, one strategy that was not frequently observed during the DSR intervention but is a crucial component of the DSR process is to focus on character's feelings. An important and positive consequence of participating in drama activities is how it helps to improve one's perspective taking skills (Heathcote, 1991). Helping children to develop empathy skills is a crucial task for early childhood educators (Lilliard & Currenton, 1999). An important aspect of empathy development is the child's role-taking ability. The ability to put oneself in someone else's place and to anticipate what that person is likely to feel or how he/she might act is the very essence of empathy (Lilliard & Currenton, 1999). DSRs provide children with an abundance of opportunities to practice role-play, thus supporting their empathy skills. Finding opportunities to use the strategy focus on character's feelings under the broad category of dramatization supports is suggested. Educators need to make a conscious effort to point out how a

character might be feeling by asking questions such as “How do you think Peter felt when he couldn’t join in the snowball fight?” Encouraging the children to interpret feelings through dramatization skills like mime should also be emphasized. This can be done by asking “Movement questions” that focus on the way a character moves or looks when a feeling is recognized (i.e., “Peter was sad, show me how you walk when you are sad.”). Using this strategy more consciously throughout DSRs will encourage the children to practice their perspective-taking skills, which have been deemed as crucial to social skills (Lilliard & Currentin, 1999).

If the need to know how someone else feels is the rock upon which the moral universe depends, then the ancient sages were right. For this is surely what happens when children give each other roles to play in their continual inquiry into the nature of human connections. (Paley, 1999, p. 61).

## Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study cannot be overlooked. First, the length of the intervention of one month was relatively short. Although eight videotaped recordings of the DSR process provided more than enough data for analysis, it is possible that the patterns of scaffolding would have changed more dramatically had the intervention been longer. The last DSR recorded for analysis was the twelfth DSR for each group. It was still a relatively new experience for the children. It would be interesting to observe how the scaffolding strategies changed in a longitudinal study.

The data collection took place at a single site with only two educators, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. The site was purposefully selected for this study because the educators were willing participants who were motivated and enthusiastic about trying out a new experience for themselves as well as the children in their groups. The amount of experience each educator had also contributed to the high-quality scaffolding strategies that emerged from the data. If this study had examined the scaffolding strategies of less-experienced educators, the scaffolding strategies might have looked very different. One purpose of this study was to make recommendations for practice, therefore discovering scaffolding strategies that support DSRs by studying the procedures used by two experienced educators, who provided a model for appropriate practice.

There was no control over the books used for reenactments in this study. This provided a naturalistic examination where the educators were free to choose books based on their own curricular decisions. Throughout the intervention, Educator I used several books that included opportunities for character dialogue, however these were not

recorded on tape. It would have been interesting to observe more variety in the types of books read and reenacted, especially by Educator I in order to get a clearer picture of how scaffolding techniques are used when the books contain several opportunities for character dialogue and speech.

The quality of the daycare and the demographics of the children are other factors that could be considered as limitations. The children in this daycare already benefited from rich literacy experiences with their educators. The majority of the children came from middle-class homes where most parents had post-secondary education. The patterns of scaffolding might look quite different with children of lower socio-economic status or those in daycare centres of lower quality. The children's ability to initiate and contribute to the DSR may take more time with children who are less advantaged. However, the population of the children in both classes in this study did include children with a wide range of English language receptive skills, children with special needs, and second language learners. This is representative of the populations most educators face in daycare centres in Quebec, thus strengthening transferability.

To conclude, my own extensive experiences with DSRs influenced the way categories of scaffolding were defined, selected, and described. Although the analytic process used in this study was grounded theory, this implies that the theories and practical recommendations that emerged were grounded in the data. Nonetheless, I was influenced by my own expertise and knowledge of the topic. "In educational research, as in many social sciences today, the researcher is often a relative insider in the field, studying a topic that he or she already knows quite well." (Harry, Sturges & Klinger,

2005). The triangulation methods used in this study helped to mediate my biases, strengthening validity.



## Conclusions

The present study makes several contributions to the research on dramatic story reenactments and best practices for supporting them. There is a scarcity of literature on this topic and none that examines a process-oriented approach as analyzed in this study. The findings from this study indicate that implementing DSRs with preschool children can be an active and enjoyable way for educators to extend stories. DSRs allow the children to revisit the story and interpret the characters' meanings and intentions. They provide an abundance of opportunities for children to practice language, motor, and social skills. The years between 3 and 5 have been deemed as especially important for long-term literacy development (Dickenson & Neuman, 2006). "Today, more than ever before, early childhood literacy is regarded as the single best investment for enabling children to develop skills that will likely benefit them for a lifetime." (Dickenson & Neuman, 2006, p.1). There is a growing need to find meaningful literacy experiences for young children that actively engage all the children in a daycare group regardless of their various abilities.

