FOSTERING EMOTIONAL AWARENESS IN A GRADE TWO CLASSROOM: AN APPROACH USING LITERARY EXPERIENCES

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Dedication

To Duncan, Heather and Greg: Thank you always, for your love and support.

Abstract

This action research project was created to investigate if purposeful experiences with literature can lead to an increased emotional awareness in students. In my regular grade two classroom of twenty-seven children, I created a teaching model that exposed the students to selected literature through reading and listening. The literature that was presented to the students consisted of a combination of well-known stories and new titles that are rich in vocabulary and character development. Ensuing group conversations allowed the students to reflect on what they discovered in the story and to relate similar experiences from their own lives. Individual and group response work then provided an opportunity for metacognitive processes, creating a greater depth of self-reflection and increased emotional awareness in the students. In the model, individual story writing then served as a culmination by combining real-life experiences, self-awareness, and increased vocabulary to create a permanent record of the emotional growth of the students. The study fit easily into an existing language arts program. It followed the language arts curriculum framework set in place by Western Canadian Protocal. Data sources for the project included videotapes, field notes, journals, student response work and student story writing samples. Data was collected from four students over a period of twelve weeks and was analyzed for evidence of patterns of growth in their emotional development. During the project, careful thought was given to ensuring that the feelings and situations of children were addressed in a positive, supportive manner. The interactions among the students and between the students and myself were genuine and productive. The experiences involving literature served as a catalyst to promote these results. Combined, these two components provided opportunities for

individual students to develop their levels of emotional growth. Purposeful strategies can be created and implemented by classroom teachers to foster the growth of emotional awareness in their students. This is important knowledge for educators who feel they have a role in the emotional development of students.

Preface

"The most unique power that each person possesses is the power to be herself or himself... to sing your own song, to dance your own dance, speak your own poetry. It is the power to be true to your best self..."

(Sergiovanni, 1998)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Robin Bright and Dr. Shirley Crawford for the assistance and support they gave me in completing this project. As well, thank you to the Foothills Cohort, its members and supporters – together we embarked on a journey of discovery. Thank you to Mike Evans, Tony Hampshire, Kendra Hayes and the staff at Big Rock School; to Ada and to Carol for their richly textured contributions to my work; and to my students whose energy and interest gave exciting momentum to my classroom research.

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Research Question and Background

Introduction

Emotional awareness is a current topic of interest for researchers and educators. Linked to the study of emotional intelligence, (Goleman, 1995) and brain science (Jensen, 1998), there is a great deal of discussion about what classrooms and schools can do to integrate research findings into curriculum and subject areas. Research in the classroom is a genuine and practical way to investigate questions and possibilities that educators have discovered about this topic (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997). In doing this project, I felt that purposeful emphasis on emotional awareness could potentially influence the feelings of self-confidence and empowerment – two demonstrations of emotional growth - of my grade two students. I believe that a significant factor in promoting the emotional development of students is the genuine interest of the teacher. In my project I investigated the possibility of combining my interest in this topic with specific grade two curriculum areas (Jeroski & Dockendorf, 2000) to create a model that would foster emotional awareness in my students. Using selected children's literature as a springboard, the students engaged in conversation and response work, relating their real life experiences to the emotions of the characters in the stories that were presented. Then they used their new level of understanding to write stories of their own, creating pieces of work that included the common elements of a story as well as descriptions of their story characters' emotions, the circumstances that caused the emotions and the resulting situations.

Research Topic

Using an action research model, I investigated whether or not students' feelings of self-confidence and empowerment can be fostered through guided use of classroom literature and writing experiences.

Assumptions

1. Current research in emotional intelligence can be purposely combined with effective learning approaches, allowing students to strengthen areas of personal emotional development.
2. Depending on their individual backgrounds, grade two children enter a stage of emotional development where they can begin to self-reflect on their own feelings and experiences.
3. Purposeful literary experiences including exposure to appropriate stories, discussion and response work, can foster a greater depth of self-reflection and increased emotional awareness in students.
4. Story writing can be used as a culmination to response work and self-reflection. Combined with real-life experiences and increased vocabulary, the stories provide a permanent record of the emotional growth of students.

Background

Children around the age of seven and eight are at a stage of emotional development that is, according to Wollman-Bonilla and Werchadlo (1999), fascinating to investigate. They leave the egocentric world of early childhood and begin to understand a more complex world of relationships, points of view and feelings of empathy. This transition and the accompanying changes allow children to undertake major changes in responsibility, independence and social roles (Greenberg & Snell, 1997). During this time, most children begin to develop a sense of empowerment. This means they start to understand how to deal confidently with emotional difficulties which enables them to handle their problems in a seemingly positive, assured manner. This confidence becomes part of a framework that continues to develop with time and experience, benefiting them in a variety of personal and social situations throughout their lives. However, this is not evident in all children. Some students, characterized by low self-esteem and poor social skills, struggle through continual emotional conflicts, becoming aggressors or victims (Garrity, 1994).

Having taught this age group for the past twenty years, I believe teachers, especially at the elementary level, develop personal relationships with their students, recognizing the emotional attributes of those individuals in their pedagogical care. That is, with an ease that develops through experience, teachers engage in interactions that serve to expand the emotional repertoire of students. Frequently these situations happen incidentally during unstructured school time. Thus, such encounters are not generally documented nor well understood (Resnick, 1990). I believe that purposely-structured classroom experiences can facilitate observable growth in the emotional awareness of

children. It is very rewarding to see emotional development in students. On innumerable occasions I have seen children smile and hold themselves proudly because of a casual conversation I had with them on the playground. By carefully phrasing a question or making an insightful comment, I have been able to help individual children understand the validity of their feelings and ideas. For example, when I was supervising at recess one day last winter, a student who was walking with me, began talking about her disappointment in not being able to go to her friend's birthday party that weekend. She had to go stay at her dad's place, which was in another town. Sensing her frustration, we talked about how she was feeling and some strategies that would help her cope with the situation. It was a brief conversation, but I knew that I helped her clarify some of the feelings she had about having her plans interrupted because of her family situation.

I find these moments to be small, consistent successes for children who are developing a feeling of control in their own lives. It is my wish that all children develop as reflective and empathetic individuals; that they feel self-confident and empowered.

Action research (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2000) is an efficient and timely approach for giving structure to this project. I have previously experienced the direct impact of a successful action research project. The students who were involved in the project with me knew that I genuinely sought their input and they facilitated the direction of the project with exciting results. As we solved a problem together, they experienced significant changes in their attitudes and behaviors. At the same time, common goals and high motivation created a unifying bond amongst themselves and with me.

Teachers are recognized as primary sources of knowledge about what is inside their classrooms and schools (Bird, 2000). Sergiovanni (1998) believes that with the wisdom of experience, careful analysis of the situation at hand and commitment to professional virtue, the sources of authority become internal and knowledge based; teachers become empowered to make genuine contributions to their profession. Through deliberate planning, the researcher's focus is clarified, data is collected and analyzed, results are reported and informed action is taken (Sagor, 2000). Action research becomes part of a commitment that teachers make to their learning and growth (ATA, 2000).

Literature Review

Assumption 1: Current Research

Current research in emotional intelligence can be purposely combined with effective learning approaches, allowing students to strengthen areas of personal and emotional development. Research in brain science and emotional intelligence has had a strong impact on today's educators because of the connection it has with long-held theories of effective teaching (Dickinson, 2000). Maslow was one important contributor with the construction of hierarchical levels of human development. The highest level is self-actualization, where we make the fullest possible use of our talents and abilities (Maslow, 1970), and show an integrated blend of experience and wisdom (Miller & Seller, 1990). Maslow believes that certain preconditions must be met for us to develop to our highest level of capabilities. These qualities need to be modeled and nurtured from childhood in homes, schools and communities. Teachers may help students achieve small successes and continue to increase challenges as they improve their skills (Dickinson, 2000). Everyone must have opportunities to discover and use their own strengths.

Piaget's contributions to child development also provide structure in effective teaching theory (Piaget, 1963). He states that concepts and their relationships are stored in a person's mind as schemata. Every child has unique schemata, making each learning situation an individual experience. The teacher needs to create conditions that will enable each child to accommodate new information into existing knowledge (Buchanan, 1985). This relates directly to brain science where it is recognized that each student has a unique background of experience and will acquire new knowledge according to the brain

circuits he or she already have developed (Jensen, 1998). Gardner's (1983) work on "multiple intelligences" also provides background information for considerations in today's educational settings.

Abbott and Ryan (1999) wrote an article based on the premise that emerging brain science supports constructivist learning as one of the most effective learning approaches for children in schools. Using a constructivist form of learning, each child structures his own knowledge and new experiences into a unique pattern. It is a living web of understanding, demanding that learning is essentially active. Research shows that with appropriate stimulation, these high order-thinking skills can begin to be developed at an early age.

Jensen (1998) is interested in the inseparable links between emotional intelligence, brain science and successful learning. He writes that emotions have their own physical pathways in the brain, about how the brain's chemicals are involved with emotions and how these pathways and chemicals are linked to learning and memory. Emotions trigger the chemical changes in our brains, which alter our moods and behaviors. This is significant for educators because research indicates that when positive emotions are engaged right after a learning experience, the memories of the experience are more likely to be recalled. In turn, the accuracy of recall also increases. Engaging appropriate emotions is an invaluable part of children's learning as a way of helping them create their individual patterns of knowledge.

Sylwester (2000) writes that effective teaching and learning require an understanding of the importance of students' emotions and feelings. Emotion alerts us to the existence of a challenge, which then activates the problem-solving processes that develop a

response. However, emotion itself does not solve the challenge. Aroused emotion allows us to maintain interest in the problem. As well, emotions can artificially be aroused which activate cognitive systems and enhance learning. Well-chosen activities such as games, role playing and class projects can provide emotional contexts for learned material. In turn, acquired knowledge and skills can then be readily available in the memory for application to future learning.

Kessler (2000) speaks of helping students develop and nourish an inner level of deep connection. Profound caring and respect are part of a spirituality that builds a healthy identity that is central to a child's development. Authentic relationships with others are also a source of deep connection. Young people missing this in their lives will seek to find a connection through developing a significant bond with a caring adult such as a teacher, a relative or a stranger. Unfortunately, some children become misguided and pursue unhealthy relationships and activities. Kessler writes that a deep connection to community encourages authenticity for each individual member in the group. This sense of belonging enables children to form healthy attachments and relationships, which lead to the creation of social competence.

Assumption 2: Emotional Development of Students

Depending on their individual backgrounds, grade two children enter a stage of emotional development where they can begin to self-reflect on their own feelings and experiences. In one school program, Quest Skills for Growing (Resnick, 1990), specific activities are outlined at the grade two level to promote positive feelings. For example, students express themselves through discussion, movement and writing. Follow up activities then provide opportunities for students to apply what they have learned to new situations.

Bully Proofing Your School (Garrity, 1990) is another commercial program that is available for all levels at the elementary level. Topics include building self-esteem, making friendships and promoting caring behavior. Activities such as role playing and group discussions reinforce the sessions. The program is designed to help students not to be victimized by strengthening their social skills and promoting emotional development.

After assessing studies on emotional development programs in schools, Goleman (1995) found that introspection, which includes the use of journals, discussion, stories and reflection, helps students learn the value of engaging appropriate emotions in all aspects of their education.

Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Educational Implications, (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997) includes research findings and writings from many researchers currently interested in the area of emotional intelligence. In What is Emotional Intelligence?, Mayer and Salovey (1997) state that the emotional knowledge base of children begins developing with early parent-child relationships, however not all young children have the benefit of an emotionally stable home environment. In

discussing the possible implementation of school programs, the authors believe that opportunities for emotional learning can be found in school settings where informal relationships between a teacher and a child are able to develop. The teacher can serve as a role model and an interested participant in the child's life.

Reading is another opportunity at school where children can reflect on the emotions of story characters. This type of learning can progress through the grades where stories become more complex as do the emotional perceptions of young adults. As well as through stories, arts programs including music and theatre are natural learning environments for the development of emotional intelligence. The authors caution that the development and implementation of programs specifically geared to teaching emotional intelligence need to address more than the "right" way to feel because of the diverse background experiences and cultures that students bring to the classroom. The authors then emphasize the importance of conflict resolution programs that are geared to teaching the skills involved with emotional intelligence where students learn to identify their own feelings and those of others. The authors feel that emotional skill levels can be measured in students whereas teaching and assessing emotional intelligence are difficult. Presently, we are at the beginning of the learning curve about emotional intelligence with further research contributing to our level of understanding.

In the concluding chapter of the same book, authors and researchers Zins, Travis and Freppon (1997) write that for research experiences to be useful, they must be followed by reflection. Rather than only focusing on the information gained through research, attention must be given to understanding the underlying theories involved. Fully

understanding the theories as well as their application requires time, administrative support, and personal commitment.

According to authors and researchers Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenberg, Haynes, Kessler, Schwab-Stone, and Shriver (1997), social and emotional (SEL) programs need to be promoted in schools to provide systematic structure to the development of students' social and emotional skills. The basic objective of such programs is to promote knowledge, responsibility and caring. The authors feel that other existing prevention programs are recognized as valid, but they have an important missing piece, which is recognizing the importance of children's emotions in their ability to learn effectively. When children are confronted with emotional struggles, their feelings of confusion must be addressed before they can acquire the necessary skills, attitudes and experiences needed to seek out positive opportunities for growth and learning. As well, there is a degree of frustration among school personnel who find various existing programs to be disjointed and lacking a coordinated strategy. SEL programs on the other hand, are based on curriculum outcomes progressing from kindergarten through grade twelve. According to the authors, many teachers are naturally adept at helping children develop socially and emotionally. However, there is a growing recognition that these practices must now become part of a sequenced curriculum with the same structure and attention that is devoted to traditional subjects. Rather than being left to an intuitive emergence of social and emotional competence, the complex needs of students today must be addressed by significant adults in a supporting context. In a caring environment, students can become prepared for the challenges they are faced with in a very complex world. Realizing the importance of giving attention to

the social and emotional lives of students, educators must now decide on the best method for doing this.

Assumption 3: Literary Experiences

Purposeful literary experiences including exposure to appropriate stories, discussion and response work, can foster a greater depth of self-reflection and increased emotional awareness in students. Barton and Booth (1990) write that many children do not have literature experiences at home because of family priorities and situations. Exposing children to, and modeling the use of powerful literature becomes the responsibility of the teacher. Carefully chosen stories can be used to enrich and extend a range of knowledge, laying a foundation for future learning. A book can ignite children's emotions, extend their perceptions of our environment and stimulate imaginations (O'Brien-Palmer, 1993). The teacher must find a possible starting point that is relevant to the students' individual experiences, and guide them to move beyond the details of the story to the underlying concepts portrayed by the author (Barton & Booth, 1990).

