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Children's genre knowledge: An examination of K–5 students' performance on multiple tasks providing differing levels of scaffolding

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In their 1999 *Reading Research Quarterly* report, Kamberelis and Bovino considered how children's demonstration of their genre knowledge varies "as a function of differential levels or modes of cultural scaffolding" (p. 141) of the different tasks in their study. They broadened the notion of scaffolding from the more typical emphasis on the social mediation of learning by a more knowledgeable other (e.g., Woods, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) to include the cultural artifacts (e.g., task materials such as storybooks used for pretend readings) around or even by which scaffolding occurs. They noted that "like the privileging of narrative over paradigmatic discourse genres, the privileging of social forms of mediation over cultural-artifactual ones may result in pedagogies that constrain children's overall literacy development and learning in unsuspected ways" (p. 142).

The privileging of narrative is evident in that the predominant genre in early elementary classrooms is narrative for both reading and writing (e.g., Christie, 1986; Duke, 2000; Martin, 1989; Rothery, 1989b). This dominance of narrative has been speculated to be at least part of the reason for children's difficulties with the expository texts that come to dominate their school reading and writing once they enter the upper elementary grades (e.g., Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990; Langer, 1985, 1986; Newkirk, 1987, 1989). Yet questions about the interrelationships of these two genres remain (e.g., Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998); it has, for example, been postulated that children's ability to read and write expository texts does not transfer from competence with stories (Morris, 1986). As facility with different genres is as much a part of the writing process and development as encoding and control of mechanics (e.g., Kress, 1994; Martin, 1989), a narrow focus on narrative in early school years may interrupt the development of reading and writing in multiple genres. We may, in fact, be missing critical opportunities to capitalize on genres that some children prefer (e.g., Caswell & Duke, 1998; Fresch, 1995; Pappas, 1993) and to support children's development with the types of genres that may be of greatest use and importance to them throughout their lives (Christie, 1986; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, 2000; Kress, 1994, 1999; Martin, 1989).

The privileging of social forms of mediation is apparent in the large numbers of studies that focus on the sociocultural aspects of writing development through naturalistic methods (e.g., Atwell, 1987; Bissex, 1980; Calkins, 1986; Chapman, 1994, 1995; Dyson, 1983, 1987, 1993, 1999; Graves, 1975, 1983; Hansen, 1987; Kroll,

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In this article, we have taken a critical look at the issue of scaffolding in children's writing, beginning with a consideration of the ways in which children's productions of text have been supported in previous research on writing development. From that initial look, we developed a series of tasks to explore what 24 focal children, four each at kindergarten through fifth grade, knew about two very commonly used school genres, stories and informational texts, so that we might learn more about the complex relationships among development, task, and genre knowledge. Tasks ranged from those that provided little support to children (a prompt to write a made-up story) to those that provided high levels of support (describing how children knew whether a book was an information book or a story after examining its pictures and listening to it read aloud). Our findings suggest that while scaffolding can assist children it may also, at times, hinder children in demonstrating their full range of genre knowledge. Patterns displayed in children's responses also point to periods of shift in cognition, during which children who may have implicitly performed a task may become unable to do so as their understandings shift from implicit to explicit forms, a phenomenon described in cognitive research by Karmiloff-Smith (1992). Finally, our findings have compelled us to reexamine our own thinking on the study of texts, making room for individual authors' aims in our look at genre.

El conocimiento de los niños sobre tipos textuales: Un examen del desempeño de estudiantes K–5 en múltiples tareas con diversos niveles de andamiaje