The findings from this study validated my own previous impressions of DSRs and highlighted their importance. DSRs are a valuable literacy activity that young children embrace due to their interest in pretend play. Yet it is a practice seldom implemented by daycare and preschool educators on a regular basis. Even the highly experienced educators in this study disclosed that it was a new practice for them and that they did not use DSRs regularly in their classrooms prior to this study. Many educators are concerned with keeping order and are not always comfortable with the high energy levels children may exhibit in a DSR. They also lack the practice and knowledge for selecting

appropriate books and appropriate strategies to support the DSR process. This study uncovered many categories of scaffolding, creating a theory of practice that can be used as guidelines for implementing DSRs successfully with preschool children. The recommendations made here can provide a structure for implementation of DSRs. Educators often feel more comfortable when they have specific guidelines to follow.

The results of this study highlight the need for further study on the impact of DSRs with young children. There is some evidence that DSRs enhance literacy skills (Constantine, 2001; Pellegrini & Galda, 1982; Silvern et al., 1986) as well as dramatic play skills of young children (Saltz & Johnson, 1974). Due to the scope of this study, the impact of the DSR intervention on these children was not examined. Directions for further research might include studying the impact on preschool children's storytelling abilities based on the importance of understanding narratives and school success (Peterson, 1994). There was some evidence discussed in the findings and discussion of this thesis that implied that the DSRs influenced the children's subsequent dramatic play. A one-month intervention is probably not enough time to make a dramatic impact. Studying the impact of DSRs over a longer period of time is recommended.

Examining DSRs with populations of children from lower socio-economic backgrounds is also a direction for further research. Studies have revealed that children living in low SES families have more difficulty with narrative ability (Peterson, 1994). Implementing DSRs with children from less-advantaged backgrounds may strengthen and support their story understanding and literacy skills.

This study confirmed that DSRs are a valuable literacy experience that can be implemented by educators successfully in a daycare setting. As the populations in

daycare centres in Montreal are typically diverse with increasing numbers of cultural and linguistic differences, there is a need to explore non-traditional approaches to language and literacy experiences. The need for new approaches to language and literacy education that considers the various and diverse needs of young children is recommended by researchers in the field (Spodek & Saracho, 1993). This study brought to light a new approach that enabled all children to actively participate and contribute in collaborative ways with their educator regardless of their cultural and intellectual differences. "Stories that are not acted out are fleeting dreams: private fantasies, disconnected and unexamined." (Paley, 1990, p.25).

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**Appendix A**  
**Director Letter of Consent**

Dear Director,

My name is Cathy Burns. I am a teacher at Vanier College in the Early Childhood Education Department. I am also a Master's student in the Child Studies program at Concordia University. I am working under the supervision of my advisor Professor Ellen Jacobs. For my thesis I am interested in how different interactive story sharing methods influence children's abilities to retell stories.

For this study I would like to work with the educators and the children in both 4-year-old groups. This research project will involve several phases. The children's participation would consist of participating in Dramatic Story Reenactments (where children act out familiar stories from literature with the guidance of their teacher) three times a week for four weeks. I plan to observe and videotape the teachers and the entire group of children sporadically during the Dramatic Story Reenactments process. I will also meet with each child on an individual basis on three separate occasions. Prior to the implementation of the project I will meet with each child to play two games. The first will be a picture vocabulary game in which the child will be asked to identify objects amongst pictures. The second game will involve retelling a recently heard story with the help of a feltboard and corresponding felt pieces. The third session will take place after the children have participated in the Dramatic Story Reenactments for one month with their teachers. At this meeting each child will repeat the feltboard storytelling game. The children's storytelling will be audio recorded for accurate transcription.

The educator's participation will involve a brief training session with me prior to the implementation of Dramatic Story Reenactments with the children. The training session will involve viewing a teacher training video based on best practices for implementing Dramatic Story Reenactments. Discussion of strategies as well as suggested books will also be reviewed. I will also model a session with each group of 4-year-olds with the educator's participation. The educators will be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire providing me with demographic information as well as a questionnaire on reading styles. I will also ask the educators to make brief notes regarding the process throughout the implementation.

It has been my experience that children enjoy these activities. There are no anticipated risks involved in this study and the children will benefit from active involvement in stimulating story experiences with their teacher. I will end the sessions with any child who is unwilling to participate, even if parents have previously given their consent. All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and anonymous. No centre, child, teacher or parent will be identified at any time and all results will be reported as group and not individual findings.

If you agree with having your centre be part of this study, please sign below. I would like to thank you for the attention you have given this letter. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me, Cathy Burns at (514) 486-8765 or by email at [burnsc@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:burnsc@vaniercollege.qc.ca) or my advisor Professor Ellen Jacobs at (514) 848-2424 ext. 2016, or be email at [jacobs@education.concordia.ca](mailto:jacobs@education.concordia.ca).

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 ext.7481 or by email at ([areid@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:areid@alcor.concordia.ca))

Thank you,

Cathy Burns

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Director Signature

Date

**Appendix B**  
**Educator Letter of Consent**

Dear Educator,

My name is Cathy Burns. I am a teacher at Vanier College in the Early Childhood Education Department. I am also a Master's student in the Child Studies program at Concordia University. I am working under the supervision of my advisor Professor Ellen Jacobs. For my thesis I am interested in how different interactive story sharing methods influence children's abilities to retell stories.