Encountering a story affects children in different ways. Depending on their background experiences, they will have individual responses to the story. Sharing their story experiences through thought provoking questions, making predictions, creating response journals and story maps are all worthwhile response techniques (O'Brien-Palmer, 1993). Roser and Martinez (1995) write that the power of literature can be discovered in genuine discussions. Classroom discussion about books gives children the opportunity to explore the messages of the story world, relate story situations to real experiences, make insightful comparisons and collaborate in group-constructed meaning. The authors researched commonalties among teachers who believe in the

importance of literary discussions. They found that when rich book talk occurs, the children's honest and spontaneous reactions are the main focus of the discussion. Children learn about themselves and gain a deeper understanding about issues that are important to them. Students can respond to literature in very personal and expressive ways. Routman (1994) believes that this type of discussion needs to be a conversation that has flexibility, choice and ownership. Researchers refer to this as a "grand conversation". Personal association, or tying aspects of the story to their own lives, can be done through literature response journals, dialogue journals, or a combination of both. This gives teachers a unique opportunity to understand the literary processes of each student.

McGee (1995) emphasizes the importance of good conversation about books with children. It allows students to think deeply about their reading and to construct a richer understanding of the book. Teachers who listen carefully to the children as they talk about a story learn much more about their students' areas of enjoyment and understanding. Children need to be given space to explore and expand their unique and personal responses to literature. She explains that young children are often uncertain about the feelings and personal connections that text creates and they benefit from discussions that clarify ideas and images. In doing this, personal experiences can be linked back to what was read and deepen children's understanding of the story and of themselves.

Assumption 4: Story Writing

Story writing can be used as a culmination to response work and self-reflection. Combined with real-life experiences and increased vocabulary, the stories provide a permanent record of the emotional growth of students. Suid (1994) writes that storybooks or trade books provide an accessible and exciting base for new stories. Real life situations involving the home, school, relationships and emotions are important aspects that can be used as ideas in students' writing. Literature models can be used to stimulate ideas for stories based on reality, fantasy, spin-offs and values.

Children become deeply involved in their stories, restructuring and re-examining as they clarify their ideas and modify their work to suit their needs. With knowledge that comes from life experiences and an increase in how to communicate their ideas through story writing, they work towards a more complex, imaginative understanding of what is happening in the story. Their own experiences and emotions become interconnected with those of their characters, validating and enhancing their perceptions of themselves (Barton & Booth, 1990).

We can purposely help our students extend and enrich their personal experiences to the point where they feel encouraged to think of themselves as authors (Buchanan, 1985). Personal writing is a meaningful expression of ideas, thoughts and information. Significant vocabulary is identified and developed as young writers find ways to express their ideas with clarity. As their vocabulary bases broaden, it becomes easier for them to reflect on their experiences, thoughts and emotions, which gives them opportunities to think about themselves in new ways.

As Routman (1994) explains, children have many stories to tell. Regardless of their backgrounds, they have experiences in their lives that are significant and need validation. Teachers give affirmation when they encourage their students' stories, which in turn builds their self-esteem.

In their research linking writing and literature, Dahl and Farnan (1998) relate their findings on how children interact with stories. Children use story writing as a platform for their creativity, often using text as context, stimuli and identity. The researchers feel that the more educators understand about the role of writing and the nature of its importance, the more effective they can be in supporting children's development.

Jensen (1998) writes that the role of language is very significant in the development emotional awareness. The use of journals and stories provide a means of reflection that engages the students at a very personal level as they connect with emotions and ideas. The role of emotions is an integral part of all learning and therefore can not be perceived as a separate entity. By engaging in appropriate emotions through personal and passionate writing, a complex and important aspect of children's education is addressed. It is a focused and productive way to combine reflective thinking and creative ideas into a framework that can continue to develop and evolve over time.

Methodology

In this action research project, the whole class of grade two students engaged in all classroom activities. I followed procedures that I considered to be important in a literature program and in a balanced language arts program (Cassidy & Wenrich, 1999). I did not discover any research studies that completely encompassed all the elements of my project. However, certain studies did fit into sections of my work and particular authors had specific ideas that I found useful. Buchanan (1985) used discussion techniques to help students formulate and discuss their ideas. Newly acquired feelings, opinions and knowledge of the students were focused on, as well as the relationships among the new meanings. Rosen and Martinez (1995) investigated the way in which students shared their thoughts and feelings that books stimulated. They found that teachers need to be a part of literature discussion groups so they can guide students to make important intertextual links and have varied approaches to literary experiences. In their studies, Dahl and Farnan (1998) and Platt (1991) researched the use of students' literary response journals. Useful teaching strategies included modeling the kinds of entries made, providing some structure to children who needed support and writing to the students in their journals about similar, personal experiences of the teacher. Routman (1994) researched the idea that through discussion and identification with characters and themes, students can connect these with their own lives. She also found that it is important to purposely build flexibility into the process. As relationships are developed and short-term goals are reached, continuous assessment and re-direction are required to attain genuine growth.

Instructional Approaches

Selection of Literature

My sources of literature for presentation to the class were from my personal collection, from recommendations of peers and students, as well as discoveries made through research for this project (Brown, 1998; Freeman, Lehman, & Scharer, 1998/1999). The stories contain significant elements of emotional awareness. They are also rich in vocabulary, they relate to children's experiences, and have intriguing issues that lend well to conversation (Roser & Martinez, 1995). I introduced a new literature selection weekly. Depending on the level of difficulty, some stories were read by the students and others were teacher-read. An annotated bibliography of the stories I used can be found in Appendix A.

Conversations About the Literature

In her research, Wheelock (1999) found that she needed to redefine her role when discussing literature with her class. She had to learn to explore issues with her students and not be the leader. I kept her findings in mind as I worked with my students in discussion areas. Questions needed to be open-ended and interpretive answers were sought by having the students express their personal opinions. The students and I decided together how these "grand conversations" would operate (Routman, 1994). At this time we also created links between the stories and the students' personal experiences through reflections and comparisons. Data collection of these events was through videotaping, observation notes of the youth development worker when she worked with small groups, my own field notes as well as samples of the completed group charts and other response activities (ATA, 2000; Routman, 1994).

Modeling Response Work Through Collaborative Practices

Charting and webbing activities were initial components in creating response work. I found that these activities developed clarity and interconnectedness of thought. Characters, setting, plot and vocabulary were all addressed in concrete ways. These components have been used successfully by several researchers (Rosen & Martinez, 1995; Routman, 1994). Modeling of entries in a response journal were also done at this time, particularly at the beginning of the project (Wheelock, 1999). The students also continued to relate how aspects of their own lives fit with the emotions and actions portrayed in the stories (Buchanan, 1985). An important strategy for comparing their own emotions to those of the characters in the stories was to help them build a vocabulary base that would assist them in labelling and describing familiar emotions. Collection of data at this point was through videotaping, which was done once a week (ATA, 2000). The youth development worker recorded her observations in field notes as a source of data after working with small groups. Other sources were my own field notes as well as samples of the completed group charts and other response activities (ATA, 2000; Routman, 1994).

Individual Writing and Sharing of Dialogue Response Work

Many researchers (Dahl & Farnan, 1998; Platt, 1991; Rosen & Martinez, 1995; Routman, 1994; Wheelock, 1999) have found that there is a high success rate in the use of dialogue response journals because of the genuine thoughts and insights of the students that are created. This was an important part of the project because the relationship between individual students and myself was nurtured and strengthened. This type of writing experience was very beneficial because I was able to see the world from

the child's perspective. The youth development worker was able to meet with small groups to seek clarification of ideas, promote reflection of the literature and personal experiences, extend vocabulary and build confidence in the students. After each session of working with the students, she recorded her reflections and impressions in the form of field notes (ATA, 2000; Hill, 1995).

Modeling Story Writing

"Writing aloud" and shared writing (Routman, 1994) are excellent strategies for guiding students into the writing process. In a group setting, children saw their ideas put into print as I scribed their writing. They created text that combined the selected literature and new elements of emotional awareness, character development, plot or the story outcome. I made this very purposeful, and developed strategies as I saw where their struggles were throughout the process. These group compositions became a language resource displayed in the classroom. As well, they were to be a source of data which I used for identifying an increased use of key vocabulary (Routman, 1994) and an evolving development of emotional awareness (Buchanan, 1985).

Individual Writing and Sharing of Stories

The students worked towards finished products of story writing with some element of the original literature piece and some new element of emotional awareness. Grade appropriate writing expectations (Jeroski & Dockendorf, 2000) were balanced with creative content. The stories served as a culmination of response, reflection and new understandings, motivated by the literature and the interactions in the class.

Teacher Project Journal and Field Notes

Throughout the three months, I kept written accounts of my observations, thoughts and reflections. Following several of Lewison's (1999) ideas, I created a personal record of work that I added to my understanding as I made new discoveries and affirmed my beliefs throughout my project. This was personally beneficial and added to the students' perceptions that journaling is valid and significant (Platt, 1991). I added to my field notes daily, to keep track of hunches and reflections (Lewison, 1999). My journal entries served as a weekly review of my field notes, combining reflections and ideas as they evolved.

Selection of Students

I selected four grade two students who were tracked individually in terms of data collection and analysis. This is because I wanted to make the collection of data manageable and at the same time create a feeling of engagement with the class as a unit. As well, much of our work covered curriculum expectations, which required involvement from everyone. Initially, to select the four participating students, all of the children were assessed on the basis of their displayed level of emotional development, as documented through teacher observations and parent observations (Resnick, 1990). Then, following a procedure used by Platt (1991), I placed the students into four groups depending on their level of emotional awareness (Garrity, 1994), and randomly select one student from each of the groups.

Students who were placed in the first group consistently displayed strong emotional reactions to conflicts. They required direct adult support to resolve their issues with little or no ability to use appropriate vocabulary to label their emotions. The second group of

children displayed consistently milder emotional reactions to conflicts but still required adult support to clarify their emotions and offer suggestions for resolving the issues. The third group had noticeably fewer conflicts than the members of the first two groups and usually resolved these well through discussion with minimal adult support. As well, they were capable of analyzing the sequence of events that led to the conflicts. The members of the fourth group were involved in very few conflicts and consistently gave peer support to classmates who were struggling with issues.

Collection of Work

Data was collected for twelve weeks, from January 9 to March 28, 2001. The students were involved in some aspect of the project (discussion, response work, or story writing) for thirty to sixty minutes, three or four times a week (see Appendix B).

Fortunately I had the assistance of our school's youth development worker, who was able to help monitor the progress of the selected students. She was able to assist me every Wednesday and Thursday for thirty minutes each day, for a total of twelve hours. She contributed twenty-one typewritten pages of observation notes, which served as part of the collection of data used in assessing the outcomes of the project (Sagor, 2000). For the first two weeks of the project, she observed the whole group and worked with individuals in the classroom. Starting in the third week, she worked with small groups of three or four students out of the classroom.

I made videotapes during class conversations as well as in sessions where I modeled response work for the students (ATA, 2000). The videotapes became a permanent record of students' development and participation. Videotaping was done once or twice week for twelve weeks in fifteen-minute sessions, resulting in approximately four hours of

videotape. After being analyzed, the videotape was edited and reduced to twenty-three minutes of data.

Once a week, I collected the dialogue response journals to continue the teacher-student exchange of ideas and to assess the four individuals' progress. (Platt, 1991; Roser & Martinez, 1995; Hill, 1995). The students made nine entries in their journals which resulted in twelve to fifteen pages of response writing each.

Other student work included three reflective writing activities (Kaston, 1997; Routman, 1994). These were collected and assessed in the same manner as the response journals (Hill, 1995), which resulted in three reflective writing pages each.

Usually once a week, I collected and assessed the four students' written stories, completed to various stages (Dahl & Farnan, 1998; Hill, 1995). The students each wrote seven stories, which created ten to twelve pages of story writing per student over the twelve-week period.

I added to my own field notes daily as a tool for reflection and for recording new thoughts (ATA, 2000; Hill, 1995), creating a total of forty handwritten pages of observation notes.

My project journal was an extension of my field notes. Once a week I made entries as a way of organizing my reflections and impressions (Lewison, 1999). I created fifteen pages of handwritten notes in my project journal over the twelve weeks.

This documentation provided a collection of substantial data from a number of sources. The three-month duration of the project provided the longevity needed to observe the natural growth in the students' written work and in their emotional

awareness. After reviewing and reflecting on the information that had been collected, I was able to see that definite patterns had developed during the project.

Research Considerations in the Project

In using qualitative research practices, Eisner (1991) cautions that possible factors of subjectivity must be acknowledged and addressed, in terms of the researcher and the participants. A teacher becomes very involved with his or her students and firm objectivity in doing classroom research is neither sought nor desired. Several procedures were in place to reduce the influence of a researcher's bias. In designing the project, I created multiple sources of data collection: my field notes and journal entries, my research assistant's observation notes, videotapes and the participants' writing. By comparing these for commonalties, I was able to discover definite signs of growth in the students' levels of emotional awareness.

Students' reactions to the research were important to some extent. I know that they rose to the challenge of helping with "university work", though none of them were aware that data from specific students was being collected and analyzed. At times, it was fascinating to watch their faces as they carefully deliberated over their contributions. The level of our conversations, the range of activities, particularly the aspect of story writing, and the length of the project required them to go beyond superficial levels of interaction. The students were purposely guided and deeply involved in their activities. As a result, new skills and knowledge about their emotional awareness were created. There were usually no pre-set questions for them to answer. Their conversations were steered by their responses to the stories. Most of my input consisted of seeking

clarification of their ideas and guiding their development of vocabulary to help them explain their emotions.

When I was doing reflective thinking during the progress of the project, occasionally I wondered if the rate of newly-introduced teacher read stories, response work and story writing was too quickly paced. The students were producing close to twice as much written work of this nature as they usually would. I watched carefully for signs of fatigue or disinterest. I slowed the pace of their work down twice, once half way through and again during the last week of the project. After we discussed the story for each of those two weeks, the students were involved in response work but did not extend their thinking to story writing. I felt that although regular conversations about the teacher read stories and the students' personal experiences were essential to the flow of the project, their written products could be reduced slightly. I wanted to maintain the momentum of the project and a high level of interest in the students. By monitoring the reactions of the students, I was able to accomplish this. Their attentiveness during the stories, in their conversations and for the most part, in their writing, remained intact.

Data Sources and Analysis

According to Eisner (1988), qualitative research is "naturalistic". It is based on real experiences where the variables or factors are studied without being manipulated. The personal insight of the researcher is significant because it adds to the understanding of the process and the outcomes. Eisner wrote that coherence, insight, multiple forms of evidence and persuasion create believable qualitative research.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) discuss that in qualitative research, the analyzing of data is inductive. Themes and categories develop from the data after it is collected.

Generalizations and theories that emerge from the data are illustrated and substantiated by using data examples. The writing therefore, should be a mixture of data and author interpretation to create a modulated blend of the particular findings with the general theories.

After reviewing my research question and organizing my collection of data, I was able to group my findings into four main sources of data according to the procedures discussed in Bogdan and Biklen (1992). Within each source of data I created categories that allowed me to get a clear idea of the trends that developed in the work of each participant.

