ABSTRACT. In the following exploratory study the interaction patterns of 4 parent readers and 4 senior readers were investigated using grounded theory methodology during an intergenerational shared book reading program involving 16, 5 and 6 year old children. Data were collected during pilot, pre-program, program, and post-program conditions using open, axial and selective coding procedures leading to the identification of provisional categories and the central phenomenon of scaffolding. Scaffolding was defined as a query and response pattern initiated by the adult, and used to direct the child’s focus of attention during the literacy act. This took place as part of a transactional process where the elements of (a) the book being read, (b) the child and (c) the volunteer reader were found to mutually condition each other. The qualities that the reader brought to the transaction tended to differ when comparing senior and parent readers. The main differences observed occurred in three clusters of (a) Timing, Responsiveness, and Pace, (b) Use of Expression, Colloquialisms, Articulation and (c) Gestures, Feedback Methods and Range of Strategies. Within these categories, the pace of the senior readers was found to be slower than that of the parent aged readers. The senior readers also tended to use distinct pronunciation and did not use colloquialisms. They were also more inclined to use a wider range of supportive strategies. Both the senior readers and the parent readers were unaware of most of the strategies that
they used to support the children. Further research on the question of the transac-
tional process and the qualities brought to the shared reading experi-
ence by senior volunteer readers is required. Replication of the pres-
ent study is suggested across a variety of conditions with different types
volunteer readers and children.

KEYWORDS. Parent volunteer readers, senior volunteer readers, scaf-
folding, transactional reading process

**SHARED READING**

As young children attempt to decode text and gain fluency during oral reading, parents and other reading partners often provide support during the reading act by offering phonetic or semantic cues to assist children in the recognition of letters, words, phrases and story meaning. This support assists the child in maintaining her/his independent attempts at reading while staving off possible frustration the children may encounter when the reading task becomes too challenging.

As described in studies on language development (Ninio & Bruner, 1978), many parents seem to have a natural ability to extend their child’s interest in objects and their speech performance surrounding objects by drawing the child’s attention to a particular item. This technique has been referred to as scaffolding; in part because of the parent’s support of the child’s language development but also because of the notion that it is a temporary and semi-expandable structure that can be extended and importantly, also removed when no longer needed. Bruner (1986) describes the scaffolding process as a “loan of consciousness” from someone who is more able, to one who is less able. Bruner also points out that in his experience the parent continually “ups the ante” during this transactional process by gradually increasing the complexity of the questions and responses and not accepting responses that are ill phrased or less than what the child is capable of. With respect to shared reading, Bruner describes parent-child book reading routines as a ‘transactional process’ whereby the child is encouraged to enter into a query-response pattern using rising voice patterns and scaffolding techniques that gradually increase the complexity of the questions and re-
The use of scaffolding may provide the child with a valuable opportunity to attend to specific aspects of the text or meaning within the text that may otherwise have gone unnoticed. By framing important information for the child, the parent is drawing the child’s attention to some explicit aspect of the text that she may not have attended to earlier. This aids the child in comprehending the information more thoroughly. In addition, the implicit message that the child receives from the parent is that this aspect of the text is important and valued by the parents. The parent has then contributed to the child’s understanding of the function of print and reinforced the value of print, books and learning about literacy.

The theory that parents, non-related adults, or teachers support children’s literacy and other development through tutor like behaviours was brought to the attention of researchers by Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1986). Vygotsky believed that these behaviours have the effect of controlling the focus of attention and providing children with the opportunity to gain mastery of a particular skill or task. Vygotsky strongly identified with the social context of learning, describing the cognitive mediation of social learning as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Within Vygotsky’s framework, learning is mediated with the help of a skilled adult who possesses an acute awareness of the child’s cognitive needs. Learning is then extended through a controlled presentation of tasks that will support the student in developing the necessary associations and enable her to come to her own understanding of the concept or relationship that is being presented. This socially mediated approach to learning is different from the Piagetian assimilation-accommodation model (Piaget, 1977) where cognitive development is theorised as occurring more independently and is motivated by the child’s need to make sense of the world around her to maintain internal consistencies. Within the Vygotskian perspective, the child is rarely viewed in isolation. The tutor-like support described in the ZPD theory is most effective in a dyadic relationship where the adult knows the child well enough to understand his or her ways of thinking and making associations.