For this particular study I would like to work with you and the children in both 4-year-old groups. This research project will involve several phases. The children's participation would consist of their involvement in Dramatic Story Reenactments (where children act out familiar stories from literature with the guidance of their teacher) three times a week for four weeks. I plan to observe and videotape the children and the teachers sporadically during the Dramatic Story Reenactments process. I will also meet with each child on an individual basis on three separate occasions. Prior to the implementation of the project I will meet with each child to play two games. The first will be a picture vocabulary game in which the child will be asked to identify objects amongst pictures. The second game will involve retelling a recently-heard story with the help of a feltboard and corresponding felt pieces. The third session will take place after the children have participated in the Dramatic Story Reenactments for one month with you. At this meeting each child will repeat the feltboard storytelling task. The children's storytelling will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Your participation will involve a brief training session (approximately one hour) with me prior to the implementation of Dramatic Story Reenactments with the children. The training session will involve viewing a teacher training video on best practices for implementing Dramatic Story Reenactments. Discussion of strategies as well as suggested books will also be reviewed. I will also model a session with each group of 4-year-olds and ask you to participate. You will then integrate Dramatic Story Reenactments with your group at natural and convenient times, aiming for three times a week for four weeks. I would like to observe these sessions sporadically throughout the implementation to observe the process over time. I will ask you to fill out a brief questionnaire regarding demographic information as well as a questionnaire on your interactive reading style. I will also be asking for your cooperation in making brief notes regarding the DSR process throughout the four-week project.

It has been my experience that both children and educators enjoy these activities. There are no anticipated risks involved in this study and the children will benefit from active involvement in stimulating story experiences with their teacher. I will end the sessions with any child who is unwilling to participate. All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and anonymous. No centre, child, teacher or parent will be identified at any time and all results will be reported as group and not individual findings.

If you agree to participation in this study, please sign below. I would like to thank you for the attention you have given this letter. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me, Cathy Burns at (514) 486-8765 or by email at

([burnsc@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:burnsc@vaniercollege.qc.ca)) or my advisor Professor Ellen Jacobs at (514) 848-2424 ext. 2016, or email at [jacobs@education.concordia.ca](mailto:jacobs@education.concordia.ca).

Thank you,

Cathy Burns

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I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation in this study at anytime without negative consequences.

I understand that my participation in this study is confidential.

I understand that the data from this study may be published.

Educator Signature

Date

---

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 ext.7481 or by email at ([areid@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:areid@alcor.concordia.ca)).

**Appendix C**  
**Parent Letter of Consent**

Dear Parent(s),

My name is Cathy Burns and I have a long history with West End Daycare. I am a former educator, director and parent at West End; currently I am a teacher at Vanier College in the Early Childhood Education Department. I am also a Master's student in Child Studies at Concordia University. I am working under the supervision of my advisor Professor Ellen Jacobs. For my thesis I am interested in how different interactive story sharing methods influence children's abilities to retell stories. The director and the teachers have agreed to participate in this research project and now I am seeking your permission for your child to participate in this study.

Your child's participation would consist of involvement in Dramatic Story Reenactments where children act out familiar stories from literature with the guidance of their teacher. I plan to observe and videotape the teachers and the children sporadically during the Dramatic Story Reenactment process. I will also meet with your child on an individual basis on three separate occasions. Prior to the implementation of the project I will meet with your child twice to play two games. The first will be a picture vocabulary game in which your child will be asked to identify objects amongst pictures. The second game will involve retelling a recently heard story with the help of a feltboard and corresponding felt pieces. After the four week Dramatic Story Reenactments process with their teachers, the third session will take place. At this meeting your child will repeat the feltboard storytelling task. The children's storytelling will be audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. I will also ask you to fill out a questionnaire regarding the types of literacy experiences you and child participate in at home.

It has been my experience that children enjoy these activities. There are no anticipated risks involved in this study and the children will benefit from active involvement in stimulating story experiences with their teacher. I will end the sessions with any child who is unwilling to participate, even if you have given permission. All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and anonymous. No centre, child, teacher or parent will be identified at any time and all results will be reported as group and not individual findings.

I would like to thank you for the attention you have given this letter. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me, Cathy Burns, at (514) 486-8765 or by email at [burnsc@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:burnsc@vaniercollege.qc.ca) or my advisor Professor Ellen Jacobs at (514) 848-2424 ext. 2016, or by email at [jacobs@education.concordia.ca](mailto:jacobs@education.concordia.ca).

Thank you,

Cathy Burns

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 ext.7481 or by email at [areid@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:areid@alcor.concordia.ca).



Please initial all that apply:

Yes, I give permission to Cathy Burns to allow my child to participate in this study.

Yes, I give permission to Cathy Burns to videotape my child participating in dramatic story reenactments with their teacher and classmates for research and educational purposes.

No, I do not give permission to Cathy Burns to allow my child to participate in this study.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation in this study at anytime without negative consequences.

I understand that my participation in this study is confidential.

I understand that the data from this study may be published.