Data Source One: Conversation and Response Groups

One of the sources of data came from the grand conversations and small response groups that were videotaped throughout the twelve-week project (see Appendix B). It was significant to see student growth in the area of emotional awareness through the use of specific words that label emotions. I will refer to the use of this specific vocabulary as "emotions vocabulary". As well, characters and situations were sometimes described by using emotional inferences without the specific labels, which will be referred to as "inferred emotions". According to Salovey and Sluyter (1997), the ability to identify and label emotions is an important first step that educators can use in developing emotional awareness in children.

In the area of "conversation and small response groups", the categories were created in our grand conversations to see if the participants:

- related to the story text (the story that was read by the teacher)
- related to their own personal experiences
- a combination of story text and personal experiences
- showed evidence of growth in emotional understanding (actual and inferred)
- indicated a level of independent or original thought

Data Source Two: Written Responses

After our grand conversations about the teacher-read story, the students responded regularly to the story text by using a variety of sources (see Appendix B). As well, it was evident that there was some growth in the area of emotional awareness because of their use of emotions vocabulary and situations where emotions were inferred. It was also clear that some of them enjoyed adding original ideas to their work and at times they wrote about issues in situations that they resolved in their writing. The categories were created to see if the written response work:

- related to videotaped grand conversations
- related to story text
- related to personal experiences
- a combination of grand conversations, story text and personal experiences
- showed evidence of use of emotional understanding (actual and inferred)
- showed the author's original thinking
- showed evidence of solving a problem (resolving an issue presented in the story)

Data Source Three: Student Story Writing

Student story writing was the third regular component in the project (see Appendix B.) During this time the students wrote their own stories as a way of combining and synthesizing various ideas with new understandings of emotions. The categories within this theme were the same as in the written response theme. They were created to see if the student story writing:

- related to videotaped grand conversations
- related to story text
- related to personal experiences
- a combination of grand conversations, story text and personal experiences
- showed evidence of use of emotional understanding (actual and inferred)
- showed the author's original thinking
- showed evidence of solving a problem

Data Source Four: Insights of the Project Assistant

In consultation with my project assistant, Kendra, who is the school's youth development worker, I gave the evolution of this action research project careful, on going thought. The progress of the participants influenced changes that I made during the project according to the following categories:

- emergence of Kendra's role as observer, guide and scribe
- development of participants' conversation skills and written work

Findings

In organizing and presenting my findings, I looked at each participant as a separate case study. This is because I tracked their individual progress daily through observation, videotaping and their collection of work. Each participant progressed in different and interesting ways, showing unique themes within the sources of data. In writing about each of the participants, I have organized my findings within the framework provided by the sources of data. I have included quotes from the videotapes as well as from Kendra's observation notes to give examples of the growth I found in each student's understanding of emotional awareness. This evidence of growth is supplemented by samples of their written response work and story writing. For each participant, I then organized the categories within the data sources into tables for concise summaries of growth.

Participants

James

From the beginning of the school year I noticed that James spoke easily to adults at a maturity level beyond that of his peers. James interacted well with classmates, consistently showing friendly behavior and usually not getting involved in recess conflicts. I also knew that he hesitated to contribute his ideas in front of the whole class if he felt unsure of himself and he frequently had trouble expressing his ideas in writing. It was very characteristic of him to consistently focus well on his tasks and he was quite serious about completing these to the best of his ability. James was visiting in Australia when we began the project and by the time he returned we had been establishing our group procedures for two weeks.

Conversation and oral response groups.

By the time James joined our conversation group the other students were beginning to feel more at ease with contributing their ideas. James was very attentive but quiet, only contributing his ideas when he was asked to. On February 1, Kendra wrote:

> James sat quietly during the discussion but I could tell he was listening to the conversation because of his body language (eye contact, sitting still, focused). From watching James I sense that he prefers to be the listener as opposed to the speaker.

His quiet attentiveness was consistent throughout the project and a pattern emerged in which his contributions were always relevant and showed careful thought.

Over the next two weeks, which was four weeks into the project, I discovered that James talked quite freely on topics that he was familiar with: hockey, his dogs and Australia. With the emergence of this theme, whenever possible in our grand conversations, I then attempted to structure specific questions in such a way that he would respond with ease and develop an understanding of his emotions in these areas (see Table 1). An example was of this during a grand conversation on February 13. The topic of our discussion was "Love is fun.... / Love is strong...". I felt he could speak with confidence about his old dog that died last year and his new puppy (see Clip 7).

> Teacher: James, tell us about your feelings for Rexie?
>
> James: I still love him.
>
> Teacher: Hmm – and tell us about your new dog.
>
> James: My new dog, he's really cute and...
>
> Teacher: ...and does he feel like he's part of the family already?

James: Yup, the first time I saw him.

Teacher: ...and puppies are so cute – they're so funny. Does he get into trouble sometimes?

James: Oh ya!

Teacher: Can you tell us sometime when he's gotten into trouble?

James: When my mom put a string on the table and he took the string and stringed it all over the place (laughter).

Teacher: ...and mixed it all up.

After four weeks into the project the students were writing in their journals immediately before our conversations, then they read their ideas to a small group. This strategy helped James considerably. He had time to organize his thoughts and he read his work with confidence (see Figure 1).

Written response work.

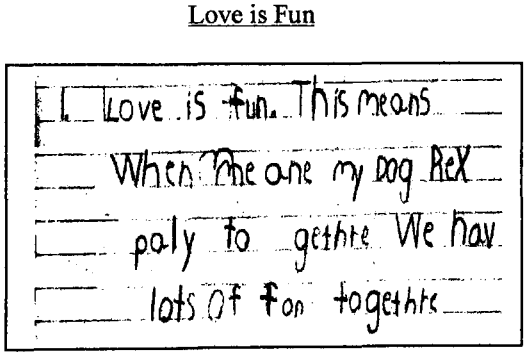
When he began his written response work in the project, James was reluctant to take the necessary risks to put his thoughts on paper. One week after he started the project (almost four weeks into the project), Kendra started working quite closely with him in his written work (see Table 2), and made the following observation:

> ...I feel that when James has the chance he likes to dictate the story and have someone scribe it for him. It just seems that he is able to express himself more openly if he does not have to worry about writing.

James showed consistent use of recalling his personal experiences and group conversations in his response work. However, until near the end of the project, he did not include emotional understanding in his written response work, either directly or

inferred. As well, he did not embellish his work with original or creative ideas (see Table 3). He frequently completed these tasks with individual support from Kendra or myself. On several occasions Kendra partially scribed his work as he dictated his ideas to her. This support allowed for the emergence of consistent growth that remained evident throughout the span of the project. One of his final response tasks involved writing confidently about an individual focus, which for him, was acting (Figure 2). Two weeks before the end of the project Kendra and I found it rewarding to see James work independently with confidence. His writing showed growth in his ability to articulate his ideas using organized thought and appropriate vocabulary. Kendra wrote:

> James completely shocked me today. He was excited about his story and got to work right away. This was a complete change from his previous work habits in the past. It was great to see James excited about wanting to work.

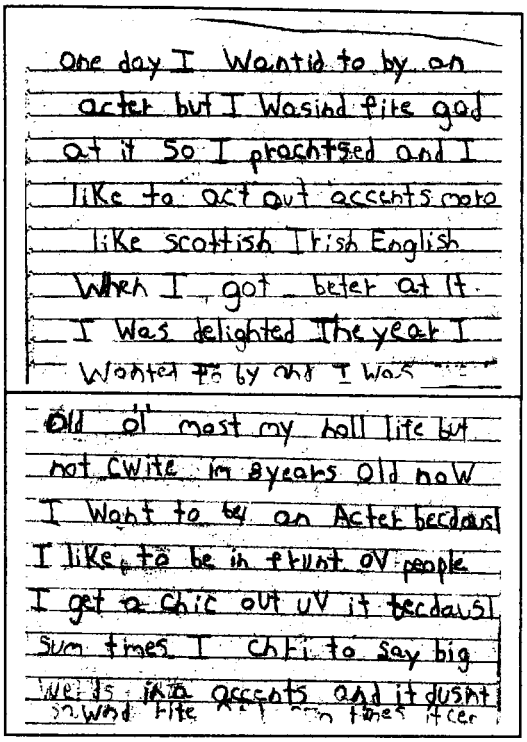


Love is fun. This means when me and my dog Rex play together. We have lots of fun together.

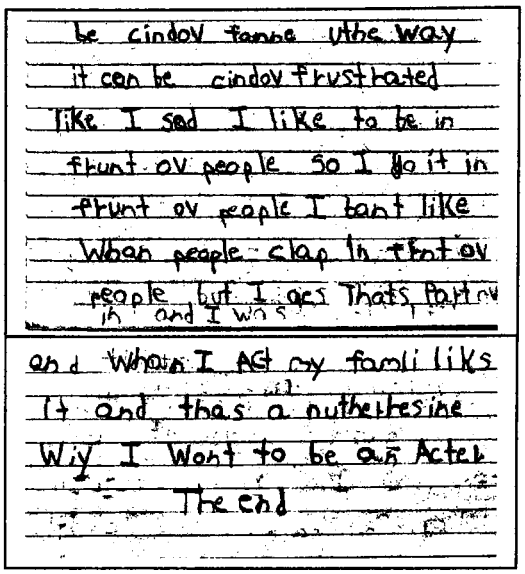
Figure 1

James – Written Response Work
February 13

I Want To Be An Actor



One day I wanted to be an actor but I wasn't very good at it so I practiced and I like to act out accents more like Scottish, Irish, English. When I got better at it I was delighted. The year I wanted to be and I was



seven years old, almost my whole life but not quite 8 years old. Now I want to be an actor because I like to be in front of people. I get a kick out of it because sometimes I try to say big words in a accent and it doesn't sound right and sometimes it can be kind of funny, anyway it can be kind of frustrating. Like I said I like to be in front of people. I don't like when people clap in front of people but I guess that's part of it and I was embarrassed
And when I act my family likes it and that's another reason I want to be an actor.

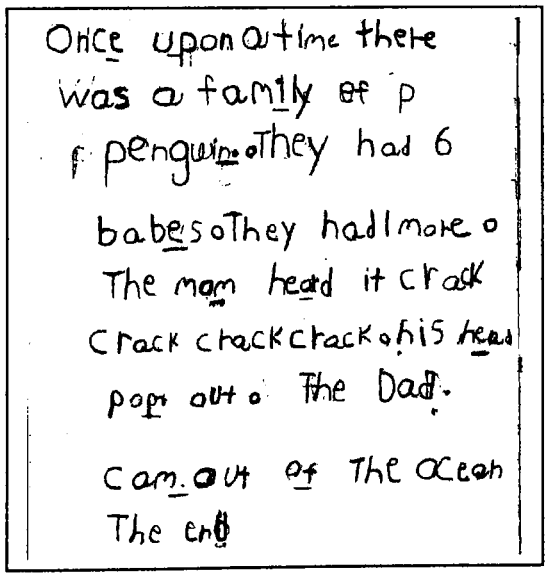
Figure 2

James – Written Response Work
March 29

Story writing.

James wrote fewer stories than the other participants did because of his late start in the project. In his initial stories he understood that he could use ideas from the story text, from personal experiences and from group conversations (see Figure 3). As with his written response work, a noticeable theme emerged. It indicated that direct support from Kendra and myself, as well as having his ideas scribed, gave James the assurance he needed to develop a level of confidence that enabled him to be an independent writer. James developed an understanding of the process of story writing, so that by the end of the project there were signs of growth in his stories (see Figure 4). These included areas of specific vocabulary showing an understanding of the emotions of the characters, author's original thinking and evidence of problem solving (see Table 4).

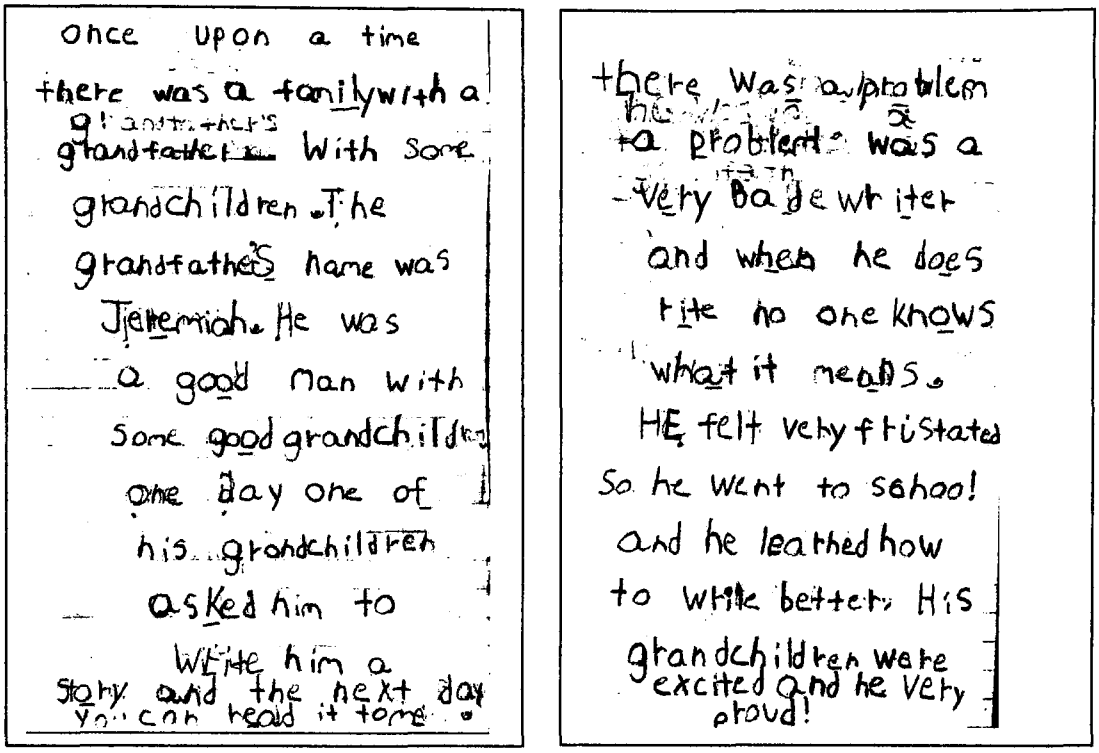
The Penguins



Once there was a family of penguins. They had 6 babies. They had 1 more. The mom heard it crack, crack, crack. His head popped out. The Dad came out of the ocean.

Figure 3

James – Story Writing
February 5



Once upon a time there was a family with a grandfather with some grandchildren. The grandfather's name was Jeremiah. He was a good man with some good grandchildren. One day one of his grandchildren asked him to write him a story and the next day you can read it to me.

There was a problem. (He) was a very bad writer and when he does write no one knows what it means. He felt very frustrated. So he went to school and he learned how to write better. His grandchildren were excited and he was proud.

Figure 4

James – Story Writing
March 19

Insights from the project assistant.

When I changed the grand conversations to small response groups, I felt James would be one of the students who would be substantially impacted. His quiet manner was not conducive to contributing orally in a large group. After assessing the situation carefully I decided that James would not make the progress he could in this project unless Kendra scribed his writing when necessary. I felt a balance would be created so that he could express himself and at appropriate times, write down his own work. Keeping in mind that he was a serious worker and always tried his best, I felt this was the best solution for him.