En este artículo adoptamos una mirada crítica sobre la cuestión del andamiaje en la escritura infantil, comenzando con una consideración de las formas en las que la producción textual de los niños ha sido planteada en investigaciones previas sobre el desarrollo de la escritura. A partir de esta mirada inicial, desarrollamos una serie de tareas para explorar los conocimientos de 24 niños—cuatro en cada año, de nivel inicial a quinto grado—acerca de dos tipos textuales muy comúnmente usados en la escuela: narraciones y textos informativos. Nuestro propósito fue comprender mejor las complejas relaciones entre desarrollo, tarea y conocimiento de los tipos textuales. Las tareas abarcaron un amplio rango, desde aquellas que proporcionan poco apoyo a los niños (indicación para escribir una historia inventada) hasta las que dan gran apoyo (describir cómo los niños saben si un libro contiene un texto informativo o una narración, luego de examinar las ilustraciones y escuchar su lectura oral). Nuestros resultados sugieren que, si bien el andamiaje puede ayudar a los niños, en ocasiones también puede impedir que los niños demuestren el rango completo de su conocimiento de los tipos textuales. Asimismo los patrones manifestados en las respuestas de los niños indican períodos de cambios cognitivos, durante los cuales los niños, que implícitamente podrían haber realizado una tarea, se tornan incapaces de hacerlo. Ello se explica porque su comprensión de formas implícitas se ha tranformado en comprensión de formas explícitas, un fenómeno descripto en la investigación sobre desarrollo cognitivo de Karmiloff-Smith (1992). Por último, los resultados nos han llevado a revisar las propias concepciones sobre el estudio de textos, otorgando un lugar a los propósitos de los autores en nuestra mirada sobre los tipos textuales.

Genrewissen der Kinder: Eine Untersuchung von K–5 Schülerleistungen mit multiplen Anforderungen bei der Vermittlung unterschiedlicher Unterstützungsbereiche

In diesem Artikel warfen wir einen kritischen Blick auf das Problem der Unterstützung im Schreiben der Kinder, beginnend mit einer Überlegung aus früheren Untersuchungen zur Schreibentwicklung wie Textproduktionen der Kinder unterstützt wurden. Aus jener ursprünglichen Ansicht entwickelten wir eine Serie an Aufgaben, um zu ermitteln, was 24 ausgewählte Kinder, davon je vier vom Kindergarten bis hin zur fünften Klasse, über zwei allgemein häufig in der Schule verwendete Genres—Erzählungen und informative Texte—wußten, damit wir mehr über die komplexen Beziehungen zwischen Entwicklung, Aufgaben, und Genrewissen erfahren können. Die Aufgaben erstreckten sich über solche, die den Kindern wenig Unterstützung gaben (eine Vorgabe zum Schreiben einer erdachten Erzählung) bis hin zu jenen, die hohe Unterstützungsbereiche gewährten (Beschreiben wie die Kinder nach Betrachten der Bilder und durch lautes Vorlesen erkannten, ob ein Buch als reines Sachinformationsbuch oder als eine Erzählung galt). Unsere Ergebnisse lassen vermuten, dass, obwohl ein Unterstützen den Kindern helfen kann, es zeitweilig die Kinder daran hindert, ihr volles Potential an Genrewissen darzustellen. Aufgezeigte Muster in den Antworten der Kinder verweisen auch auf zeitweilige kognitive Verschiebungen der Aufmerksamkeit, währenddessen die Kinder, die zuvor eine Aufgabe einwandfrei ausführten, unfähig sind, dies aufrechtzuerhalten, wobei sich ihr Verstehen von impliziten zu expliziten Formen verschiebt, ein Phänomen in der kognitiven Forschung, beschrieben von Karmiloff-Smith (1992). Endlich haben unsere Erkenntnisse uns dazu veranlasst, unsere eigenen Überlegungen zum Studium der Texte zu überdenken, indem wir Spielraum für individuelle Ziele der Autoren zu unserer Ansicht vom Genre lassen.