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Child's Name

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Parent/Guardian's Name

---

Parent's Signature

---

Date

**Appendix D**

**Educator Demographic Questionnaire**

## Educator Demographic Questionnaire

### Personal Background

1. Date of birth?
2. Gender M \_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your country of birth?
4. When did you arrive in Canada? (if relevant)
5. What is your mother tongue?
6. How long have you been speaking English? (if relevant)
7. How would you rate your fluency in English? (on a scale of 1-5, 1 being "very fluent" and 5 being "not fluent at all".)
8. How many languages do you speak and what are they?

### Educational Background

1. Number of years of High School required to graduate? \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of years of High School completed? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where did you attend High School? \_\_\_\_\_
2. College or CEGEP program enrolled in?  
Describe:  
Number of credits required to graduate? \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of credits completed? \_\_\_\_\_
3. University program enrolled in?  
Describe:  
Number of credits required to graduate? \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of credits completed? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Qualifications to work in child care?  
Attestation: Number of credits? \_\_\_\_\_  
DEC: Number of credits? \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of completion? \_\_\_\_\_  
Other, Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

### Job-Related

1. How many years of experience have you had in Early Childhood Education? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you have a co-educator in the room with you? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_
3. How often do you attend ECE workshops or Conferences? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Can you name some of the workshops you have been to recently? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What types of workshops interest you the most? \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E**

**Educator Interactive Reading Style  
Self-Report**

## Educator Self-Report

### Adult reading behaviors during story readings

In a week, how often do you read to the whole group? \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you read to individuals or small groups? \_\_\_\_\_

#### INTERACTIVE BEHAVIOURS DURING STORY READINGS

**Note: Every time indicates every time you read the story.**

During group story readings do you...

Talk about the book?  
(cover, author, illustrations or source of the story)

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Introduce the story?  
(give clues to what the story is about)

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Invite the children to ask questions or comment?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Relate children's responses to real-life experiences?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Comment on new or complex words as they appear?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Point to visual details throughout the story?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Answer questions and respond to questions children ask?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Promote further exploration of ideas presented in the story?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Provide materials that encourage children to retell stories?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Use facial expressions that reflect the meaning and feelings in the story?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Use gestures related to actions in the story?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Change the rhythm and nature of your voice to suit the story?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Vary vocal expressions to suit the characters in the story?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Encourage the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Act out the story together as a group after the story reading?

Every time      Often      Sometimes      Infrequently      Never

Comments:

**Appendix F**

**Educator Interactive Reading Behaviours Checklist**

## INTERACTIVE BEHAVIOURS DURING STORY READINGS CHECKLIST

During group story readings prior to reenactment the educator...

Talks about the book	cover	author	illustrations	source
Introduces the story (gives clues to what the story is about)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Asks open-ended questions inviting the children to comment	_____	_____	_____	_____
Relates children's responses to real-life experiences	_____	_____	_____	_____
Comments on new or complex words as they appear	_____	_____	_____	_____
Points to visual details throughout the story	_____	_____	_____	_____
Answers questions and responds to questions children ask	_____	_____	_____	_____
Promotes further exploration of ideas presented in the story (through discussion of key aspects of the story)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Uses facial expressions that reflect the meaning and feelings in the story	_____	_____	_____	_____
Uses gestures related to actions in the story	_____	_____	_____	_____
Changes the rhythm and nature of her/his voice to suit the characters in the story	_____	_____	_____	_____
Varies vocal expressions to suit the story (sound effects, mood and pacing)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Encourages the children to act out segments of the story as it is being read	_____	_____	_____	_____



**Appendix G**

**Annotated Bibliography of Children's Books Read for DSRs**

## Annotated Bibliography

Allard, H. & Marshall, J. (1977). *Miss Nelson is missing*. New York: Library of Congress Cataloging.

This story tells the tale of a group of mischievous second graders who take advantage of a very nice substitute teacher. One day Miss Nelson (the kind substitute teacher) is replaced by Miss Viola Swamp, a strict disciplinarian. The children miss their nice substitute teacher and go looking for her to no avail. The following day Miss Nelson returns and the children rejoice. It is implied at the end of the story that Miss Viola Swamp was Miss Nelson in disguise.

Appleby, E. (1984). *The three billy goats gruff*. New York: Scholastic.

This traditional tale is about three billy goat brothers. A big brother, a medium sized brother and a little brother. The billy goats gruff are hungry and there is no more grass in their meadow to eat. They need to cross the bridge to get to the other side where there is plenty of grass to eat. The problem they face is that there is a mean old troll living under the bridge who threatens to eat them if they pass over his bridge. The billy goat gruff brothers outsmart the troll in the end and manage to make it across the bridge unharmed.

Asch, F. (1985). *Bear shadow*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Little bear goes fishing and finds that his shadow is frightening the fish away. Bear tries several means to get rid of his shadow to no avail. Bear discovers that his shadow changes depending on the time of day and where the sun is.

Carle, E. (1997). *From head to toe*. USA.: Harper Collins.

Animals help to introduce the basic body parts and simple body movements. Children are encouraged to participate and imitate the animal's movements.