Summary of data.

James's intense, focused approach to the project as well as his ability to see the humour in his own ideas helped promote a very enjoyable atmosphere in our classroom. Four themes emerged from James's work that helped increase his understanding of emotional awareness both verbally and in his written work.

1. His quiet attentiveness allowed James the opportunity to carefully examine his own thoughts through new vocabulary and ideas that were generated (see Table 1).
2. When James was given the opportunity to discuss topics of personal interest, his contributions became more elaborate and increased in frequency (see Table 1).
3. In small group settings for response work and story writing, direct adult support benefited his progress while writing his ideas (see Table 2).
4. James's work showed growth in using the elements of story writing including appropriate emotions vocabulary, original thought and problem solving (see Table 4).

Table 1

James – Videotaped Conversation and Oral Responses

Clip Number and Date	Topic	Activity[a]	Under-standing	Support	Level of Attention
Clip 6 Jan. 29	Penguins	3	recall	independent	attentive
Clip 7 Jan. 30	Respons-ibilities	6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 10 Feb. 1	Feeling Proud	5	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 12 Feb. 8	Sentence frames on emotions	5	increased	occasional	attentive
Clip 16 Feb. 13	Dogs	2, 5, 6	increased	occasional	attentive
Clip 21 March 8	Wishes	2, 5, 6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 26 March 27	Focus	2, 5, 6	increased	occasional	attentive
Clip 27 March 29	Focus and Emotions	2, 5, 6	increased	independent	attentive

[a]Activity – the following numbers indicate:

1. vocabulary development involving emotions
2. use of vocabulary involving emotions in discussion (application)
3. story text retelling (teacher read)
4. interpretation and elaboration of story text (teacher read)
5. interpretation and elaboration of personal feelings
6. contribution of personal knowledge or opinion

Description of Table 1

James was consistently attentive during the grand conversations in following the development of the ideas as they were discussed. His contributions were clear and concise which meant that only occasional teacher support was required in the form of questioning and restating. Each taping session showed that he consistently became more comfortable in expressing himself, and grew in his understanding of how to apply, interpret and elaborate on his ideas as the project progressed.

Table 2

James – Kendra's Observations

Date	Topic	Activity	Under-standing	Support	Level of Attention	Comments
Feb 1	Penguins	discussion	unclear	independent	attentive	Observed whole class in discussion James made no contribution
Feb 1	I am proud about…	response work (drawing)	increased	occasional	attentive	Seems to prefer a drawing activity
Feb 7	Alexander	response work	unclear	occasional	attentive	Works effectively in a small group
Feb 14	Valentines	story writing	unclear	scribed	attentive	Expresses himself well when he does not have to worry about writing
March 13	I wish I could talk to my dog	response work	increased	scribed	attentive	Frequently wanted to change his mind and start again
March 14	Hockey	story writing	unclear	scribed	attentive	He described his hockey team
March 29	I want to be an actor…	response work	increased	occasional	attentive	James was excited and independent

Description of Table 2

Kendra observed or worked with James seven times in discussions, response work and story writing. He was consistently attentive but became easily confused during writing activities. At times Kendra was able to offer him occasional support by discussing his ideas with him before he put them into writing. At other times, she found that writing his ideas down for him as he dictated them to her accomplished the task. Because of the writing difficulties that James experienced, at times it was unclear to Kendra as to whether or not he was increasing in his use and application of emotions vocabulary.

Table 3

James -Written Response Work

Date and Activity	Story text Related	Related to Personal Experience	Conversa -tion Related	Use of Emotions Vocabulary	Use of Inferred Emotions	Author's Original Thinking	Evidence of Problem Solving
Jan 25 Trust means...		●	●		2		
Feb 1 Penguin Facts			●				
Feb 7 Bad Day		●	●		2		
Jan 25 Trust means		●	●				
Feb 13 Love is Strong/Fun		●	●		●		
March 8 My Wish	●	●	●	2	●		
March 19 Jeremiah	●	●	●				●
March 27 Focus		●	●	6	3		
March 29 Emotions and Focus		●	●				

Note. Numbers indicate frequency of occurrence per entry.

Description of Table 3

James consistently used his personal experiences and ideas from the grand conversations in his written response work, and he occasionally used ideas from the teacher-read stories. During the last half of the project he made steady growth in using emotions vocabulary. He showed some evidence of using inferred emotions. Once in his writing, he created a solution for a problem that he had written about.

Table 4

James – Story Writing

Date and Activity	Story text Related	Related to Personal Experience	Conversa-tion Related	Use of Emotions Vocabulary	Use of Inferred Emotions	Author's Original Thinking	Evidence of Problem Solving
Feb 5 Penguins	●		●				
Feb 14 * Valentines			●	●			
Feb 28 Hockey Game		●		2		●	
March 14 *Hockey		●			●		
March 19 Family	●		●		3	●	●

Note. Numbers indicate the frequency of occurrence per entry.

Asterisks indicate that an adult scribed the entry.

Description of Table 4

In each his stories, James consistently combined various components of story writing, with a noticeable use of emotions vocabulary and inferred vocabulary. Two of the completed stories were scribed. In his final story, James made very good use of his knowledge of story writing by including most of the components.

Quinton

During the first four months of the school year, my understanding of Quinton's personality and his learning interests developed quickly. His level of speaking vocabulary was considered to be average for his age group. During conversations it became obvious that he was able to consistently understand concepts more clearly than many of his peers. His areas of interest were math and science, and he found reading and writing interesting but labourious. His thoughts seemed to race much faster than his pencil, resulting in confusion and frustration. His sparkly, impulsive personality and keen interest in other people helped to establish a positive classroom presence. He followed classroom expectations reasonably well and consistently tried to please his teachers. He related well to his peers in the classroom and at recess. Except for occasional minor conflicts caused by impulsive exuberance, he was not involved in major problems with peers.

Conversation and oral response groups.

From the onset of our grand conversation groups, Quinton followed attentively. He was very willing to contribute his ideas which were always clear and relevant to the topic of the group (see Table 5). As with many members of the class, his beginning contributions to our conversations were at a level where he recalled the facts of a situation.

In Clip 2, we were talking about trust:

Teacher: Have you ever trusted someone to be there – to keep you safe or to help you play and suddenly it wasn't that way at all?

Quinton: Me and my dad were playing a game on the computer and he went somewhere and I asked him a question ... (pause).

Teacher: Hm hm...

Quinton: And I said, "Dad are you there?" And he didn't answer.

Teacher: And he wasn't there? Was he in a different room?

Quinton: (nodded)

During the next few weeks, while we were in our grand conversation group his contributions also showed that a pattern was clearly developing when he was able to make comparisons between the story-text and his own experiences. An example was in our conversation when we were comparing old pets to new pets (see Clip 5).

By the end of the twelve-week project, he had grown in his ability and in his ease of conversing with group members (see Clip 27).

Teacher: Quinton, what do you want to learn to do?

Quinton: Um, play Starcraft.

Teacher: Now, you play Starcraft already, right?

Quinton: Hmmm

Teacher: So you want to go to higher levels?

Quinton: You don't go up to higher levels. You just get better at the skill, 'cause the focus thing is to destroy the whole base.

Teacher: You want to destroy the whole base? And to do that you have to...?

Quinton: Build fighters.

Teacher: Okay.

Robbie: How do you build fighters?

Teacher: So that might be "self-talk." What would you say to yourself?

Quinton: I need to build ...(pause).

Robbie: STVs

Quinton: STVs

Teacher: Do you know what this is? Do you do this by yourself or do you get help?

Quinton: Sometimes I get help by doing cheats.

Teacher: Now cheats are tips, hints?

Robbie: No

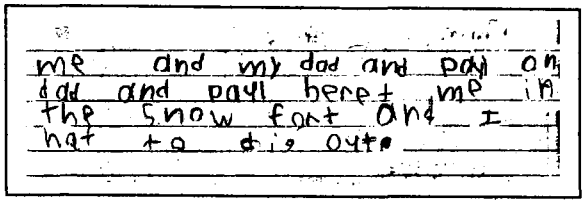
Quinton: No, it's a specialist kind of cheat and you don't get hurt.

Written response work.

His confidence in contributing his ideas became more noticeable when he shared written responses in small groups. However, at the beginning of the project, putting his ideas in writing was a real struggle for him. As with James, Kendra found that a pattern became evident in that he responded well to small group support and some scribing during his writing (see Table 6). As was typical of many of the class members, his response entries related to our immediate conversations and his personal experiences (see Table 7 and Figure 5). His responses did show a good balance of story-text and personal experiences. This balance is a significant development for young writers as they are encouraged to gather their story ideas from a variety of sources and background experiences. As well, especially at the end of the project, he demonstrated a frequent use

of "emotions vocabulary", "author's original thought" and "evidence of problem solving". This theme that emerged is shown clearly in one of his final written responses (see Figure 6).

Snowy Day

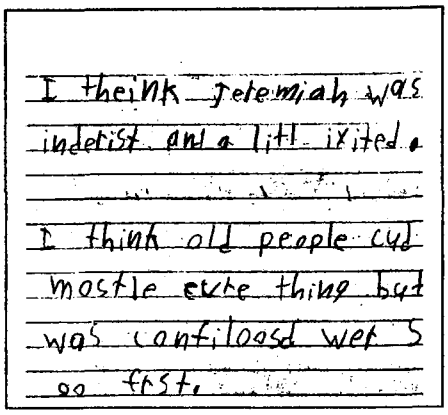


Me and my dad and Paul (one day) Dad and Paul buried me in the snow fort and I had to dig out.

Figure 5

Quinton – Written Response Work
January 10

Jeremiah



I think Jeremiah was kind of interested and a little excited. I think old people could teach mostly everything but he was confused, "Where should I go first?"

Figure 6

Quinton – Written Response Work
March 19

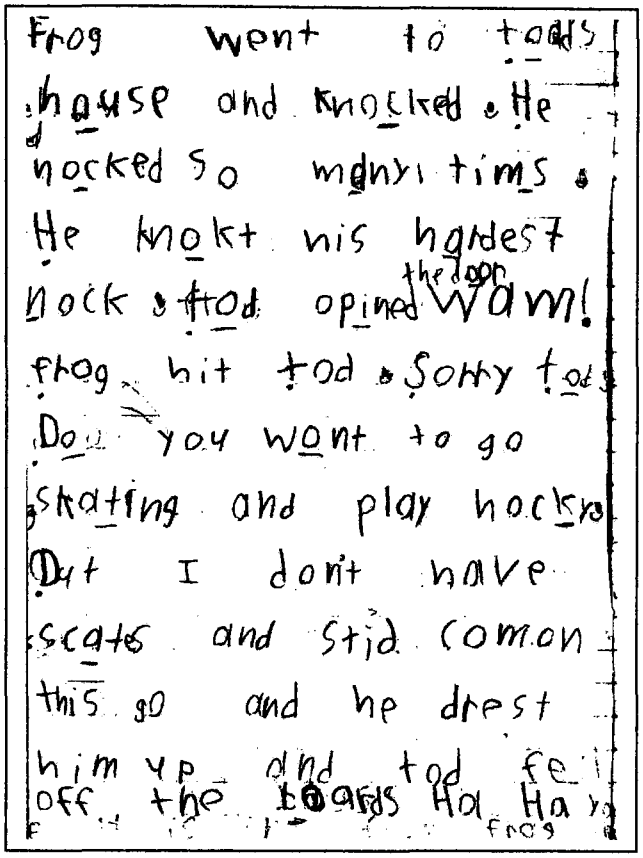
Story writing.

Quinton's struggles with writing were evident in his stories as well as in his response work. Throughout the project, his stories showed that he was able to combine elements of writing that he gathered from a variety of sources including the use of story-text that had been read and discussed in class, personal experiences, original thinking and "emotions" vocabulary (see Table 8 and Figure 7). However, this was not an easy process for him. He benefited from small group support with Kendra, and again, occasional scribing really helped to build his confidence so that he was able to express his ideas clearly. On January 11 Kendra wrote:

> I could tell Quinton knew what he wanted to say, by the way he was telling me what had happened...but he just was having a difficult time writing it down. We worked on the paper together. He dictated the story and I scribed it for him... Quinton did have good ideas; he just needed that extra bit of help and encouragement to make his story clear.

His use of story writing components remained a consistent and balanced pattern throughout the project with the exception of "problem solving". It was rewarding to see that in five of his six stories he had a good understanding of emotional awareness of his characters through his use of emotions vocabulary and inferred emotion (see Table 8). His story "Al and I" written on February 28 shows a good blend of the components that were sought (see Figure 8).

Frog and Toad

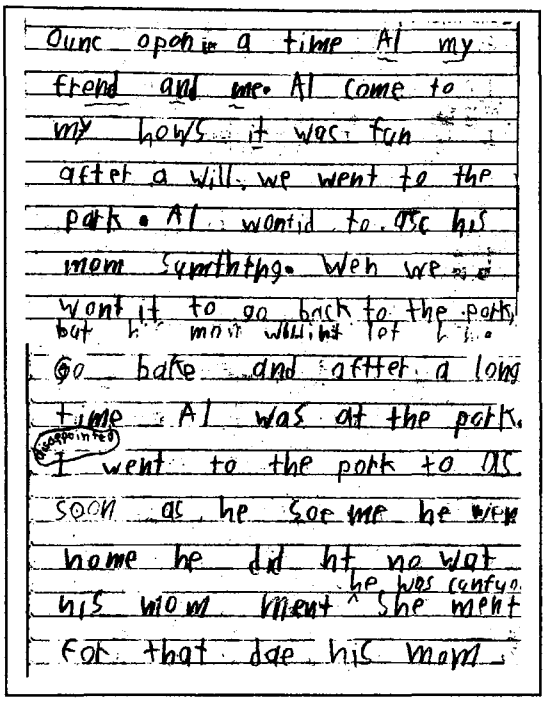


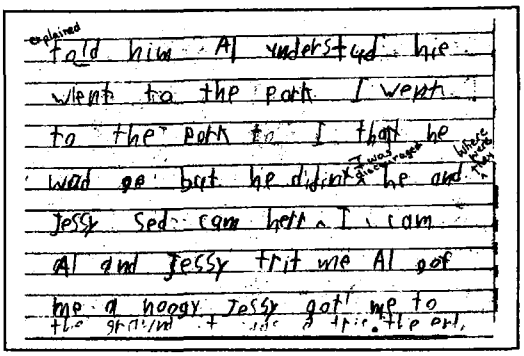
Frog went to Toad's house and knocked. He knocked so many times. He knocked his hardest. Toad opened the door. Wam! Frog hit Toad. Sorry Toad. Do you want to go skating and play hockey? But I don't have any skates and stick. Come on (let's) go and he dressed him up and Toad fell off the boards. Ha, ha, you fell off the boards. It isn't funny said Frog.