子供のジャンルに関する知識：様々なレベルの足場を提供する多重タスクにおける幼稚園児から小学５年生のパフォーマンスの研究

本稿は、子供達が文章を書くことがライティングの発達に関する先行研究でどのように支持されてきたのかという考察から始め、子供達のライティングにおける足場作りの問題を批判的に検討した。その最初の考察を基に、一連のタスクを用意した。これは、２４人（幼稚園児から小学５年生までそれぞれ４人づつ）の子供達が学校でよく使われている２種類のジャンルである物語りと情報文書についてどんなことを知っているかを調べることで、発達、タスク、ジャンル知識との間に存在する複雑な関係についての理解を深めることを目的としている。タスクは、子供達にほとんど援助を与えないもの（作り話を書くための刺激材料）から高レベルの援助を与えるもの（ある本の絵を見たり読んでもらったりした後で、それが情報文書か物語りなのか、子供達がどう見分けられるのかを説明するもの）に及んだ。結果、足場作りは、子供達を助けるものである一方、時には子供達がジャンルの知識を十分に発揮するのを妨げることもあるということが示唆された。また、子供達の半応で示されたパターンは、認知における変換期を差し示した。この時期、タスクを暗示的に行った子供が、理解が暗示的形から明示的形に変化するにつれて、そうできなくなっていく可能性がある。これは、Karmiloff-Smith (1992) の認知的研究において説明されている現象である。最後に、本研究の結果は、テキストの研究に関するこれまでの見方を見直す必要性を示唆し、ジャンルを見ていく上で個々の作者の意図を考える余地を作り出した。

Connaissance des genres par les enfants : examen des performances du jardin d'enfants à la 5° année dans des tâches multiples apportant différents niveaux d'étayage

Dans cet article nous abordons de façon critique les effets de l'étayage sur l'écriture des enfants, en commençant par le type d'aide apporté à la production de textes par les enfants dans les recherches effectuées sur le développement de l'écriture. Partant de là, nous avons construit une série de tâches afin d'explorer les connaissances qu'avaient 24 enfants, quatre par classe, du jardin d'enfants à la 5° année, de deux genres scolaires utilisés de façon très courante, les textes narratifs et informatifs, de façon à en savoir davantage sur les relations complexes entre développement, tâche, et connaissance des genres. Les tâches allaient de celles qui fournissent peu d'aide aux enfants (invitation à écrire une histoire inventée) à celles qui fournissent un degré d'aide très important (décrire comment des enfants savent si un livre contient des informations ou une histoire après avoir examiné les illustrations et avoir écouté sa lecture à haute voix). Nos résultats suggèrent que si l'étayage peut aider l'enfant, il peut aussi parfois l'empêcher de faire usage de la totalité des connaissances des genres dont il dispose. Les structures que manifestent les réponses des enfants font aussi apparaître des périodes de changement cognitif, au cours desquelles des enfants qui avaient implicitement réussi une tâche se révèlent incapables d'y parvenir dès lors que leur forme implicite devient explicite, phénomène que Karmiloff-Smith (1992) a décrit en psychologie cognitive. Ces résultats, finalement, nous obligent à examiner notre propre façon de concevoir l'étude des textes, pour faire une place dans notre façon de considérer les genres aux buts personnels des auteurs.

Понятие жанра для дошкольников и младших школьников: выполнение разнообразных учебных задач, заключающих в своей формулировке различную по количеству и характеру помощь

В данной статье, анализируя проблему становления у детей навыков письменной речи, мы в первую очередь рассмотрели ранее предпринятые исследования по развитию письма и то, какую непосредственную помощь оказали эти исследования детям в работе над текстом. Затем мы разработали ряд учебных задач, чтобы выяснить представления 24-х детей (по четыре на каждую возрастную группу: от детского сада до пятого класса) о двух наиболее привычных для школы жанрах, рассказе и информационном тексте, с тем, чтобы глубже проникнуть в сложные взаимоотношения между возрастным развитием, учебной задачей и знаниями о жанре. Формулировки задач разнились: некоторые обеспечивали детям минимальную поддержку (написать рассказ на предложенную тему), некоторые же обеспечивали высокий уровень поддержки (детям подсказывали, как – на основе анализа иллюстраций и прослушивания отрывка – узнать, является ли книга информационной или художественной). Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что помощь, которую мы оказываем детям, порой не позволяет им продемонстрировать всю полноту их знаний о жанре. Типичные детские ответы также указывают на возрастные изменения в процессе познания, когда дети, еще недавно выполнявшие задания имплицитно, перестают справляться с ними вовсе, поскольку их когнитивные способности превращаются из имплицитных в эксплицитные – это явление описано в исследовании процесса познания Кармилофф-Смит (1992). Полученные результаты заставили нас вернуться к размышлениям о том, как учитывать цели авторов при изучении разножанровых текстов.