Research on family literacy (e.g., Amstutz, 2000; Edwards, 1991; Hewison, 1988; Lancy & Nattiv, 1992; Neuman & Gallagher, 1994; Tizard, Schofield, & Hewison, 1982; Toomey, 1993) has often focused on parent involvement and subsequent gains in school performance. Less is known however, of the tutor like behaviours and scaffolding techniques that are used by non-related volunteers. As well, there is little understood about the differences in the scaffolding behaviours of
volunteers of different ages. Different from the above family literacy conditions the following study examines the interactions of non-related senior volunteer readers engaging in one on one reading with 5 and 6 year olds and compares those interactions with the interactions of non-related parent aged volunteers under similar conditions.

**DESGINS AND PROCEDURES**

**Research Methodology**

To explore the nature of the shared reading experience within the intergenerational shared reading program, grounded theory procedures and analytic techniques were used (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As conceived of by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later Strauss and Corbin, (1990, 1998) grounded theory calls for ongoing analysis during the course of data collection to generate and then test provisional hypotheses and identify categories leading to the generation of theory. This was done in the following exploratory study by creating provisional categories and hypotheses through initial observations and later verifying them using video observations and interviews with the volunteer readers as part of the process of ongoing analysis and hypothesis testing during pilot, pre-program, program, and post-program conditions.²

**Intergenerational Shared Reading Program**

The following study was conducted in a full day Kindergarten daycare centre located in Victoria, BC. The children taking part in the study attended the program 5 days per week typically arriving in the morning between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. and leaving in the late afternoon. All of the children who took part in the study had attended the centre for at least one year. The shared reading program took place four times per week over a period of five weeks.³

Four senior volunteers and four parent volunteers were selected to participate in the shared reading program with sixteen children age 5 or 6. This number of volunteers was chosen to maximise the number of readers that could be observed within the five-week period of the program for comparative purposes while minimising the overall impact and program disruption to the childcare centre. Each of the eight volunteer readers was matched with two children whom they would be reading with during their hour session. The adult reader, however, only read
with one child at a time. This was done to observe each volunteer with two different children. The children participating in the program were assigned to either Group 1 condition, that is reading with a parent aged reader or Group 2 condition, that is reading with a senior aged reader. Each child was assigned to a reading partner using stratified random assignment. This was done to divide the children up along gender lines prior to randomly assigning them a reading partner. Because some of the children in the program may have known the parents within their own centre, parent volunteers were drawn from parents of children aged 3 and 4, who attended the childcare centre. Again this was done to compare groups of volunteer readers and children equitably and without evaluating a pre-established relationship. Children age 5 and 6 were selected for this study because of the flexibility typical of this age group (e.g., independence and interest in new experiences) and their skills as emergent readers (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999).

Throughout this study an attempt was made to capture authentic interactions as much as possible by suggesting to the readers that they adopt their usual style of reading with the children. The volunteers were asked to follow the guidelines of: (a) greeting the children; (b) allowing the child to choose the book and; (c) asking the child if he or she would like to read or listen to the books that they had chosen. For the purposes of this study, shared reading is defined as a shared book experience involving dyads of either senior volunteer readers and young children aged 5 or 6 years or parent aged volunteer readers and young children exploring the text and pictures of storybooks. The books used by the volunteer readers and children were not restricted to big book formats often associated with the shared book experiences described by Holdaway (1979), where kindergarten and primary classroom teachers or volunteers read with an entire group of children. The books chosen for the study included both big and smaller formats. This allowed the children to choose from a variety of age appropriate books including pattern books, big books, picture books with predictable phrases and pictorial context clues and books that the children were familiar with either with respect to content or from previous readings.

Procedures

Informed consent was obtained from the volunteer readers, parents of the children participating as well as the children themselves. A participant background survey was administered to select volunteer readers who had no prior instruction in reading and to select children who were
not living with grandparents or great-grandparents so that the participants were not advantaged by additional training or circumstances.

Additionally four types of data were collected during the shared reading session: video recordings, “running accounts” (Bergen, 1997), researcher anecdotal comments and parent written comments about their child’s reading experiences. Following the reading sessions audio taped post-program interviews of the adult participants were conducted. Both the video and audio recordings were later transcribed and analyzed to assess patterns and verify information. At the time of the interviews some preliminary coding of the data had taken place. This provided information that could be used to modify the interview questions as part of a theoretical sampling. The interview questions were able to focus on verification of researcher interpretation as well as to further determine the reader’s intentions in the use of particular strategies and to determine his or her feelings toward the experience or particular children. This helped to clarify my understanding of the intention of the volunteer readers and elucidate the participants’ perspectives (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996). The post program interviews also provided the volunteer readers with the opportunity to debrief their experience and allowed for program closure from their volunteer tasks.