Figure 7

Quinton – Story Writing
January 17

Al and Me





Once upon a time Al, my friend and me. Al came to my house. It was fun after a while we went to the park. Al wanted to ask his mom something. When we wanted to go back to the park but his mom wouldn't let him go back and after a long time Al was at the park. I went to the park too. As soon as he saw me he went home. He did not know what his mom meant. He was confused. She meant for that day.

His mom told him. Al understood. He went to the park. I went to the park too. I thought he would go but he didn't. I was discouraged. He and Jesse said come here. I came. Al and Jessy tricked me. Al gave me a noogy. Jessy got me to the ground. It was a trick.

Figure 8

Quinton – Story Writing
February 28

Insights from the project assistant.

Quinton's oral contributions to our group conversations were consistent and astute. Although his progress was not part of my decision to move away from large group conversations to small groups, he did benefit from the change. His ideas showed an increase in confidence and understanding of how to use appropriate vocabulary when discussing emotions. His struggles in his writing greatly influenced my decision to accept occasionally scribed work. As well, Quinton's difficulties with writing conventions such as spelling and sentence structure helped me decide that the process of developing emotional awareness in his stories needed to take priority over having a correctly finished story.

Summary of data.

Quinton's ability to combine various elements from our group conversations and apply these in his oral and written contributions encouraged others to strive for the same level of understanding. At times he persevered diligently to complete his assignments, which usually resulted in a noticeable feeling of self-satisfaction. Four themes emerged from Quinton's work during the project.

1. His clear growth in understanding the appropriate use of emotions vocabulary and situations in the grand conversations enabled him to easily make connections between the story-text and his own experiences (see Table 5).

2. He capably applied ideas in his written response work and his story writing from group conversations, personal experiences and story-text ideas (see Table 7 and Table 8).

3. He consistently used emotions vocabulary and inferred emotions in his writing (see Table 7 and Table 8).

4. Direct adult assistance and scribing gave Quinton the opportunity he needed to organize his thoughts and build confidence in his ability to write down his ideas (see Table 6).

Table 5

Quinton – Videotaped Conversation and Oral Responses

Clip Number and Date	Topic	Activity[a]	Under-standing	Support	Level of Attention
Clip 2 Jan. 21	Trusting	6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 6 Jan. 25	Pets	6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 7 Jan. 30	Respons-ibilities	6	increased	occasional	attentive
Clip 11 Feb. 7	Bad Day	2	increased	occasional	attentive
Clip 14 Feb. 8	Sentence frames on emotions	2, 5	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 18 March 6	Emotions -Analogy	2, 5	increased	direct	attentive
Clip 20 March 8	Wishes	2, 5, 6	increased	occasional	attentive
Clip 25 March 19	Jeremiah	2, 4, 5, 6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 29 March 28	Focus and Emotions	2, 5, 6	increased	independent	attentive

[a]Activity – the following numbers indicate:

1. vocabulary development involving emotions
2. use of vocabulary involving emotions in discussion (application)
3. story text retelling (teacher read)
4. interpretation and elaboration of story text (teacher read)
5. interpretation and elaboration of personal feelings
6. contribution of personal knowledge or opinion

Description of Table 5

Quinton was consistently attentive during our grand conversations and made frequent, meaningful contributions. He quickly developed the ability to use appropriate emotions vocabulary. His ability to interpret and elaborate on his ideas increased consistently throughout the project. Occasionally, he was asked to clarify his contributions and twice, direct questioning allowed his thoughts to be verbalized clearly.

Table 6

Quinton - Kendra's Observations

Date	Topic	Activity	Under-standing	Support	Level of Attention	Comments
Jan. 11	Snowy Day	story writing	unclear	scribed	attentive	Great ideas but got confused easily
Jan. 17	Trust and responsibility	observation of whole class	increased	occasional	attentive	His interaction is good to see
Feb. 1	Penguins	observation of whole class	unclear	occasional	occasionally distracted	He responded when he was asked a question
March 8	Wishes	response work	increased	direct	attentive	He related well to his experiences
March 21	The Family	story writing	increased	scribed	attentive	Working with him helped him stay focussed
March 29	Computer games	response work	increased	occasional	attentive	He needed help answering some of the questions on his sheet

Description of Table 6

Kendra observed or worked with Quinton six times in discussions, response work and story writing. He was consistently attentive but became easily confused during writing activities, especially in the first half of the project. With support from Kendra to keep him focused, he was clearly able to increase his understanding in his use and application of emotions vocabulary, and in his ability to write down his ideas in an organized manner.

Table 7

Quinton – Written Response Work

Date and Activity	Story text Related	Related to Personal Experience	Conversa-tion Related	Use of Emotions Vocabulary	Use of Inferred Emotions	Author's Original Thinking	Evidence of Problem Solving
Jan. 9 Snowy Day		●	●		2		
Jan. 22 Belle's Journey	●		●				
Jan. 23 Trust means...	●	●	●	2	●	●	●
Feb. 1 Penguins	●		●				
March 8 My Wish		●	●	2			
March 19 Jeremiah			●	2			●
March 27 Focus	●			2		●	
March 28 Emotions and Focus		●		3		●	●

Note. Numbers indicate frequency of occurrence per entry

Description of Table 7

Quinton consistently used ideas from a variety of experiences in his written response work, making especially good use of conversation-related ideas. He used emotions vocabulary consistently in the latter half of the project. Quinton also included some use of inferred emotions. "Author's original thinking" and "evidence of problem solving" were used several times, particularly at the end of the project.

Table 8

Quinton – Story Writing

Date and Activity	Story text Related	Related to Personal Experience	Conversa-tion Related	Use of Emotions Vocabulary	Use of Inferred Emotions	Author's Original Thinking	Evidence of Problem Solving
Jan. 10 Snowball Fight		●	●	●		●	
Jan. 17 Frog and Toad	●		●	●	2	●	
Jan. 24 * Matthew's Journey			●		2		
Feb. 1 Penguins	●			●		●	●
Feb. 28 Al and I		●	●	2	●		
March 19 The Family			●	●			

Note. Numbers indicate the frequency of occurrence per entry.

Asterisks indicate that an adult scribed the entry.

Description of Table 8

In his story writing, Quinton again regularly used ideas from our grand conversations. His use of emotions vocabulary was also very consistent. Inferred emotions were used in half of his stories, as were his original thoughts. In one story he found a solution for a problem he had presented. Kendra scribed one of his completed stories.

Robbie

Robbie's vivid imagination was evident from the first few days of school in September. Strong emotional reactions, colourful descriptions of events and in-depth questions were very typical behaviors. His intense nature combined with impulsiveness often led to disruptions and misunderstandings with peers and adults. With no malice intended, he would easily be in the middle of a conflict. He would be very upset but had no skills in place for coping with or resolving the issue. At other times, his cheerful bubbliness and imaginative stories would captivate others' attention. Reading and writing tasks were difficult for him to complete independently, and frequently individual teacher assistance was required.

Conversation and oral response groups.

Robbie enjoyed contributing his ideas to our grand conversations when the topic was of interest to him. His contributions showed that he was capable of careful thinking. In talking about keeping elderly pets or getting new pets he said:

Robbie: A new pet could be worse, because in a storm, if they'd never been in one before and they could get scared and kick you off.

Teacher: Yes, that's always a reaction of young pet....is to kind of panic.

A theme emerged in his contributions to conversations. He was very willing to vividly explain his personal experiences (see Table 9), but he made no indication of moving into the area of emotional awareness. There was evidence of emotional understanding in a conversation that we had on goal setting (see Clip 27), but it was not elaborate.

Robbie: Wrestling... wrestle and play soccer.

Teacher: Those are great and the same in some ways. So what do you focus on

then when you're practicing? Take soccer for example?

Robbie: Soccer? Play hard, have fun.

Teacher: Good!

Robbie: And... try to kinda get hurt.

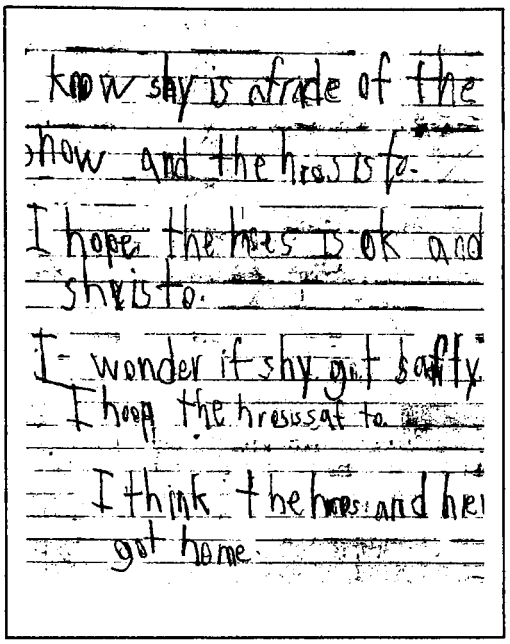
Teacher: Take risks?

Robbie: Yah.

Written response work.

Completing written response work was difficult for Robbie. When left to work, independently he became very distracted and confused in his writing. As with James and Quinton, a theme emerged where Kendra found that scribing his ideas helped him complete his tasks. However, he was not able to move easily from scribed to independent work with confidence by the end of the twelve-week period. His inattentiveness was evident with Kendra in small groups as well (see Table 10). He contributed to small response groups fewer times than the other students because he had usually not completed his work in time to join the group. When his written response work was complete, he did show a good use of personal experiences and conversation-related ideas (see Table 11 and Figure 9). There were some responses completed that showed a use of emotions vocabulary and inferred emotions, and his original thinking was used consistently. His response work on March 28 included many of the desired components (see Figure 10).

Belle's Journey

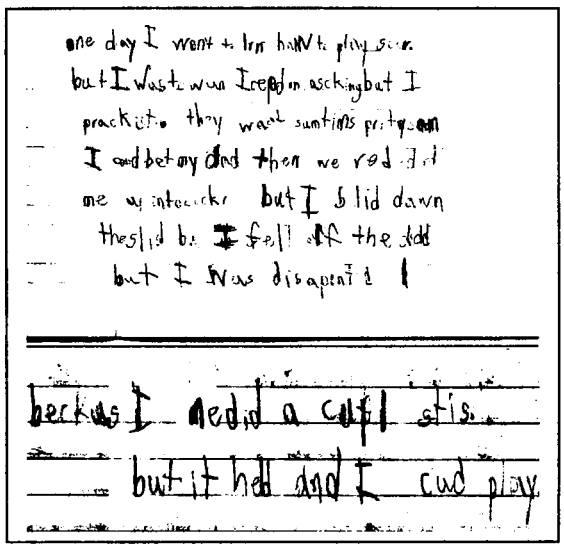


(I) know she is afraid of the snow and the horse is too. I hope the horse is okay and she is too. I wonder if she got (home) safely. I hope the horse is safe too. I think the horse and her got home.

Figure 9

Robbie – Written Response Work
February 7

Soccer



One day I wanted to learn how to play soccer but I was too young. I kept on asking but I practiced. One day I could beat my dad then we registered me up in soccer. But I slid down the slide. But I fell off the slide. But I was disappointed because I needed a couple of stitches. But it held and I could play.

Figure 10

Robbie – Written Response Work
March 28

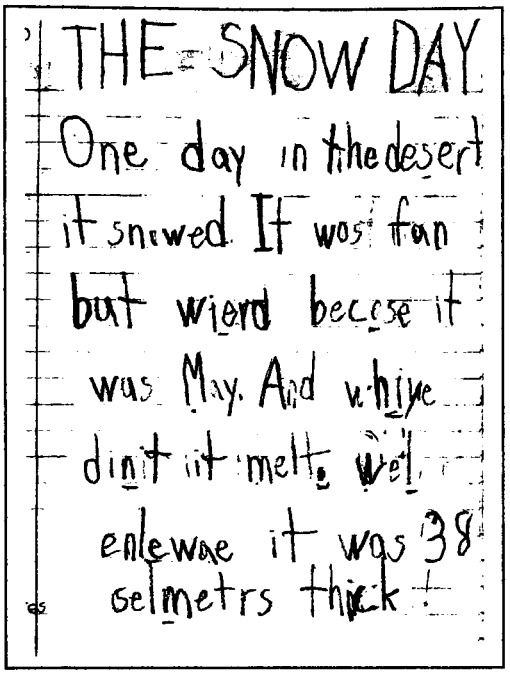
Story writing.

Beginning with his earliest story writing, Robbie's creative originality was evident (see Figure 11). As with his written response work, Robbie's story writing was hampered by rapid, impulsive thinking and by distractibility. This pattern in his story writing remained consistent throughout his work. Kendra scribed three of his seven stories. After the small group session on February 14, Kendra wrote:

> Robbie had great ideas in mind but he just needed help starting the story. Once he got started, Robbie could not stop telling me what to write down. Robbie did need a few reminders about what the story was supposed to be about. Robbie seems to have an easier time dictating than actually writing them down. Robbie has a very good imagination and is very creative in story writing.

Robbie showed evidence of emotional awareness in his use of vocabulary and inferred emotions (see Table 12). Most of his stories also showed original thinking with a good representation of conversation related ideas and some story text ideas. Interestingly, his story writing did not show a use of his personal experiences as compared to his group conversation contributions, which were usually an extension of personal experiences. It was also interesting that in three of his stories there was evidence of resolving an issue, which requires concentration on the development of the story and an understanding of the situations (see Figure 12). This complexity in his story writing was a noticeable theme.

The Snow Day

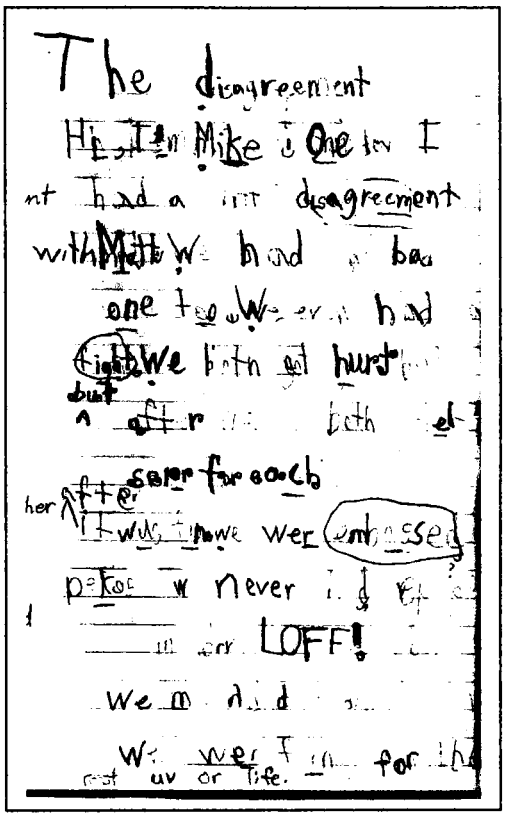


One day in the desert it snowed. It was fun but weird because it was May. And why didn't it melt. Well anyway it was 38 centimetres thick!

Figure 11

Robbie – Story Writing
January 10

The Disagreement



Hi, I'm Mike. One day I had a disagreement with Matthew. We had a bad one too. We even had a fight. We didn't get hurt but after we both felt sorry for each other. After, it was fine. We were embarrassed because we never had apologized in our life! But we managed to do it and we were friends for the rest of our life.