1991). Through these and other studies, data are accumulating that young children can and do develop understandings of multiple genres (Barnhart, 1996; Chapman, 1995; Kamler, 1994; Newkirk, 1987, 1989; Wollman-Bonilla, 2000; Zecker, 1999); however, these data also imply that different tasks require different levels of cognitive ability. As Englert, Stewart and Heibert (1988) suggested, "the facilitative effects for different text structures cannot be assumed for different tasks, presentation modes, or response modes" (p. 144). Thus, the accumulation of information from studies using similar as well as different tasks is crucial to generating theory about genre knowledge development. What is needed, we believe, are studies examining children's performance across multiple tasks. Such research would not only give a broader view of the range of understandings children might have given the different supports of varied tasks, but also offer insight on how different tasks might be used as instructional scaffolds for supporting children's genre knowledge development.

Theoretical framework and purpose of the study

We are only now beginning to understand (and in rather limited ways) the extent to which children know about and come to know about different genres. This study has been grounded in the systemic functional linguistics of the Australian genre theorists (e.g., Halliday, 1975; Halliday & Hasan, 1985, 1989; Hasan, 1984; Martin, 1989; Martin & Rothery, 1986) as well as the work of those following in that tradition (e.g., Kress, 1994; Pappas, 1986, 1991b, 1993). It also draws from the work of cognitive psychologists (e.g., Meyer, 1975; Stein & Albro, 1997; Stein & Glenn, 1979; Stein & Policastro, 1984).

In the systemic functional linguistic tradition, language is seen as functional, taking on specific forms to serve specific functions in specific social situations. Purpose is therefore crucial in determining the genre that is necessary for communicating in specific social contexts (i.e., schools), and thus tasks used to examine genre knowledge must be considered carefully. Few studies, as noted earlier, have used a variety of tasks to examine children's genre knowledge. The purpose of this examination was to explore and describe K–5 children's implicit and explicit knowledge of two specific school genres—story and informational texts—as demonstrated on six different tasks. We saw these tasks, using different materials (artifacts), as scaffolding to varying degrees children's ability to articulate and demonstrate their implicit and explicit knowledge of story and information genres.

Our participants were primarily of mainstream, upper-middle-class European American backgrounds. We selected this population because its members had ample experiences with literacy that closely matched school expectations, and they were attending a suburban public school, which by its nature privileges the backgrounds of these children (e.g., Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, 2000; Dyson, 1999, 2000; Heath, 1983; Martin, 1989). We saw them as the group with the greatest likelihood of developed notions of school genres. With that in mind, the following questions guided this study.

1. What insights to children's developing genre knowledge are offered from children's responses to a range of tasks that provide different levels of support, or scaffolding?

2. Are there patterns in what these children demonstrate knowing (implicitly or explicitly) about written story and information genres across the grades (K–5)?

Related literature

As the present study describes children's responses to different tasks, this review will consider the related research in terms of the tasks and artifacts of the methods used to access children's understandings of genre. Table 1 is an overview of how we have conceptualized the levels of support, or scaffolding, that were provided to participants through the different tasks and materials used in various studies of genre knowledge. We have also indicated the cognitive demands each level entails—that is, what types of tools the task requires be placed on the cognitive workbench (Britton, Glynn, & Smith, 1985). The Table shows how the methods of different studies have used different tasks and materials; we have placed the studies into categories to indicate levels of scaffolding. Our categories, described in more detail later, are nonscaffolding, unknown scaffolding, and scaffolding, which for us ranged from lowest to highest levels of support.