Hall Ets, M. (1965). *Just me*. Chicago: Puffin Books.

A little boy on a farm tries to mimic the walking of all the animals he sees including turtles, rabbits, horses and cows. In the end he sees his dad who arrives by rowboat. The boy decides to join his dad and discovers the best way for him to get to his father quickly is to move like a boy and run.

Hartman, B. & Ragman, T. (2002). *The wolf who cried boy*. New York: Penguin Putnam.

A humorous parody of the classic folktale "The boy who cried wolf". In this version the little wolf is sick of eating junk food and longs for his favorite meal a real boy. Little wolf angers his parents by crying "boy!" falsely. What really happens when a real boy

does appear? The little wolf learns the same lesson that the boy who cried “Wolf!” did in the original tale.

Keats, E.J. (1962). *The snowy day*. Canada: Puffin Books Inc.

A classic story about a young boy’s adventures in the deep, deep snow. Peter makes a snowman, makes angels in the snow and pretends to be a mountain climber. Peter watches older children in a snowball fight and discovers what happens when you take snow home in your pocket.

Kroll, S. & Stevens, J. (1987). *The big bunny and the easter eggs*. Canada: Scholastic.

Wilbur the easter bunny is so sick he almost misses delivering his easter eggs. Wilbur finds many creative ways to ensure that his deliveries arrive on time.

Marshall, J. (2001). *Goldilocks*. New York: Penguin Books.

This version is a retelling of the classic tale of a young girl who enters the home of a family of bears when they are not at home. After exploring the house she finds a comfy bed to nap in. The family of bears return home to find their house is not how they left it and stumble upon the little girl.

Marshall, J. (1993). *Little red riding hood*. New York: Penguin Books.

This story describes the adventures of a little girl who travels through the forest on her way to her sick grannies house. In the forest she makes the mistake of talking to a wolf.

Munsch, R., & Martchenko, M. (1992). *Mortimer*. Canada: Annick Press.

This story deals with a theme every child can relate to, not wanting to go to bed. In this story Mortimer is put to bed and promises that he will be quiet and go to sleep. The minute his mother leaves the room he makes a big racket and will not go to sleep. Several adults get involved n helping get Mortimer to go to sleep quietly. In the end Mortimer falls asleep when nobody is looking.

Munsch, R., & Martchenko, M. (1980). *The paper bag princess*. Cananda: Annick Press.

A modern take on a classic fairytale theme, the damsel in distress. This time however, it is the prince who has been captured by the dragon. The princess Elizabeth outsmarts the dragon and saves her prince. The prince Ronald is hardly grateful and Elizabeth decides not to marry him in the end.

Munsch, R., & Martchenko, M. (1989). *Murmel, Murmel, Murmel*. Canada: Annick Press.

A young girl discovers a baby in her backyard sandbox, the baby can not speak and can only say “Murmel, murmel, murmel ...”). The young girl sets out on many adventures to find the baby a home. This could be seen as a story about adoption.

Rosen, M., & Oxenbury, H. (1989). *We're going on a bear hunt*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

This story is based on the classic call and response chant about a family who is going on a bear hunt. Before they get to the bear cave they need to go through many obstacles including, long tall grass, thick mud, and a river. The language is repetitive and descriptive making it easy for children to follow and repeat.

Sendak, M. (1988). *Where the wild things are*. USA: Harper Collins.

The book tells the story of Max, who one evening runs around the house in a wolf costume chasing his dog with a fork. As punishment, his mother sends him to bed without supper. In his room, a mysterious, wild forest grows out of his imagination, and Max journeys to the land of the Wild Things. They are fearsome-looking monsters, but Max conquers them with a scary look and he is made the King of all Wild Things.

Trivizas, E., & Oxenbury, H. (1994). *The three little wolves and the big bad pig*. New York: Alladin.

A funny take on the classic tale “The three little pigs”. The three little wolves make several houses out of different materials, but the big bad pig uses different tools to destroy each one (including dynamite for the brick house!). Finally the wolves make a house out of flowers and this appeals to the pig, they all live happily ever after.

Wilson K. (2002). *The bear snores on*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Several forest animals visit a bear's cave where they warm up and participate in a host of other activities while the bear snores on and never wakes. When the bear finally wakes up his cave is full of uninvited guests. The bear is ready to play, but all the other animals have now fallen asleep.

Wise Brown, M. (1942). *The runaway bunny*. New York: Scholastic.

A little bunny finds many creative ways to run away from his mother. The mother always finds a way to playfully catch him and show her little bunny that she loves him very much.

**Appendix H**  
**Transcripts of DSRs**

4<sup>th</sup> reenactment, 2<sup>nd</sup> taping.

*Just Me*

Educator I/ classroom

Educator

“So let’s start on the first page.

I will turn the pages and it will remind you what happened. Let’s start on the first page. Pretend that you are the boy watching.”

Remains sitting in her chair holding book.

“What is he watching here?” shows picture.

Reads first page.

“Look at all the cats crawling in the room Oh, we can hear them too! Loud cats.”