Figure 12

Robbie – Story Writing
February 28

Insights from the project assistant.

Robbie's need for direct adult attention in completing his writing tasks added strength to my decision to allow adult scribing of response work and story writing. Without this decision, many of Robbie's creative ideas would never have been written down. Robbie's difficulty with the conventions of writing also added to my decision to focus more on the thought processes of writing rather than a final, correctly edited product. Many of his writing tasks were not taken to the final stages because of the struggles he had in completing his work.

Summary of data.

Robbie's wonderful imagination often added an extra element of humour and creativity to our grand conversations. At times, he admirably persevered to complete his work to his satisfaction. Four themes emerged from Robbie's work.

1. His curiosity, his ability to ask questions and his love of imaginative conversation were consistent and productive (see Table 9).
2. Adult support was required in most tasks to promote organized and focused work (see Table 10).
3. In his written response work, Robbie showed consistent use of a variety of background experiences as well as emotions vocabulary and inferred emotions (see Table 11).
4. His story writing showed growth in his use of emotions vocabulary and he consistently used original, creative thinking and problem solving (see Table 12).

Table 9

Robbie – Videotaped Conversation and Oral Responses

Clip Number and Date	Topic	Activity[a]	Under-standing	Support	Level of Attention
Clip 4 Jan. 23	Pets	4	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 8 Feb. 1	Feeling Proud	6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 13 Feb. 8	Sentence frames on emotions	2, 6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 26 Feb. 27	Apple Batter	6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 26 Feb. 27	Focus	6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 27 March 29	Focus and Emotions	1, 2, 5, 6	increased	independent	attentive

[a]Activity – the following numbers indicate:

1. vocabulary development involving emotions
2. use of vocabulary involving emotions in discussion (application)
3. story text retelling (teacher read)
4. interpretation and elaboration of story text (teacher read)
5. interpretation and elaboration of personal feelings
6. contribution of personal knowledge or opinion

Description of Table 9

In our grand conversations, when our topics of discussion were of interest to Robbie, his contributions were elaborate and imaginative. He was attentive during these times which gradually benefited his growth in understanding the use of desired emotions vocabulary and the interpretation of his own feelings.

Table 10

Robbie - Kendra's Observations

Date	Topic	Activity	Under-standing	Support	Level of Attention	Comments
Jan. 11	Snowy Day	observation of whole class	unclear	occasional	occasionally distracted	No contributions
Jan. 17	Frog and Toad	observation of whole class	increased	independent	attentive	His interaction is good to see
Jan. 18	Trust	response work	unclear	occasional	attentive	Working on his story made it clear and understandable
Feb 1	Penguins	observation of whole class	unclear	direct	occasionally distracted	Inattentive in group discussion
Feb 1	I am proud about...	response work (drawing)	increased	independent	attentive	Highly motivated in this drawing assignment
Feb. 14	Valentines	story writing	increased	scribed	usually attentive	Enjoyed telling the story verbally
March 13	Wishes	response work	unclear	direct	distracted	Very inattentive
March 29	The Family	story writing	unclear	scribed	distracted	He needed lots of help with his story

Description of Table 10

Kendra observed or worked with Robbie eight times in discussions, response work and story writing. At times, direct support and scribing helped Robbie stay focused, however he was frequently distracted and his rate of growth was inconsistent. Because of his attending difficulties, Kendra was unclear as to whether or not Robbie increased in his use and application of emotions vocabulary.

Table 11

Robbie – Written Response Work

Date and Activity	Story text Related	Related to Personal Experience	Conversa-tion Related	Use of Emotions Vocabulary	Use of Inferred Emotions	Author's Original Thinking	Evidence of Problem Solving
Jan. 9 Snowy Day		●	●				
Jan. 22 Belle's Journey	●		●	●			
Jan. 25 Trust means...		●				●	
Feb. 1 Penguins	●		●				
Feb. 7 Bad Day		●	●	●			
Feb. 13 Love is...					●	●	
March 7 *My Wish		●	●				
March 18 Jeremiah	●		●	●			
March 27 Focus			●				
March 28 Focus and Emotions		●		●	●	●	

Note. Numbers indicate the frequency of occurrence per entry.

Description of Table 11

Robbie made very good use of his experiences when he was creating his written response work. He consistently combined these with original, imaginative results. His use of emotions vocabulary and inferred emotions was evident, but not strong. His final written response showed a noticeable use of the possible components.

Table 12

Robbie – Story Writing

Date and Activity	Story text Related	Related to Personal Experience	Conversa-tion Related	Use of Emotions Vocabulary	Use of Inferred Emotions	Author's Original Thinking	Evidence of Problem Solving
Jan. 10 Snowy Day						●	
Jan. 17* Frog and Toad	●		●	●	2	●	●
Jan. 24 Belle's Journey	●		●	●	●		●
Feb. 5 Penguins	●		●				
Feb. 12* Valentines				●		●	
Feb. 28 The Dis-agreement				2	2	●	●
March 19 *The Family			●	2		●	

Note. Numbers indicate the frequency of occurrence per entry.

Asterisks indicate that an adult scribed the entry.

Description of Table 12

In his story writing, Robbie sometimes used experience-related ideas, with the exception of personal experiences, which were not used in any of his stories. Kendra scribed three of his stories. He sometimes included inferred emotions and showed noticeable growth in combining emotions vocabulary, original thinking and problem solving.

Jenny

From the beginning of the school year, Jenny was consistent and dependable in most of her endeavours, both socially and in academic work. She had an ability to assess peer conflicts and find acceptable solutions for everyone involved. This worked especially well when she was not part of the conflict. Usually quiet in group discussions, she remained attentive and was frequently ready to give an answer if she was specifically asked to do so. She took pride in completing her academic tasks well by combining new knowledge with her own background experiences. She preferred not to take risks in her work and felt the most comfortable when she was working with ideas and concepts that she was sure of.

Conversation and oral response groups.

Jenny was always attentive during our grand conversations but usually chose not to contribute. During the first two weeks of the project her first five oral contributions were teacher prompted and each one consisted of a short phrase. After that a pattern formed in which she was able to express her ideas more clearly especially when they involved recalling personal experiences (see Clip 7). This particular contribution took place three weeks into the project (see Table 13). We were talking about responsibilities, and although her contribution was short, it was the first time that she spoke voluntarily.

Jenny: If my friends come over and they forget to clean up their mess, I have to clean it up for them.

Teacher: And that's an important responsibility isn't it?

As seen in Clip 27, close to the end of the project, she felt the most comfortable when she shared her ideas in a small group setting.

Teacher: Jenny, what do you want to learn to do better?

Jenny: Read.

Teacher: What are you going to do to practice your reading? What is your focus going to be?

Jenny: Concentrate on ….(pause)

Teacher: Concentrate on your reading? Where do you find you can concentrate the best?

Jenny: In my room.

Teacher: And, what style of book helps you learn better than another style of book?

Jenny: (shrug)

Teacher: Should you try to read one where you know every single word like you've read it since you were a baby?

Robbie: No, you can't read it since you were a baby!

Teacher: Well you know… Should you know …? This is what I'm trying to say. Guys, when you're learning to read and you want to be better, choose a book that has three or four words that you don't know on the page, but you know the rest.

Teacher: If you're stuck, what do you do Jenny?

Jenny: Umm

Robbie: Sound it out.

Jenny: Sound it out or just skip over it and then "read on" and you'll find it out.

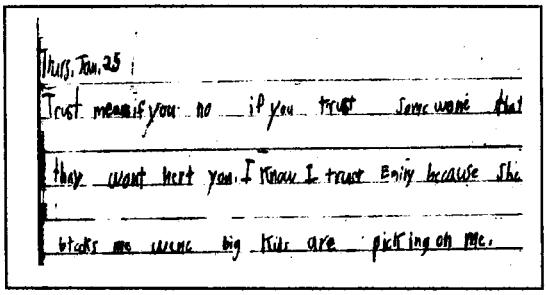
Teacher: I like this one: "read on", skip the word, and "read on." You have to

pay attention to what's happening in the story then go back.

Written response work.

A very noticeable theme emerged early in Jenny's written response work. She very capably used the knowledge she gained from our grand conversation groups in her written response work (see Figure 13 and Table 15). Consistently, she combined her personal experiences with ideas from the story-text in three of her written responses. Jenny used some "emotions" vocabulary, however this occurred in tasks where it was a specific requirement. She did not include any original thinking, but she did show an understanding of the situation by writing a solution to the problem (see Figure 14). When Jenny was a small group member with Kendra, she was attentive and usually independent, creating the emergence of a theme in her adult-supported work (see Table 14). At the beginning of the project and occasionally throughout, Jenny was asked to include more detailed information when completing her rough drafts, which she did willingly.

Trust

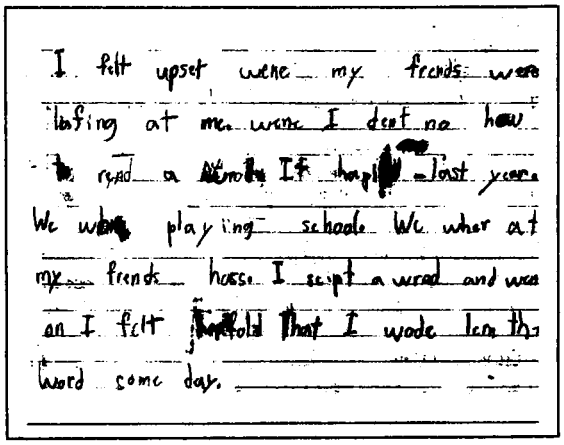


Trust means if you know if you trust someone that they won't hurt you. I know I trust Emily because she protects me when big kids are picking on me.

Figure 13

Jenny – Written Response Work
January 25

My Friends



I felt upset when my friends were laughing at me when I didn't know how to read a word. It happened last year. We were playing school. We were at my friend's house. I skipped a word and went on I felt hopeful that I would learn the word someday.

Figure 14

Jenny –Written Response Work
March 28

Story writing.

Jenny's progress in story writing was very evident (see Table 16). A theme emerged in which she consistently combined ideas from the story text, grand conversations, and her own original thoughts. An understanding in the use of emotions vocabulary and inferred emotions progressed steadily, especially during the last four weeks. As well, her stories frequently had conclusions that included problem-solving strategies to resolve issues. This is evident when her writing samples in Figures 15 and 16 are compared.

Insights from the project assistant.

Jenny was very attentive during our grand conversations but she did not feel comfortable contributing her ideas. This was a large part of the reason for changing the conversation format to small response groups. Jenny's ideas needed to be heard and by the end of the project she appeared more at ease reading her ideas from her response book (see Clip 28). Jenny's written response work and her story writing developed very well. She expressed herself with confidence and the small group with Kendra enabled her to extend her ideas. Her contributions in the small groups benefited the other members and she usually completed her work independently.

Summary of data.

Jenny's growth and contributions were strong throughout the project. Her natural ability to organize and assess issues gave her a base for increasing her understanding of emotional awareness. Four themes emerged in Jenny's participation in the project.

1. Her contributions to the grand conversations were short and concise, frequently requiring extra questioning and restating from the teacher (see Table 13). She was

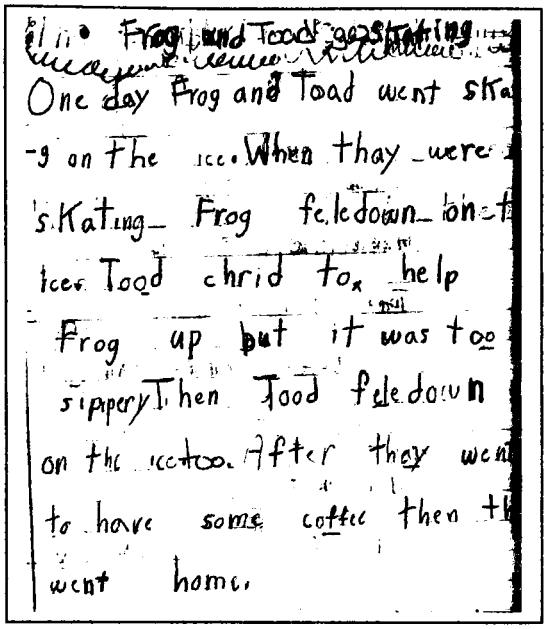
always very attentive during these times and gradually she was comfortable in elaborating on her ideas.

2. In small group work with Kendra, Jenny's strong work habits remained intact. Her attentiveness, her independent work habits and her contributions in small group settings were assets to her classmates (see Table 14).

3. She made consistent use of personal experiences and grand conversations in her response writing, and showed noticeable growth in most of the other areas (see Table 15).

3. Her understanding of the use of emotions vocabulary and inferred emotions developed quickly in her story writing, as did her original thinking and problem solving capabilities (see Table 16).

Frog and Toad Go Skating

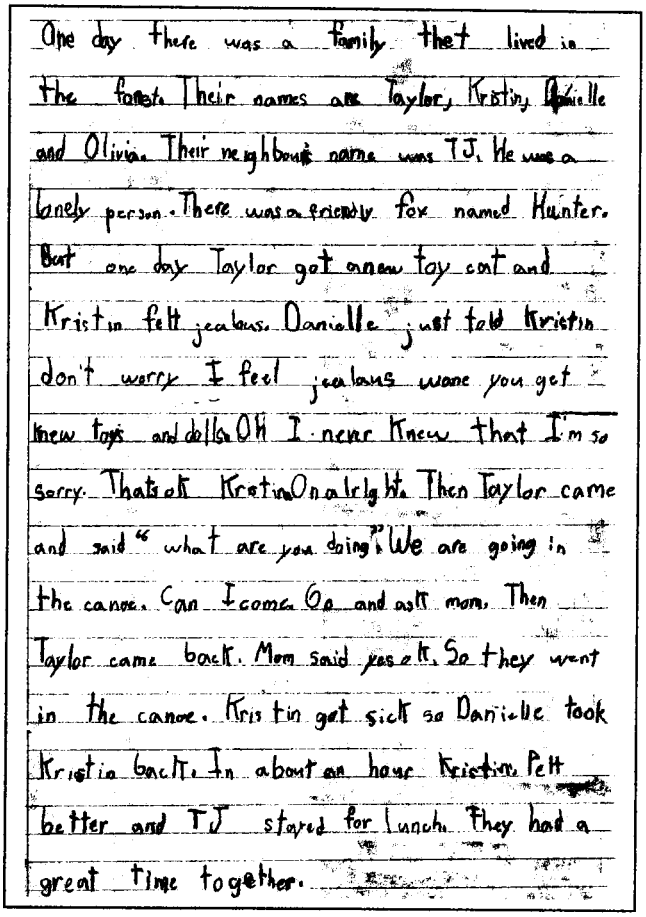


Frog and Toad went skating on the ice. When they were skating Frog fell down on the ice. Toad tried to help Frog up but it was too slippery. Then Toad fell down on the ice too. After they went to have some coffee then they went home.