The above mentioned data were analyzed for notable patterns such as the presence or absence of incidence. In this process the data were reviewed to compare events or incidents and to focus further data collection. Early data analysis, in the form of open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was used as a method of conceptualizing early observations and became a basis to further clarify and explore emerging patterns. Data were coded using “constant comparisons” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) among data segments to search out similarities and differences. The “constant comparison” method, as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), involves identifying provisional hypotheses and categories that are later verified by noting concurrence as well as exceptions based on what is observed within the data. Following open coding and with the addition of information from the video segments, parent journals and interviews, axial coding was done as a way to validate the relationships between events and to uncover any links that were identified in open coding. During this phase of data coding, data were looked at analytically to uncover the context, conditions, action and interaction strategies that are used and the consequences of the phenomenon being coded.

To test the provisional hypothesis that was established within axial coding I returned to the data and began examining the changes that oc-
curred between each volunteer reader and each of the two children with whom he or she read. During this process I identified the central phenomenon that best defined the relationships across all the intervening conditions. The other categories then became subsidiary categories to the core phenomenon. During selective coding an emerging conceptualisation of the relationships among conditions, phenomenon, context action/interaction, and consequences were established. Following this, an explanatory framework and analytic story was developed.

Results

The overriding characteristics that differed most significantly between senior and parent readers were those underlined in Figure 1, namely: Timing, Responsiveness, Pace, Expression, Colloquialisms, Gestures, Articulation, Range of Strategies and Feedback Methods.

When considering the transaction among the three elements of: (a) the book being read, (b) the child, and (c) the volunteer reader, the complexity of the transaction becomes apparent. This has the effect of creating a unique dynamic not only for each reader and child but also from moment to moment within the 30 minute reading period. The three elements in the shared reading transaction are shown on the following page.

Despite these dynamic qualities however, when comparing transactions across senior and parent readers the differences noted can be said to create a different overall quality within the shared reading environment for the children reading with senior volunteer readers compared to children reading with parent readers. Of the most significant characteristics, three clusters of qualities can be identified. The characteristics of timing, responsiveness and pace seemed to be very interrelated and clustered together as a group. Timing refers to the decisions made around when to introduce questions or comments. The second characteristic found in the same cluster of elements is that of responsiveness. This refers to the volunteer readers’ ability to assist the child by scaffolding in response to the tasks of decoding and comprehension and in response to any other perceived needs of the child. Responsiveness seemed to be a quality influenced by the volunteer readers’ judgment concerning the type of correction method used or supportive strategy and the decision whether or not to intercede. This characteristic was therefore closely tied to timing in that the methods adopted by the volunteer readers would have to be decided spontaneously within the context of the reading experience and to be successful would require
appropriate timing. Within this same cluster of characteristics, the quality of pace was also related to both timing and responsiveness. Readers who exerted a higher level of responsiveness in the timing of their interventions or questions and comments tended to slow the pace of the shared reading experience and the transaction deepened with respect to the content of the book and related dialogue.

The characteristics of expression, colloquialisms, articulation, and gestures were also interrelated features that clustered together to affect the delivery of the text while the volunteers were reading or making...
Expression refers to the use of variations in voice tone and quality to match the perceived features of the characters in the story being narrated. Articulation refers to the sounds of speech used during pronunciation, while the use of colloquialisms refers to the type of expressions that were used by the readers. The use of gestures was associated exclusively with the senior readers, and refers to the use of hand and facial movements that were used to animate the content of the story. In combination, the transactions associated with this cluster of characteristics created a dynamic quality around the way that the material being read was delivered to the children with respect to verbal and non-verbal reading responses during the shared reading experience.

The other significant characteristics identified as interrelated were those of feedback methods used and the range of strategies. Feedback methods, refers to both the amount and type of feedback that was given to the children by the readers, while the range of strategies refers to the variation that occurred in the type of correction methods that were used.

A key process identified within the shared reading experience was transaction. This process was seen as different from “interaction” given the cohesion noted between self and the object perceived. Dewey described transactions as “unfractured observation” devoid of the subject/object separation. Within the shared reading experience this transactional process involves (a) the book being read, (b) the child, and (c) the volunteer reader as further described below, all three elements of which exerted influence upon the others and were in turn influenced by the others in what might be described as mutually occurring process or mutuality.