Nonscaffolding

As a field we have learned that genre knowledge emerges early as children engage in writing for meaningful purposes (e.g., Bissex, 1980; Chapman, 1994, 1995; Donovan, 2001; Kamberelis, 1999; Newkirk, 1989; Pappas, 1993; Zecker, 1999). Bissex (1980) examined the form and function of her son Paul's self-generated writing from 5 to 7 years of age. She described his work as including signs, letters, lists, and other functional writing in addition to stories. Although the child composed these writings in unprompted situations, these studies of self-generated writing must be considered within the supportive context in which they were produced. However, we do not have enough information to make generalizations

Table 1 Levels of scaffolding afforded by tasks used in studies of genre knowledge

Category of production	Description and examples
Nonscaffolding	Self-generated texts—the child in the study has produced all texts by himself or herself (e.g., Bissex, 1980). Cognitive demands: Create completely novel content, determine form, hold in memory while writing.
Unknown scaffolding	Texts in which the conditions (type of instruction, daily habits) under which children produced them are unknown. Most commonly found in research that examines large numbers of writing samples collected from many classrooms (e.g, Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975), but occasionally appearing in studies involving naturalistic inquiry (e.g., Dyson, 1989). Cognitive demands: unknown.
Levels of scaffolding Tasks that provide children varying levels of support in their efforts to demonstrate understanding	
Lowest	Child writes or speaks in response to researcher prompt, such as Applebee's (1978) direction to subjects, "Tell me a story." Cognitive demands: Select topic, create text, hold in memory if a written task.
Minimal	Texts produced in response to more specific researcher prompt, such as Stein and Albro's (1997) request that children create a story beginning with a story stem. Cognitive demands: Create text, hold in memory if a written task.
Low	Habitually produced texts, such as the journals kept by children in Wollman-Bonilla's (2000) study. Scaffolding supplied through repetition. Cognitive demands: Insert class-discussed but individually configured content into known form, hold in memory during writing.
Middle	Response produced to a visible textual support, such as "pretend reading" unknown storybooks (Bamberg, 1985) or discussion of composition process while looking at self-produced text (Donovan, 1996). Cognitive demands: Produce oral language to narrate or describe from stimulus.
High	Given texts reproduced following adult read-aloud, book available for visual support (e.g., King & Rentell, 1981). Cognitive demands: Recall text wording while describing action or content represented on the page.
Highest	Texts produced in response to direct classroom instruction, with graphic organizer for support (e.g., Wray & Lewis, 1995). Cognitive demands: Write text from known content with visual support for phrasing and organization.

about the specific ways in which Paul's compositions in different genres were scaffolded.

Unknown scaffolding

Naturalistic examinations of children's writing in which issues of genre were noted (e.g., Dyson, 1989, 1999), and studies that examined writing samples produced as part of the classroom curriculum (e.g., Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975; Chapman, 1994, 1995; Martin & Rothery, 1986; Newkirk, 1987; Sowers, 1985), are considered in this category. There are just too many unknowns about the circumstances of text production to suggest to what level the children were supported in their productions. Context must be considered in these studies as well, as it is likely that the assignments were not novel and that the instructional context in which those assignments were requested provided support for production.

Examining genre knowledge through naturalistic inquiry. Many researchers have noted genre and discourse-related issues within studies of classroom discourse (e.g., Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1983), the writing process (e.g., Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1975, 1983), and early writing behaviors (e.g., Clay, 1975; Dyson, 1983, 1987, 1997, 1999; Kamberelis, 1999; King & Rentell, 1981; Kroll, 1991). Cazden (1988), for example, noted the culturally different storytelling styles of children attending the same school and responding to the same tasks. Dyson found that children use a variety of discourse forms during and in their writing (e.g., 1983, 1987, 1997) and play with those forms in appropriately supportive environments (1999, 2000). These studies provide rich information about the contexts in which children use oral and written language and have done much to support greater awareness of the importance of cultural background and social interactions around literacy events.

Examining genre knowledge through compositions produced for classroom instruction. Many studies of genre knowledge development have been based on the examination of students' writing produced in the classroom as part of instruction. For example, Britton and his colleagues (1975) requested student writing from teachers of British secondary schools along with descriptions of the assignments for which they were produced. From these samples, Britton's group determined a continuum of children's compositions beginning with the expressive, most closely resembling personal expression. This use of

expressive form then moves outwardly toward mature transactional (expository) or poetic (narrative) forms.