Figure 15

Jenny – Story writing
January 17

The Forest



One day there was a family that lived in the forest. Their names are Taylor, Kristin, Danielle and Olivia. Their neighbour's name was TJ. He was a lonely person. There was a friendly fox named Hunter. But one day Taylor got a new toy cat and Kristin felt jealous. Danielle just told Kristin, don't worry I feel jealous when you get new toys and dolls. Oh, I never knew that, I'm so sorry. That's ok Kristin. Oh alright. Then Taylor came and said, "what are you doing?" "we are going in the canoe." "Can I come?" Go and ask mom. Then Taylor came back and said "mom said yes". "ok". So they went in the canoe. Kristin got sick so Danielle took Kristin back. In about an hour Kristin felt better and TJ stayed for lunch. They had a great time together.

Figure 16

Jenny – Story writing
March 19

Table 13

Jenny– Videotaped Conversation and Oral Responses

Clip Number and Date	Topic	Activity[a]	Under-standing	Support	Level of Attention
Clip 2 Jan. 21	Trusting	6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 6 Jan. 25	Pets	6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 7 Jan. 30	Respons-ibilities	6	increased	occasional	attentive
Clip 11 Feb. 7	Bad Day	2	increased	occasional	attentive
Clip 14 Feb. 8	Sentence frames on emotions	2, 5	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 18 March 6	Emotions -Analogy	2, 5	increased	direct	attentive
Clip 20 March 8	Wishes	2, 5, 6	increased	occasional	attentive
Clip 25 March 19	Jeremiah	2, 4, 5, 6	increased	independent	attentive
Clip 27 March 26	Focus	6	increased	direct	attentive
Clip 29 March 28	Focus and Emotions	2, 5, 6	increased	independent	attentive

[a]Activity – the following numbers indicate:

1. vocabulary development involving emotions
2. use of vocabulary involving emotions in discussion (application)
3. story text retelling (teacher read)
4. interpretation and elaboration of story text (teacher read)
5. interpretation and elaboration of personal feelings
6. contribution of personal knowledge or opinion

Description of Table 13

Jenny was always attentive during our grand conversations. Frequently, she benefited from extra prompting when elaborating on her ideas. There was a noticeable increase in her understanding of the use of emotions vocabulary and its application in her contributions as the project progressed.

Table 14

Jenny- Kendra's Observations

Date	Topic	Activity	Under-standing	Support	Level of Attention	Comments
Jan. 18	Frog and Toad	Story writing	increased	occasional	attentive	She was asked to include more details
Feb. 1	Penguins	observation of whole class	increased	independent	attentive	No contribution – but attentive
Feb. 1	I am proud about…	response work (drawing)	increased	independent	attentive	Drawing activity
Feb. 8	Emotions	response work	increased	independent	attentive	Good participation
March 8	Wishes	response work	increased	independent	attentive	Lots of ideas
March 29	Focus and goals	response work	increased	independent	attentive	Good input and group assistance

Description of Table 14

Jenny was consistently attentive and independent when working with Kendra. She contributed her ideas well to small group activities. Kendra could easily see the increase in Jenny's understanding and use of emotions vocabulary and inferred emotions in her work.

Table 15

Jenny- Written Response Work

Date and Activity	Story text Related	Related to Personal Experience	Conversa -tion Related	Use of Emotions Vocabulary	Use of Inferred Emotions	Author's Original Thinking	Evidence of Problem Solving
Jan. 9 Snow Activity		●	●				
Jan. 22 Belle's Journey	●		●				
Jan. 23 Trust means...		●	●		●		
Feb. 1 Penguins	●		●				
Feb. 7 My Very Bad Day	●	●	●	2			●
Feb. 13 Love is strong/fun		●	●		2		
March 8 My Wish		●	●				
March 18 Jeremiah		●	●				●
March 27 Focus		●	●				
March 28 Emotions and Focus		●	●	2			●

Note. Numbers indicate frequency of occurrence per entry

Description of Table 15

In her written response work, Jenny made excellent use of her personal experiences and her conversation-related ideas. She noticeably used emotions vocabulary, inferred emotions and problem solving. Jenny did not include original ideas in her response work.

Table 16

Jenny – Story Writing

Date and Activity	Story text Related	Related to Personal Experience	Conversa-tion Related	Use of Emotions Vocabulary	Use of Inferred Emotions	Author's Original Thinking	Evidence of Problem Solving
Jan. 10 Snowy Day	●		●		●	●	●
Jan. 17 Frog and Toad	●				2	●	●
Jan. 24 Belle's Journey	●						
Feb. 5 Penguin Pete	●			2	2		
Feb. 12 Valentines				●	●	●	●
Feb. 28 Nina and Mae				2	3	●	●
March 19 The Forest				5	2	●	●

Note. Numbers indicate frequency of occurrence per entry

Description of Table 16

In the first half of the project Jenny used ideas from the teacher read stories but almost no other background experiences. She consistently developed the use of emotions vocabulary, inferred emotions, original thinking and problem solving throughout the span of the project.

Discussion

Purposefulness and Flexibility

My most reoccurring concern throughout the twelve weeks of the study was keeping the development of the project genuine to the curriculum and to the students. From the start we reviewed and worked on procedural expectations, many of which had been established at the beginning of the school year. These included courteous listening, being ready to participate in conversations about the elements of the stories and predicting outcomes in the stories. Taking risks in expressing their own ideas instead of thinking about the "right" answer was strongly encouraged. As well, there was an expectation that everyone's ideas would be accepted as valid.

I was pleased with the evolution of our conversations. At first I felt a bit intimidated by the "grand conversation" format of our discussions. I wanted them to steer the direction of the conversations with enough flexibility to include the full range of their thoughts and opinions. We had established many of the characteristics for these conversations beforehand, and the children responded to the expectations easily. I realized that in such a large group, the students would not be able to have equal shares of time. However, we established our routines quickly and the conversations usually seemed to have a good balance of story text related and student related topics. As we got a few weeks into the project I was able to identify those students who needed extra prompting for their input. As I have found to be typical of grade two students, I had to give them steady encouragement to use new vocabulary for expressing emotions and creating descriptions. It was challenging at times to devise ways that would guide them to a higher level of thinking. However, for this study, I truly wanted them to explore the

story ideas and their own ideas. As well, the conversations allowed them the opportunity to move beyond their own personal experiences. In an atmosphere of cooperation and support the students analyzed their peers contributions, finding ways to build links in their thinking as a way of deepening their understanding about themselves and their emotions.

After one month into the project, I felt I could look for progress by analyzing their response work and their story writing. As I expected, I found a wide range of ability and achievement. As well as meeting the standard grade two expectations of a language arts program, I had them focus on several other components that were specific to this study. They were encouraged to label and describe the emotions of their story characters by using the emotion vocabulary charts in the classroom that had been created during our grand conversations. During the study, I also led them to purposefully create situations of unease or conflict so they could practice resolving the issues in their writing. The main purpose of their writing was to use and apply emotions vocabulary, either directly or inferred, in story situations that they created. I felt that this type of application would help promote the development and use of emotional awareness.

When the class had been involved in the project for about two weeks, I realized that my intentions to use dialogue response journals, as a way of establishing genuine communication with my students, would not work. A large part of their concentration and time was being used in our grand conversations and their written work. Although I usually wrote back to them regularly after their entries in their response journals, I purposely did not encourage them to continue these as dialogues. I felt we were

communicating, very sufficiently and regularly, on a variety of pertinent topics in our conversation groups and related activities.

Wanting the project to fit into the language arts curriculum, I set diligently to work on peer editing and teaching the mechanics and conventions required in grade two written work. Close to halfway through the project though, I realized that not everything would fit into the time frame that I had created for the project. The students could not work on exploring their own feelings and their characters' feelings as well as edit their work to the level I would normally expect, including "publishing" their work. For most of the students this was not a problem; their writing was voluminous and their editing requirements were minimal. I struggled with finding ways of adjusting support for some of the others. For a few of my students (three of my participants included), my project assistant, Kendra, occasionally scribed their work as the individual students dictated their stories to her. Finding a balance between process and product was a concern for me. In a regular teaching situation I most likely would have allowed for other forms of expression such as artwork or drama, but story writing was fundamental component of the project. After spending a considerable amount of time reflecting on this, I confirmed for myself that the most important outcome of the project was the development of students' emotional awareness, and that this took precedent over attending to the correct structure and mechanics of their stories. When students were struggling with getting their ideas organized and written down, I helped them focus on that aspect of their thinking and did not emphasize correct spelling or sentence structure.

As is generally true with educators, flexibility in planning is common in my teaching, as the needs of the students direct the structure and content of my program. Each group

of students that I work with is different in their abilities, their experiences and their interests. However, I was not prepared for a large group of writers who hesitated in writing down their ideas without direct adult support. In reflecting about the possible reasons for this, I looked at the demographics of my class. The gender ratio in my class was sixteen boys to eleven girls, and in my group of project participants there were three boys and one girl. To varying degrees, it was the three male participants who struggled with their writing. In looking at the tables of data, generally the boys' thinking became well developed, but they benefited from extra support. In my years of teaching experience I have found that boys struggle more with some areas of language development. Many educational researchers and writers support these findings including Gurian (2001), who has recently researched the neurological and endocrinological effects of gender on learning and behavior. All three of the young writers, who had hesitated to put their ideas into writing, continually gained confidence and experience. During the last two weeks of the project, their final products were very good examples of the kind of story writing I had anticipated.

Another factor that caused me to deliberate, was to what extent the project should interfere with our regular classroom proceedings. One important feature of the project was for it to fit easily into an existing classroom program. However, just managing and running the research dictated a need to leave out some aspects of my language arts program that normally would be a major part. Publishing completed stories was one of these parts. A regular component of my writing program, and one that captivates the attention of students, is the appearance and sharing of their completed work. Even though I realized this at the time of my planning, it still bothered me regularly during the

twelve weeks that there was not enough time to incorporate the finishing steps to the stories. At the end of the project, the students did publish their final pieces of work.

Writing in "content areas" was minimized as well. Although we did do some factual writing after reading about penguins, this was noticeably less than normal kinds of writing that would more completely incorporate individuals' interests. Many of my students and several of the participants enjoyed math and science areas far more than fiction writing. Although I kept this in mind when I was choosing my literature selections, writing about emotions and related situations was very different from discussing a science experiment or explaining how to solve a math problem. I chose literature and writing because there is a major emphasis placed on these in the curriculum at the elementary level. As well, it is an area of personal interest for me and for many students. Overall, my observations and the other data show that my students were very interested in being involved in the project and their level of emotional awareness increased noticeably.

Other Findings

Our group conversations usually followed an interesting, but anticipated, pattern of exchanges on topics that are of interest to seven and eight year olds. One conversation however, stands out as being significant because it made me stop and reflect carefully on its implications. We were discussing the story I had just read, Swan in Love (Bunting, 2000) (see Appendix A). At the end of the story the swan died and the author implied that it went to Heaven. I was really surprised that most of the students were confused about where the swan had gone. Only five or six students were able to discuss their ideas about what Heaven is. I have reflectively returned to part of my literature review where I

discussed the work of Kessler (1994) and her thoughts on how children need a spiritual foundation on which to build their value systems. I wonder if this needs to be addressed further and if there are a number of stakeholders who need to share the responsibility for doing this. Perhaps there are implications here that educators need to consider such as ensuring that genuine relationships are developed between students and significant adults, and that healthy identities in students are promoted through profound caring and respect. This responsibility would need to go beyond the role of the school and would need to involve other community organizations.

Considerations for My Teaching

Conducting this study has re-emphasized for me, the importance of developing genuine relationships with my students. It is important to always take the time to find out what they are thinking, how they are feeling and to make real connections with them through mutual respect and shared interests. Being a classroom teacher and researcher has given me the unique position of finding solutions to real questions about my teaching. The input and responses of the students determined the direction of the research. It was important that I never allowed my expectations to steer the procedures that were used. With a different class I am sure my methodology would have differed to some extent but I think the results would have been similar to what I discovered.

I felt restricted by the reduced range of writing possibilities for my students. Because the students' writing was based on the teacher-read stories, during the twelve-week period there was little possibility of exploring writing in other subject areas. However, the span of the project was of short enough duration to allow the students ample time after it was completed, to engage in report writing and poetry writing. To varying

degrees, I felt all of the children benefited from the writing experiences they gained during the study, however it also reminded me of the importance of guiding students in many forms of writing.

The project helped me recognize the importance of proper pacing in planning for instruction. The students created a lot of written work during the twelve-week period, showing good growth in their levels of emotional awareness. In doing the project I wanted to see as much growth in this area as was possible. In a normal situation the writing would be more balanced with the process of editing, revisions and publishing. As a result, there would be fewer written products.

I believe that the students' exploration of text, the connections they made with one another's points of view and the growth in the awareness of their emotions contributed to a classroom community of confident and empowered thinkers and learners.

Implications and Considerations for Educators

Educational Research and Emotions

"Appropriate developmental environments" is a term used by Robert Sylwester (2000) in his article entitled Unconscious Emotions, Conscious Feelings. I share his belief that educators have a responsibility to develop appropriate environments for dealing with the emotions of students. I chose to develop one such environment in the area of language arts. I did this with purpose, wanting my students to increase their levels of emotional awareness. Through my research (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997)) and my teaching experiences, I believe emotional awareness is a fundamental skill that needs to be purposely encouraged in the development of young children. With guidance and practice, they can then build on this skill as they encounter increasingly complex situations that require emotional astuteness.

Teachers need to be reminded of their influence on the emotional development of their students, in all subject areas and fields of interest. The subject area provides only the setting for helping students reflect on and understand their feelings and reactions to situations. Although teaching content and subject matter is important, decision making and problem solving in social and emotional contexts is of particular importance. After accomplishing this, students can then be led to understand their underlying emotions. Sylwester discusses areas of the arts, of play and of classroom management as being particularly useful environments. In my project, classroom management was a key factor in creating an environment where students were at ease responding to literature and others' ideas. Situations must be created where students can express their feelings, experiment with different reactions and ultimately develop their individual response

abilities. All kinds of emotions, because they are part of the brain system, must be developed. Emotions are neither positive nor negative in themselves. Rather, they are signals of special kinds of problems. Educators should design appropriate developmental environments for the emotions that alert us to situations with students that may require further attention rather than labeling these as misbehaviors.

Research in the area of emotional intelligence and emotional skill development is extensive. There is a consensus that emotions must be addressed by educators because of the growing knowledge of neurological development in learning and the relationship that it has with emotions. Emotions effect the learning state of people (Sylwester, 2000). Educators need to remember that by addressing the emotional situations of their students, they are helping develop confident people who function well individually and in cooperation with others. Attending patiently to children's emotions and their effects as a central part of classroom processes will lead to improved personal and academic outcomes. It is not a responsibility that all educators care to embrace, but the present areas of research in education will influence interested people because of the validity of scientific evidence.