“Oh, oh” Puts her hand up.

“When my hand goes up like this that means there is another animal that the boys sees.”

Turns page.

“Who is this?”

“Now the boy walks just like the rooster. Let’s see the rooster walking”.

Short interaction with F. (can’t hear)

“Now, do roosters make any sounds sunshines?”

Turns page. “ Oh, oh, the page is turning and we see what?”

“A pig taking a bath in the mud.”

“And the sounds too, the oinking”

“And on this picture, do you remember sunshines?”

“Was the pig actually moving around? What was the pig doing? Who can remind me?”

“Lying in the mud and enjoying that bath. Oh, oh, the page is turning.” Turns page.

“Bunny rabbits! C. You like to be the bunny”

Children

Children stand up, some move into a position on the floor.

All children stand, preparing to move now.

“A bird”

Children begin to crawl like a cat and make cat sounds.

Children meow louder.

Children stop and look towards book.

“Rooster, rooster!”

Children move around room like rooster position boy takes in book.

“Cock a doodle doo!”

“A pig. A pig!”

Children make pig sounds.

B. “My guinea piggy makes oinking sounds too”

Children are crawling like pigs.

“No, no”

“Lying down in the mud!”

Children lie down and roll.

“Bunny Rabbit!”

Children hop around and say “bunny, bunny”

"Do bunnies make sounds as they hop?"

Children continue to hop, some sounds.

"Sometimes they stop to look around to check who is watching them." Models this action on the chair.

Children continue to move like rabbits.

Time given to hop.

"Ok, bunnies, now the page has changed. Now the little boy, he saw something slithering through the grass."

Children begin to slither on floor.

"Let me see if you can be a snake slithering through the grass."

C. is not involved.

"C. What about you, show us how a snake would move."

C. begins to slithers with others.

"And now sunshine's" Turns the page.

"The cow" Children begin mooing.

"The cow didn't walk around because he was busy doing something, who remembers what the cow was doing?"

"Eating grass"

"You could do the same thing you could eat the grass, and what else did he eat, what do we see growing?"

Children pretend to eat grass.

Shows picture  
Gives time for eating.

"Flowers"

Turns page. "And then Gonky the goose spread his wings, can you show me your wings?"

Children use arms as wings and flap around room.

Gives time for movement.

"And started to run"

"Be careful not to bump into your friends."

Children continue flying.

"And the boy ran too, moving slowly and gracefully"

One child is neighing.

"And now (turns page) the horse walked a few steps."

"Look M!" One child goes under the table and another child joins.

"One horse is hiding, what's wrong? The horse is hiding under the table."

"It's a doggy, it's my doggy" one child referring to see C. under the table.

"But right now we are pretending to be different animals from this story."

Children neighing and moving like horses

"Let's see the horse, ready to be horses? We can hear them too"

Gives time

“Stop horses, stop, page is about to turn.” Turns page.

“The boy is climbing”

“He climbed high and fast”

Gives time

“Stop” turns page. “This is something you all like to do, butting heads”

“Just like Bucky the goat”

“And once in awhile the goat stops to eat, what do goats like to eat?”

Repeats “grass, flowers and hay”

“We remember that from the story of The Three Billy Goats Gruff”

Turns page.

“Show me how a frog jumps, fantastic, look how high you can go”.

“Wow, and far too!”

“Sunshine’s” Raises hand for stop signal.

“When you accidentally bump into somebody, what should you say?”

Gets up and moves to 2 children who bumped.

Turns page.

“Are we all done or is there something else to look at?”

“The frogs are tired?”

“Are you a turtle feeling shy and hiding inside your shell, or are you a curious turtle peeking out and looking around?”

“Let me see, one child is hiding, just like the one...”

“Now the last picture.

Turns page

“The boy looks in the distance and sees a man and the boat, he is untying the boat.”

“What does the boy want to do?”

Children pretend to climb, some move quickly.

Children look at picture and then pretend to butt heads like a goat.

Children continue action.

Different children call out “Grass, flowers, hay!”

Others begin to hop around, some make frog sounds.

Two children bump heads when they jump.

“Excuse me, excuse me.”

Some children have sat down. They are slowing down.

A few children “A turtle!”

Some children hide, some poke out heads.

Various children “Me too, I’m hiding, me too.”

Children pretend to untie boat.



“Let’s see”

“Does the father hear him right away?”

“What does the boy do?”

Gives time for running.

“Ok, now stop, Daddy heard you and now together what should you do? You step into the boat.”

“That’s a great idea! You can get in a boat with a friend. If you don’t have a partner let me know.”

Names a few children.

Gets up and offers to be one child’s partner.

“How should we do this? With our legs crossed? I’m going to do it like G. & E.”

Sings “Row, row your boat” with children.

“Can we go a little faster? Faster but not loud.”

After song, gets up turns out lights and says, “After your big adventure you are all very tired so lie down and rest”

“C., you look at your friends and if you see they are really sleeping you can tap them on the shoulder.”

“When you feel a light tap on your shoulder you can wake up and line up at the door.”