Newkirk (1987), Sowers (1985), and Chapman (1994, 1995) examined the writing of primary-grade children and found that much of the early writing they did was nonnarrative. However, Sowers considered the "All About" books her first graders produced to fall in the expressive mode of Britton et al. (1975) and posited that they were precursors to mature narrative. Newkirk (1987) examined and described 100 pieces of writing considered nonnarrative from the writing folders of first-, second-, and third-grade students in writing process classrooms. Unlike Sowers, Newkirk saw his findings as supporting the claim that labeling and listing are distinctly nonstory forms that may be the precursor to mature expository writing. Chapman's (1994, 1995) examinations of first graders' writing during writers' workshop across the entire year revealed the emergence from children's labeling of both narrative (event-oriented) and nonnarrative (object-oriented) forms.

Rothery's (1984) examination of primary-grade children's written compositions from writing process classrooms revealed a similar pattern of narrative and informational texts emerging from a simpler form, which they defined as the observation/comment. However, what none of these studies could reveal, because of their methods of data collection, were the children's purposes for their compositions. Though function might be inferred (Chapman, 1994), without knowing the history of the task or desire that prompted the writing, knowledge of possible support that was provided remains unavailable to readers of these studies.

Methods using scaffolding tasks and materials

When specific tasks are used to collect data about children's genre knowledge, there is no question about the purpose for the texts' production. However, as discussed earlier, different tasks support children's ability to demonstrate their genre knowledge to greater and lesser degrees. Examinations of tasks that have been used to explore children's genre knowledge reveal a continuum. Tasks range from those that provide no support (or are nonscaffolding) to those providing a high level of support, or scaffolding, of children's abilities to demonstrate their knowledge; this range depends on how much the task lessened the cognitive demands. Of course, the larger context must always be considered as some lower level tasks may be routine with expected outcomes and thus children have been provided additional support, although at some time before the study occurred, for what they are to do. For our purposes here, we wish to acknowledge the importance of context, but to focus on levels of support provided by the tasks themselves, because, as readers and researchers, we are not always privy to the larger context.

Lowest level. At the lowest level of support are tasks that prompt children to produce the genre requested. These tasks scaffold children's ability by simply making known what is expected with directions such as "make up and write a story," or "write an informational text." No additional support is provided; the words *write* and *story* or *information* are the only clues the children are given as to the purpose of the task. This prompt guides children's productions to demonstrate knowledge of the difference between drawing and writing as well as producing a story text or an informational text. Unless these are common classroom statements that have been given greater instructional support in the curricular context, these least supported tasks may be seen as providing little cognitive assistance.

Several studies have requested that children compose original texts and produce them either orally as in Applebee's (1978) "Tell me a story," through dictation (King & Rentell, 1981), or in their own writing (Donovan, 2001; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Kamberelis, 1999; Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999; King & Rentell, 1981; Langer, 1985, 1986; Sulzby, Barnhart, & Hieshima, 1989). (Applebee, 1978, and King and Rentell, 1981, examined stories only.) These studies let readers know the purpose of the text production as well as what children can produce, but are limited in their ability to show the range of individual children's knowledge of several genres that use of multiple tasks might provide.

Minimal level. Minimal levels of scaffolding, just above the lowest, are provided when children do not have to generate or formulate all of the ideas, but do have to hold them in memory while they compose the text. These levels of support include tasks such as recounting past experiences (e.g., Purcell-Gates, 1988) and recalling and writing familiar texts (Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999). Stein and Albro (1997), for example, provided the story stem "Once there was a fox...." in their prompt to tell a story in order to activate children's story schema by introducing the formulaic beginning and a common antagonist. With the use of this stem, most of the 7- and 9-year-olds, and half of the 5-year-olds, were able to generate goal-directed stories. In contrast, only about half of the 5-year-olds (beginning of the school year) who received the lowest level prompt "make up and write a story" in Donovan's (2001) study created a story of some level of complexity, with only a few at the goal-directed level. These kinds of differences support findings that constraints of writing faced by young children limit their message-making abilities (e.g., DeFord, 1980; Dyson, 1983) and thus the genre knowledge they demonstrate (e.g., Donovan, 2001; Zecker, 1999).