The book being read by the child or the volunteer reader was said to be influential in the transaction with respect to its narrative, non-narrative qualities, complexity and length. If the book had narrative qualities, the features of story, humour, poetry, prose, pattern, suspense and illustration were also identified as influential. If the book was non-narrative, the features of context, topic, photos, and illustration were influential. Efferent transactions were said to occur during the reading of non-narrative material. During these transactions the leadership was shared by both the adult and child and was influenced by the photos and illustrations accompanying the text. This was true for both narrative and non-narrative material being read or listened to.

The qualities that the child brought to the transaction included whether or not the child was reading or listening and his or her ability to read. These qualities were found to range along a continuum from non-reader to reader. The transaction was also affected by the cues to intercede pro-
vided by the child and her needs with respect to such things as word prediction, decoding, or miscues. The child’s need for scaffolding were heightened if the child was in the early stages of reading aloud. This need for scaffolding could occur at several points even within brief passages of text. In addition to whether or not the child was reading or listening and whether or not the child was a reader or non-reader the child’s confidence and how quiet or outgoing they were was also identified as influential within the transaction. The interrelatedness of the child’s characteristics were noted and said to create strong cluster of features that affected the transaction.

A greater range of metastrategies was observed among the senior readers when compared to the parent readers. Most of the strategies were provided spontaneously by both the senior and parent readers and only three of the readers had goals in mind. Without the conscious intent to scaffold the child to the next logical level while providing metastrategies Vygotsky’s model of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was seen as inconsistent with what was found during the shared reading experience. Also missing from the shared reading experience were those features of the volunteer readers’ conscious awareness of the child’s cognitive needs and the controlled presentation of tasks or skills. The shared reading experience can therefore be best described as a spontaneous transactional process occurring between the child, volunteer reader and the book being read.

**Comparing Parent and Senior Volunteer Readers**

*Expressive Voices.* Both the senior readers as well as parent readers used expressive voices when reading with the children. When reading fictional material, three of the four senior readers and all the parent readers used slight variations in their voices to distinguish characters. In addition to these features the senior readers also made greater use of pausing and timing in the delivery of the text; this was done for fiction as well as non-fiction material. The senior readers also had very distinct pronunciation of the material that they read and when making comments or asking questions often used less common words or expressions.

*Colloquialisms.* In contrast to the senior readers, the parent volunteer readers were more inclined to use colloquial words or expressions. This took place while making comments about the books that were being read as well as during conversations. The senior readers, despite hearing the children use colloquial expressions, did not reflect this back to them in their own speech.
**Gestures.** The use of gestures and facial expressions was a common feature among 3 of the 4 senior volunteer readers but none of the parent readers. The use of gestures and facial expression animated the text of both fiction and non-fiction material being read to the children by the senior participants. In one case gestures were used by a senior reader as a scaffolding technique to assist the child in word prediction. From my anecdotal records the additional dimension of gestures and facial expression including sound effects created an atmosphere similar to readers’ theatre.

**Comments.** Common features among all readers (senior and parent volunteers) were that comments fell naturally into three categories of: **procedural, opinions, and general comments.** For both the senior and parent readers a pattern existed where there were a higher number of comments when readers were reading or listening to non-fiction than fiction. Among all readers there were also a higher number of comments while reading or listening when the child whom they were reading with was also making comments. Among both the senior and the parent readers who were able to identify a stronger connection with one child over the other, all the children identified tended to have an increased number of exchanges with the readers, usually in the form of comments.

In addition to the three categories of **procedural, opinions, and general comments** two other categories were identified in the case of one of the senior volunteer readers. These additional categories included **talking over the heads of the children, and judgements.** The categories, identified from the video transcripts were seen as creating a different tone than that observed with the other readers, both senior and parent. Particularly in terms of talking over the heads of the children the interactions that were created broke the usual dyadic conversational pattern between the child and volunteer reader by drawing me into the exchanges. This had the affect of breaking up the connections that were created between the reader and the child as the child’s attention was drawn over to me while I was being addressed and to my responses. The effects of the second category, that of judgements were impossible to determine within the parameters of the present study but again, as noted in my anecdotal journal, created a different tone where the child was encouraged to reflect on moral issues or behaviours. Although this sentiment seemed to be drawn out of the books that were being read, it was the only case when this occurred despite the same book being read by other senior and parent participants.
Definitions. The provision of definitions was consistent among all volunteer readers. The pattern that was noted throughout was that definitions were spontaneously provided when the children asked for them to be provided or when the word seemed unusual or challenging. At times concepts were also defined or expanded upon. In all cases, the provision of definitions or expansions were more prevalent when non-fiction material or when books with unusual words were read or listened to.