“Dad, Dad, Dad” calling out, repeating each other.

“No”

“Run!”

Children run around.

“Get in the boat” Two children pretend to get in the boat and begin rowing together.

Children pair up! One child is looking for a partner.

“Like this!”

Children rock back and forth, one child is acting as a helper for C. and partner. All sing “Row, Row, Row your boat”

Children move faster.

Children lie down and wait for their turn.

4<sup>th</sup> reenactment, 2<sup>nd</sup> taping.  
*The Snowy Day*  
Educator II/ Classroom

Educator

Sitting on a chair, reads "The Snowy Day"

"Does anyone remember how the story started, what is the first thing?"

"Where was Peter, in his room?"

Lies down with the children

"Someone has to be the snow?"

"You could be the snow or Peter"

"Then what happened?"

"What do we need first?"

"And then what do we do?"

"Our boots and our scarf and what else do we do?"

Pretending to get dressed up.

Turns page of book and shows children.

"We go outside"

"Come on S. we are going outside!"

"Now we make a path, and how did he make a path?"

"Well, no, he did something before he made a path"

"His feet S., something with his feet, how did he do that?"

"And what sound did his feet make?"

"Crunch, crunch, crunch, crunch and he walked with his feet walking out like this."

Walks around with feet out with children.

"And then he walked with his feet how?"

"And then he walked with his feet doing what?"

"That's right!"

"I see something"

Children

T. "Peter woke up and then it started snowing."

Children lie down pretending to be in bed

J. "In his bed"

L. "Someone has to be the snow"

K. "He goes outside"

Children pretend to put on boots, jackets etc.  
A few children: "mittens, mittens"

P. "Now we have to go out side." All except S. march around.

T. "Now we gotta make a path"

Some children are lying down.

J. "His feet!"

Children move around stomping their feet.

"Crunch, crunch, crunch"

Children march around with feet pointed out.

Few children; "Like this" few children point feet in and others follow.

"A stick!"  
"What is it?"

"That's right, something sticking out of the snow, and what did he do with the stick?"

Gives time for movement

"And then what happened?"

"Ok, and the snow fell where?"

"Yes, and then what happened, then what happened, does anyone remember?"

"He plays for a little bit"  
Begins to walk around with children

"He was walking on his way for a little bit and then what did he see?"

Shows picture

"And then he saw..."  
"There big guys, so then what happened?"  
"So what did he decide to do then?"

"He made a snowman and angels"  
"Let's make the snowman, lets roll it"  
Begins to pretend to make a snowball and mimes rolling it in snow.

Give time for snowball making etc.

"And what kind of face did the snowman have?  
K. Do you remember?"

"And eyes, and eyebrows, and a smiley face,  
there is our beautiful snowman".

"Then he made snow angels" Observes a few children already doing this "Oh, they jumped ahead of us"

Addresses child who is watching. "You want to watch that's ok."

"Let's make our snow angels"

Lies on the floor and makes snow angels with children.

"Then where does he go?"

L. "I see something, something sticking out of the snow".

J. "He slammed the tree" Children begin to hit imaginary tree and make hitting sounds.

Children make plopping sounds, some say "On his head!"

Children are walking around.

Z. "He sees his friends"  
P. "They're not his friends they're big guys"  
J. "They're teenagers!"

J. "He made snowmen and angels!" Other children call this out to.

Children are rolling balls, some are placing imaginary pieces on snowmen, some are throwing snowballs.

Can't hear what K. says. Some children are helping educator make snowman.

1 child: "Eyes, eyebrows"  
Another child: "Smiley face"

All children make snow angels except K. who says, "I want to watch"

A few children: "He walks"

J. "He walks home"

"He walks, ok, we walk". Begins to walk with children "Where do we walk to?"  
"What do we do when we get home J.?"

"Put our snow inside our pockets, we went inside the house with our snow in the pocket, and then we take out bubblebath?"  
"With our snowsuit on?"

"We have to take everything off"  
Pretends to take off clothes and get into bath.  
"And then we went to take our..."

Gives time for movement of getting into bath.

"It's very warm, bubbles, bubbles, bubbles!"  
Pretends to play in bath with children.

"Do you know what Peter was thinking in his bubble bath?"

"He was thinking about his day and then he remembered something".

"Ok, let's get up and check our pockets"

Observes the children and laughs

"And then what happened? 2x

"In the story, Peter's snowball melted, and then what happened J.?"

"And he dreamed, come, come S."

"Did you hear that S.? He was dreaming the snow melted."

"We have to sleep?"

"What are you doing L. tell us".

"So we're going to dream and L. is going to be the sun"

Gives time for L. to melt and be the sun.  
"You want to be snow S.?"

"Ok, let's get up, look outside and see"

"What happened?"

J. "He takes some snow and puts in his pocket and goes into his house and tells his mom and takes a bath."

Children are picking up imaginary snow and putting in their pocket while J. narrates.  
"Yeah!"

"Bath"

Children laugh and undress. All children get into their imaginary bath.

Children pretend to splash and make bubbles.