Deep Connections

A possible responsibility of educators relates to my earlier question about the development of spirituality in children. As Kessler (1994) writes, there needs to be deep personal connections with the sense of self. This has similarities to Maslow's (1970) highest level of development, "self-actualization", where individuals integrate their use of abilities and wisdom to the extent that they can examine and learn about human character with width and breadth. The science of learning and emotions needs to be

combined with the development of compassion and responsibility that goes beyond a narrow sense of self. It is a holistic approach to learning that fosters a broader vision of education (Miller, 1998). In students, deep connections within themselves evoke a quality of relationship that is profoundly caring and is accompanied by strong feelings of belonging. As teachers, one way we can nourish this connection is by promoting expression through writing as a means for students to discover and express their own feelings, values and beliefs. From my study, I found that this could be accomplished through practice and encouragement. Initially, a common vocabulary base needed to be established between the teacher and the students. Then, journal entries, response writing and story writing were some of the successful ways that writing experiences were encouraged. Modeling writing samples for the students often gave them extra support in the beginning stages if they were unsure of the procedures. Connecting with each other through conversation was also an important part of this process.

Curriculum and Programs

Currently, there are on-going debates about how best to incorporate emotional learning into schools. It has generally been acknowledged in the educational field that emotion drives attention, which drives learning and memory (Greenberg and Snell, 1997). As well, educational leaders are eager to find answers to problems of poor conduct, interpersonal conflicts and violence. In appropriate environments all feelings must be acknowledged, with no lessons on the "correct" way to feel. Salovey and Sluyter (1997) emphasize this when they caution about teaching emotional intelligence. They discuss that teaching an intelligence cannot be done because it is an ability, which means it is a capacity rather than a topic. Therefore, one must learn to use emotional

skills as a way of building emotional intelligence. Whereas the intelligence of emotions cannot be taught, they feel that the level of skill in handling emotions can be increased. Teaching students how to respond to their own and others' emotions should be emphasized rather than telling them how they should feel.

Cobb and Mayer (2000) describe the characteristics of two different approaches: an emotional intelligence curriculum and a social and emotional learning curriculum. Of the two, they feel that the first one is preferable because in pure social and emotional learning situations, "getting along" can stifle creativity, healthy skepticism and spontaneity, all which are valued traits of an intelligent person. They then discuss a variation of these two approaches that helps students develop the capacity to make decisions on their own, in their own contexts. It involves the teaching of emotional knowledge and emotional reasoning. They wonder if indirect teaching of these goals could show better results than direct attention to selected values in an emotion-based curriculum.

My research is very compatible with the idea of indirect teaching of emotional knowledge and reasoning. In my project, emotional awareness was focused on within the context of story analysis and writing skills. The students' feelings of confidence and empowerment grew, not only because of their increase in emotional knowledge but also because of the success they experienced in their work and through their interactions with others. Experienced educators know that teaching specific skills in isolation is not as effective as teaching them within a larger context; teaching spelling in a language arts program for example. The same may be true for teaching emotional knowledge and reasoning which should be taught in conjunction with other educational goals. Educators

can help young children perceive emotions in many ways starting with naming emotions, then learning to read more subtle clues such as another person's posture, voice and gestures. As their level of sophistication increases, students can then learn to use emotions to create new ideas and then move to higher ordered thinking such as compassion and empathy.

I feel there is a need for a framework in emotional learning that can fit across other curriculum areas. Having used ideas from programs such as Bully-Proofing Your School (Garrity, 1994) and Skills for Growing (Resnick, 1990), I believe that basic vocabulary and skills that are common to all students in a school can increase communication and understanding. Careful attention must be given to ensure that the framework is purposefully applied in all areas of student learning. It can not be isolated in a separate curriculum, but practiced and refined in a variety of contexts. This will benefit children by teaching them to correctly perceive emotional information from a variety of sources and make sense of situations that impact them.

One context for an emotional learning framework is an existing language arts program, such as the one I used in my study. An age-appropriate selection of children's stories enables the students to experience both the familiar and unfamiliar emotions of the story characters. Grand conversations follow the teacher-read stories to help the students label emotions and compare these to their own experiences. Their understanding can then be extended by participating in large group charting activities, where emotions vocabulary is listed on classroom charts for future reference. Initially, it is beneficial for response work, including sentence frames and story webbing, to be done in large group settings. Subsequent individual and small group response work then gives

them further opportunities to use and apply the "emotions vocabulary" to their own personal experiences. Initially, story-writing activities can also be teacher-modeled and charted as a classroom reference. This allows the students to see their ideas in printed story form, and it allows teachers an opportunity to adjust their level of support if moments of uncertainty arise in the group. During this time, mini-lessons on selected elements of story writing can also be introduced. Character development, descriptions of settings, and plot development are common elements that can be reinforced at the grade two level. Some students are ready to be introduced to ways of writing about characters that infer emotions rather than by stating them, as well as other ideas for making their stories creative and original. In completing this study, I found a sequence of valid strategies for applying elements of emotional awareness. These strategies were combined and became a framework that can be implemented into a grade two language arts program.

Conclusion

It is important for educators in all areas to recognize the impact they have on the emotional development of children. Teachers need to develop and affirm the strengths that they find in their students and be involved in helping students extend their emotional knowledge and emotional reasoning ability.

Stories and student writing are extremely valuable ways of having children perceive emotions by identifying feelings and using their understanding of emotions to create new ideas through conversations and writing. Appropriate stories for the students should include rich descriptions of the evolving emotions of the characters and their circumstances. Grand conversations about the stories and their own experiences

encourage the children to extend their own understanding of emotions. Student response writing and story writing allow them further opportunities to apply their new skills. Helping children develop awareness of emotional processes such as applying verbal labeling to emotions, encouraging perspective taking and empathetic identification with others are integral steps in developing interpersonal awareness and self-control. Emotional learning has a neurological base, but for a true understanding of oneself, this needs to be accompanied by the development of an inner feeling of caring for others and of a sense of belonging. Beginning with an awareness of their full range of emotions, students can be guided to appropriately express themselves and manage their behaviors. Emphasis needs to be placed both on emotional knowledge and reasoning.

As we continue through this fascinating time of research and discovery in education, we must continue to challenge ourselves to look for ways of promoting emotional learning with the understanding that emotions effect other forms of learning. Possible implementation of frameworks or procedures must be analyzed and used carefully to construct sound educational procedures. With this understanding in mind, meeting the challenges in front of us with an attitude of flexibility and inquiry will ensure that we are guiding our students toward understanding their individual levels of emotional potential. In turn, this will lead children to find their own way toward making good decisions for themselves and for successful relationships with others.

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Appendix A

Annotated Bibliography of Selected Children's Literature

Bogart, J. (1997). Jeremiah learns to read. Toronto: North Winds Press.

A grandfather decides to learn to read and, at the same time, shares many of his skills and experiences with the children in his class.

Bunting, E. (2000). Swan in love. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

A swan grows to love a swan-shaped boat and although much disapproval is voiced by neighbouring animals, the swan is determined that the power of love will keep the two together.

Harrison, T. (1999). The dream collector. Toronto: Kids Can Press.

This is an imaginative story which enables a young boy to have an early morning adventure when he helps collect dreams from the previous night.

Keats, J. (1962). The snowy day. New York: Viking Penguin Inc.

This well-known story for primary students takes us through the day of a young boy playing outside after a snowfall. Children are easily able to identify with the activities and feelings of the boy.

Lobel, A. (1976). Frog and Toad all year. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Children are well acquainted with these two characters who find themselves in situations where their antics annoy each other. In the end though, they always realize that they have a genuine and lasting friendship. The vocabulary in this book is appropriate for a mid-grade two reading level.

Mayer, M. (1983). I was so mad. Wisconsin: Golden Books Publishing Company.

This story provides a meaningful and humorous way for children to identify with the problems and frustrations that they meet in their daily lives.

Perlman, J. (1994). The emperor penguin's new clothes. Toronto: Kids Can Press.

This book gives the classic tale a new twist with cartoon penguins who learn a valuable lesson after being embarrassed by dishonest clothes-makers.

Pfister, M. (1993). Penguin Pete, ahoy! New York: North-South Books.

This story is about two friends, a penguin and mouse, who experience the difficulties of living in each others' homes which are an old, abandoned ship and the open water. They develop an appreciation of each other's situations.

Polacco, P. (1994). My rotten red-headed older brother. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks Inc.

Through the trials of having to live with the teasing of an older brother, in the end, when his help is needed, having him around turns out to be a very good thing.

Reynolds, M. (1993). Belle's journey. Victoria: Orca Book Publishers.

While Molly is returning from her piano lessons with her horse, they encounter a blinding blizzard, which requires the young girl to trust her old horse to get her home safely. After they return home, the family finds it easy to answer the question they have been struggling with on whether or not they should sell their old horse and get a new one.

Viorst, J. (1972). Alexander and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. New York: Antheneum Books.

The reader follows Alexander through his day as terrible, horrible events and feelings unfold. At the end of the story, Alexander understands the comfort and security that his home and family provide.

Viorst, J. (1974). Rosie and Michael. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks Inc.

Two friends explain their friendship in terms of how they like to alternately tease each other and support each other. The incidents in the story are very familiar to those of all children, with the under-lying belief that true friendship makes annoyances easy to put aside.

Yerxa, L. (1995). A fish tale, or, the little one that got away. Toronto: Groundwood Books.

This is a parable about a curious young fish who is taken on a dangerous adventure and then realizes, after a narrow escape, that he is safer in his own underground garden.

Wells, R. (1973). Benjamin and Tulip. New York: The Dial Press.

In this story with animated illustrations, two friends spend most of the time planning how they can sabotage each other. It becomes clear that their antics are a display of affection and they really do care for each other.

Zagwyn, D. (1999). Apple batter. California: Tricycle Press.

A woman and her young son both have goals they want to meet, so they determinedly develop strategies that will help them be successful.

Appendix B

Time Line of the Twelve-Week Period

Week 1 – January 9 – 11

Tuesday:
- teacher-read story, The Snowy Day (Keats, 1962), and grand conversation about snowy day activities
- created wall charts on "Feelings about Snow" and "Snow Activities"
- written response work about snowy day activities

Wednesday:
- story-writing – playing with a friend on a snowy day

Thursday:
- completed and edited stories

Week 2 – January 15 – 18

Monday:
- teacher-read story, Frog and Toad All Year (Lobel, 1976), and grand conversation reviewing snow activities

Tuesday:
- grand conversation about "trust", relating story experiences to personal experiences (video taped)
- teacher-modeled response work on creating a web showing feelings of the characters

Wednesday:
- grand conversation reviewing characters' feelings
- brainstorming ideas for individual stories about Frog and Toad (video taped)
- began story-writing

Thursday:
- completed and edited stories

Week 3 – January 22 – 25

Monday:
- teacher-read story, first half of Belle's Journey (Reynolds, 1993), and grand conversation about story outcome and predicting the outcome
- modeled response work using sentence stems
- independent completion of written response work

Tuesday:
- shared responses from yesterday in a large group setting
- teacher-read story, second half of Belle's Journey (Reynolds, 1993), and grand conversation about story outcome

Wednesday:
- mini-lesson on point of view in a story to show the feelings and thoughts of the characters (video taped)
- story-writing involving Belle's Journey written from the point of view of one of the characters

Thursday:
- grand conversation about old pets and new pets

Week 4 – January 29 – February 1

Monday:
- teacher-read story, The Emperor's Egg (Jenkins, 1999), and grand conversation about comparing the aspects of a non-fiction story to two fiction stories involving penguins, Penguin Pete, Ahoy! (Pfister, 1993), and The Emperor Penguin's New Clothes (Perlman, 1994)

Tuesday:
- grand conversation about the responsibilities of the members of a penguin family (video taped)
- mini-lesson on combining factual and fictional elements of story-writing

Wednesday:
- Professional Development Day

Thursday:
- grand conversation about the responsibilities of family members (video taped)
- changed Kendra's role from large group observer and assistant to facilitator of small group work

Week 5 – February 5 – 8

Monday:
- distributed copies of student-compiled "feelings" vocabulary lists
- grand conversation about people and things that are important in the students' lives
- individually completed "reflection work" on what is important in their lives

Tuesday:
- teacher-read story, Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day (Viorst, 1972), and grand conversation relating Alexander's experiences to personal experiences
- compared the emotions in the story to those in I Was So Mad (Mayer, 1983)
- used ideas from the conversation to complete written response work

Wednesday:
- completed and shared response work from yesterday in large group setting (video taped)
- reflection work (with a partner), discussed and wrote about three emotions they have experienced on a bad day or on a good day

Thursday:
- Kendra and I discussed the use of teacher "scribing" for hesitant writers
- students completed reflections from yesterday and shared one reflection each in the large group (video taped)

Week 6 – February 12 – 15

Monday:
- large group brainstorming ideas for individual story writing about Valentines
- began story writing

Tuesday:
- mini-lessons on conventions, mechanics and editing in story writing
- continued story writing

Wednesday:
- completed and edited stories

Thursday:
- teacher-read story, Swan in Love (Bunting, 2000), and grand conversation
- individual written response work using sentence frames (video taped)

Week 7 – February 19 – 22

The students were not in school this week. I reflected on the evolution of the project and decided to move away from large group conversations to small discussion and response groups (three groups of nine children).

Week 8 – February 26 – March 1

Tuesday:
- teacher-read story, Rosie and Michael (Viorst, 1974), and grand conversation about teasing and friendship
- supplemented with teacher-read story Benjamin and Tulip (Wells, 1973)

Wednesday:
- conversation and story writing involving friends in a disagreement (video taped)

Thursday:
- reviewed conversation from yesterday and completed stories

Week 9 – March 5 – March 8

Tuesday:
- discussion about analogies in story writing to describe feelings
- teacher-read story, My Rotten Red-Headed Older Brother (Polacco, 1994)

Wednesday:
- mini-lesson on revising stories to add details and descriptions
- practiced peer editing

Thursday:
- teacher-read story, The Dream Collector (Harrison, 1999)
- completed and shared in groups, response frames on having wishes come true and not come true (video taped)

Week 10 – March 12 – 15

Tuesday:
- teacher-read story, A Fish Tale, Or, The Little One That Got Away. (Yerxa, 1995), and had a grand conversation comparing it to The Dream Collector
- completed reflection work by making drawings of activities they enjoy doing

Wednesday:
- teacher-read story, Jeremiah Learns To Read (Bogart, 1997)
- completed and shared response frames on how young people and old people can help each other learn (video taped)

Thursday:
- mini-lesson on using descriptive phrases in story writing

Week 11 – March 19 – 22

Monday:
- conversation and written response work on Jeremiah's feelings (video taped)
- mini-lesson on combining information completed during the previous week in story-writing

Tuesday:
- completed drawings as pre-writing activity
- began story-writing

Wednesday:
- completed story-writing and began editing
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Thursday:
- worked on publishing of story

Week 12 – March 26 – March 29

Monday:
- teacher-read story, Apple Batter (Zagwyn, 1999), and grand conversation about focusing on a goal

Tuesday:
- conversation and written response work on personal goals (video taped)

Thursday:
- conversation and written response work about the emotions involved in personal experiences when working towards goals