Questions. As with the volunteer readers’ comments, a consistent pattern of types of questions was observed in both groups of readers. The categories noted through the observations and researcher anecdotal comments included: prediction, comprehension and procedural questions. Both senior and parent volunteer readers asked about the same percentage of comprehension questions, 75% and 76%, respectively. The percentage of prediction questions was lower among the senior volunteer readers than the parent volunteer readers at 1% and 3%, respectively. The percentage of procedural questions was higher among the senior readers compared to the parent readers at 24% and 21%, respectively. In part this may have been due to the slower pace of the senior readers and subsequent effect of needing to re-orient the child to the reading task. In many cases when reading with the parent readers the children would automatically select their next book and less discussion ensued about the choice and the roles.

Decoding and Correction Methods Used: When percentages were compiled across both groups of volunteer readers a lower percentage of provision of word, cloze technique, scaffolding memory, and correction for miscued words were noted among the senior readers as determined from the video transcript. The percentage of other meta strategies were higher among the senior volunteer readers.

A greater uniformity of strategies is noted among the parent readers. Consistent strategies were used by 3 of the 4 volunteer readers. When examining the other meta strategies used by the parent readers most of these strategies were also employed by one reader. This differs from the senior readers who seemed to employ a broader range of strategies, with more individual differences including in the case of one senior reader no discernable strategies at all during the video taped session while reading to a child. Of the other meta strategies used by the senior readers the greatest number used consistently were provision of semantic cues and gestures. The meta strategy used most frequently, primarily by one senior reader was that of using the phrase “It says here” to point out the words or a cluster of words. Among the parent volunteer readers the
most frequently used meta strategy was the letter identification strategy used by one of the parent volunteer readers. As well, the same parent volunteer reader independently employed four of the other meta strategies. Different from the parent readers, the senior readers were less inclined to identify the strategies that they thought were most successful and instead often questioned things that they thought they may have overlooked or should have omitted.

**Feedback Methods.** When comparing the feedback methods provided by the volunteer readers during the video sessions, the average number of words or phrases used by the seniors to provide affirmations and other feedback was higher compared to the average number among the parent volunteers at 15 to 9, respectively. In addition the senior readers were noted providing high levels of backchannel feedback in the form of “umhumm” as the children were correctly reading. This gave the impression of a higher level of scaffolding when senior readers were listening to children read. Across both senior and parent readers, the other pattern that emerged was a higher level of feedback given by the female compared with the male readers at an average of 16 and 9, respectively, during the video sessions.

**Analytic Story.** Under conditions of reading to non-related children during the shared reading time particularly when reading fictional material, both senior and parent readers used expressive voices and senior readers tended to be more animated and had distinct pronunciation. For both senior and parent readers under all conditions within the shared reading program, comments fell into three categories of procedural, opinions and general comments. Under all conditions the number of questions and comments made tended to be higher with children with whom the readers thought they had made a stronger connection. Questions asked by both the senior and parent readers under conditions of the shared reading program fell into the categories of procedural, prediction and comprehension. On the part of the senior readers fewer prediction and more procedural questions were noted. Prediction questions were more likely to be asked by parent readers than senior readers and for all volunteer readers were most likely to be asked under conditions of reading fictional material when the story tension was at its greatest. Senior readers under conditions of reading with emergent readers who were beginning to decode were less likely compared with parent readers to provide the word needed, to use the cloze technique or to provide corrections for miscued words. Under conditions of reading or of listening other meta strategies including the use of semantic clues and gestures were higher among senior readers compared to parent readers. In addi-
tion under the conditions of the reading study, senior readers were less inclined to identify successful strategies. At the time that senior readers were listening to children read, they were inclined to provide higher levels of affirmations and backchannel feedback to scaffold children during their attempts at reading compared with parent readers.

When examining the feedback given to the children when they were reading, a higher number of affirmations were noted by the female senior and parent readers compared to male senior and parent readers. Under the conditions of the study it was noted that the senior readers would have liked to have more rules or guidelines to delineate their role and the strategies that they should use during the shared reading experience. Opposite to this, the parent readers were pleased with the open-ended nature of the reading program and their freedom to develop their own style and role. Under the conditions of the study all readers (both senior and parent) expressed a desire to help out. Parent readers also identified a desire to gain a deeper understanding of both the study and the development of the children who were involved. Under conditions of the shared reading experience, parent readers were more likely to provide input about the types of books and to critique the content of the books presented compared to the senior readers. Within the shared reading program, parent readers were also more likely to read at a faster pace than the senior readers and to be more goal oriented in particular to get the children to read more. The senior readers were likely to have expectations but had no stated goals going into any of the reading sessions.