L. "I remember something, I put something in my jacket"

Z. "There's something in mine".

Some children pretend to cry or call out "Oh, no" as they pretend to find melted snow.

Z. "He's sad" pointing to J. who is pretending to cry.

J. "He went to bed and he dreamed of the sun melting the snow."

All the children are lying on the ground except S. who is playing with something on the shelf.

1 child: "You have to sleep."

L. is up and standing over the children and making a big O with her hands. L. "I am being the sun."

L. spins around slowly in her sun dance, all children lie on floor and watch her.

Few children: "Let's look outside!" Children rush to window in class.

"There is snow!" Some say, "It was just a dream!"

“There is snow! It was just a dream!  
What does he decide to do Z.?”

“Come S. they went outside”

“That’s right, they were holding hands”  
Holds hands with a few children and walks  
around.

“They remember better than I do” aside to C.

Leads children to carpet area where the story was  
read hand in hand with some children, “So they  
walk hand in hand to end the story.”

Z, “Call his friends!”

Some children make pretend calls on imaginary  
phones, some children pair up and ask each other  
to go outside. Other children call to each  
other and take hands and pretend to go outside.

**Appendix I**

**Post-Intervention Questionnaire and Responses**

## Post-intervention Questionnaire

**Question 1: Please list the books you used for story reenactments.**

Please see annotated bibliography (Appendix G).

**Question 2: What types of stories seemed to work best with your group of children?**

**Educator I:** “Classics of children’s literature (because of elements of familiarity and predictability). Books where good overcomes evil. Books with clear and appealing illustrations.”

**Educator II:** “The stories they were most familiar with- the ones we had read and discussed more than twice, for example (*The Snowy Day*, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, and the Robert Munsch collection).”

**Question 3: Can you identify some strategies you used that seem to support story reenactments?**

**Educator I:** “Modeling, using illustrations in order to remember sequence of events, asking questions and welcoming children’s input.”

**Educator II:** “My voice: Changing the tone of my voice to go loud or soft to either portray different characters, draw children’s attention or depict a dramatic moment.

Sound effects: I would use my hand to make knocking sounds or slap my hands on my knees to make climbing sounds as in *Mortimer*.

Being expressive: I felt being expressive and thrilled about what I was reading allowed children to get excited about the story. I modeled excitement of stories and participated actively in the reenactments.”

**Question 4: What did you notice about the children’s participation during the story reenactment intervention? Did their participation change overtime?**

**Educator I:** “Enthusiasm and gradual increase in creativity during story reenactment sessions. Children who otherwise need help staying engaged in stories I read, paid attention to the plot eagerly anticipating the next action.”

**Educator II:** “I noticed with some stories some of the children would volunteer more of their own ideas and add on to what the story was describing.”

**Question 5: Have you noticed any influences of the story reenactments in other areas of play?**

**Educator I:** “During outdoor play I was frequently asked to take on a role of “someone bad” (e.g., the big bad wolf, Miss Viola Swamp) which lead to further experimentation with reenactment of those stories.”

**Educator II:** “Definitely, I observed on many occasions, children bringing their DSR experiences into their pretend play in the dress up corner, outdoor play and in the block corner with toy animals and little people. Many bridges got crossed and homes blown up by big pigs. It has also spilled over during free-play art. The children drew and cut up characters to make stick puppets and put on puppet shows.”

**Question 6: Have the children asked to act out stories during shared reading storytime, when reenactments were not planned? If yes, give an example.**

**Educator I:** “One day, at snack time, I told the children about the story involving the Easter bunny who got sick and almost didn’t deliver the goods. After snack there was a sudden rush to act out the story, which prompted me to look for the book “The big bunny and the easter eggs” and used it for one of my planned DSRs.”

**Educator II:** “Yes, on many occasions. On two specific occasions when stories were read too close to outdoor time, we decided to act it out outdoors. I realized I now need to



plan extra time around the story so that we have time for reenactment. When we run out of time we figure out a time when we can do it, usually in the afternoon.”

**Question 7: What questions do you still have about how to best support reenactments?**

**Educator I:** “I am not always sure if the book is going to work. I have chosen books that the children really enjoyed but if they don’t have enough action then they don’t seem to work as well. Occasionally the children say who they want to play in the story, I am wondering if I should allow them to select roles, perhaps they are becoming interested in this. Would this interfere with the focus on the process?”

**Educator II:** “I’m still not sure how much to model and how much to step back and let the children lead. I am sometimes worried I am doing too much. It seems that if the children know the story well then they don’t need me to model and lead so much.”

**Question 8: Do you think you will still continue to implement DSR’s in your classroom?**

**Educator I:** “Most definitely! They are a useful tool to keep children engaged and interested. They invite creativity and innovation and generally provide a very enthusiastic response.”

**Educator II:** “Yes, I will and have been continuing since the intervention ended. I would like to do it more often.”

**Additional Comments:**

**Educator I:** “I would think that the next step to DSR would be to experiment with assuming different roles simultaneously. It takes a little work, effort, flexibility and ability to negotiate but the children themselves have begun to engage in these activities.”

**Educator II:** No additional comments.