Under the conditions of the shared reading program, the senior readers fielded more challenging behaviours than the parent readers but had no negative comments about the children’s behaviour and tended to use the guidance strategies of ignoring or re-direction. Compared to the parent readers, the senior readers were more likely to make personal comments to the children but were much less likely to share their own personal experiences and preferences. Under the conditions of reading with more outgoing children, an increase occurred across all readers in the number of comments and questions. Compared to parent readers, senior readers were slightly less likely to scaffold the children’s memory than were parent readers. Under the conditions of reading humourous material, shared laughter was noted across all readers; however senior readers tended to spend more time also sharing laughter over amusing pictures or events than parent readers. Senior readers were less inclined to make reference to popular books or culture. Most readers including both senior and parent readers were able to identify stronger connec-
tions to one of the two children with whom they read. In every case this was the child who made the most comments during the shared reading experience.

CONCLUSIONS

The central phenomenon identified in the shared reading program across all volunteer readers and children was the phenomenon of scaffolding. This took place as part of a transactional process involving the elements of (a) the book being read, (b) the child, and (c) the volunteer reader. Each of these three elements conditioned and was conditioned by the others in mutuality creating what was observed as a seamless transaction between the object, that is, the book being read, and the subjects, namely the children and volunteer readers. Within this transactional process the book that was chosen seemed to play a significant role in the dialogue that was generated, in particular the number of questions and comments and the types of questions and comments. A strong example of this was found when children choose the scientific genre. This seemed to be particularly salient in providing the opportunity for these children to generate theory and share their understanding of concepts. In turn this genre often brought out comments and questions from the volunteer readers that promoted deep thinking and shared understanding of abstract ideas or features of the environment. Another concern that was revealed during the shared reading experience was the need for sensitive timing of questions and comments by volunteer readers, particularly when the children were at the beginning stages of reading. The experiences observed between one senior reader and child pointed out the tenuous dialogic relationship that exists when children particularly at the beginning stages of reading are attempting to decode and interpret text. If the interactions become too one-sided without adequate attempts to interpret the child's cues and need for support then the transaction may break down. The fragility of the relationship will also depend on the other elements in the transactional process. For example if the child has less confidence or if the reading material is inappropriate, additional stress may be felt within the experience.

With respect to the qualities that the child brings to the shared reading experience one overall finding was that quiet children were not perceived to be as easy to get to know and make connections with compared to more outgoing children who offered numerous comments and
asked more questions. This finding points out the importance of adjusting our expectations of quieter children and taking more time when conversing with them to try and get to know them and appreciate more subtle cues that they may use to express themselves. It also suggests the importance of not giving up on the dialogue and continuing to make appropriate comments and ask questions while accepting the child’s responses even those that are non-verbal or appear minimal. Potentially quieter children are at risk of being misunderstood, and may be over or under-challenged, or over or under-scaffolded by those who are not able to know them well.

Further research on the question of the transactional process and more specifically the qualities brought to the shared reading experience by senior volunteer readers is required. Replication of the present study should be done across a variety of conditions with different volunteer readers and children. This would assist in further determining the relationship between elements within the transactional process and substantiate or refute the categories identified within the present study. Variations in the backgrounds of the senior readers may also yield different results if the readers were drawn from different cultural communities. This additional cultural component would also help to validate or refute the categories identified. Replication of the present study may also be pursued using a different research methodology that may allow comparisons to be made statistically to provide quantitative information on the elements within the transactional process.

NOTES

1. This article is a summary of my doctoral dissertation entitled “An Investigation of Intergenerational Relationships Occurring within a Shared Reading Program.”

2. For the purposes of this study no observation tools (i.e., scoring sheet, or preconceived categories) were utilised. This was done in an attempt to collect information that would lead to an understanding of the interactions and derive categories from the observations rather than the opposite condition. From these observations, it was hoped that it could be determined what made the interactions unique.

3. During the course of observation and subsequent data analysis I benefited from my prior experience teaching this group of children at the child care centre where the study took place. I was, therefore, familiar to all but one child and had known some of the children for up to two years. This allowed some degree of what is identified by Strauss and Corbin (1990), as “theoretical sensitivity” derived from professional experience and practice in the field.
REFERENCE


Received: 09/29/04
Reviewed: 11/15/04
Accepted: 01/15/05