Low level. At the low level of support, tasks are highly contextualized and habitually produced such as learning logs and daily journals. Children have the support of the long-term context that has shaped and provided guidance in the production of certain texts at that particular time, such as what the teacher expects, has modeled directly or indirectly, and has praised or critiqued. The writing under examination likely does not have direct support for each entry.

Wollman-Bonilla's (2000) examination of children's family message journals is an example of this level task. Children wrote to family members explaining and describing aspects of science activities engaged in or completed during the school science period. The teacher modeled science genres, and children were expected to write about science in their messages. Thus, this habitual exercise provided support through its consistency in expectations, teacher modeling, and responses from family members. What such tasks show us about children's genre knowledge is how children appropriate genres that are experienced and discussed. They do not, however, show us what children can do with those genres outside that controlled experience.

Middle level. Middle-level scaffolding provides visual support that is tangentially related to completing the task. Having a visual support, even if not familiar, provides additional and continuous support for task completion. Such tasks include pretend readings of unfamiliar (Bamberg, 1985; Berman & Slobin, 1994; Duke & Kays, 1998) and familiar (Purcell-Gates, 1988; Sulzby, 1985) books, as well as interviews with children in which they have their texts that are being discussed in front of them (Donovan, 1996; Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999).

Bamberg (1985) was first to use Mercer Mayer's (1969) wordless storybook *Frog, Where Are You?* as a tool for eliciting children's stories to study narrative development. Berman and Slobin (1994) built on the use of this text and other Mercer Mayer wordless books in their cross-cultural work on the development of narrative competence. These studies have demonstrated the children's developing ability to tell more complex narratives with age and experience with stories. However, these early studies were limited to the story genre. As a tool, though, the support of the pictures served the purposes well as they provided "a common content—across age and language—representing a typical children's story" (Berman & Slobin, 1994, p. 20).

Duke and Kays (1998) extended the idea of wordless-book use to information books in an effort to extend Pappas's (1991a, 1991b, 1993) work by examining children's ability to demonstrate knowledge of information book language with an unfamiliar information book. Pappas's (1991b, 1993) work had examined children's pretend readings of information books immediately following the read-aloud of the book. Duke and Kays (1998) examined children's pretend reading of an unfamiliar information book following a 3-month period in which information book read-alouds were added to the daily read-aloud sessions. The pre- and posttest pretend readings indicated that with experience listening to information books children did demonstrate growth in their ability to approximate the book language of that genre even with an unfamiliar book.

Donovan (1996) used puppet interviews with her first-grade students to gain a sense of the children's understandings of informational and story genres as they talked through the composition of one informational text and one story text. Similarly, Kamberelis and Bovino (1999) asked children specific questions about the story and science information texts they had just composed. Like the picture support of books for pretend reading, children's own writing seemed to serve as a support for children when they were discussing aspects of different genres and the process of composing the texts in front of them.

High level. Visible and familiar picture support is provided throughout the task at this level. Tasks include taking a turn to pretend to read a book that was just read aloud (King & Rentell, 1981; Pappas, 1991b, 1993; Pappas & Brown, 1987a, 1987b, 1988) and pretending to read a familiar storybook (Purcell-Gates, 1988; Sulzby, 1985). Because the book is known from the immediate reading situation or familiarity from read-alouds over time, the pictures provide strong memory cues. Thus, these tasks provide insight to children's ability to remember and reenact the reading of the book, and thus children's ability to approximate the language of the genre. Storybooks were used in these pretend-reading tasks first (King & Rentell, 1981; Pappas & Brown, 1987a, 1987b, 1988; Purcell-Gates, 1988) with results demonstrating in all cases that children were able to approximate the language found in stories. Purcell-Gates (1988) found that both well-read-to kindergartners and second graders have "an implicit awareness of a particular style of language employed in written stories" (p. 151).

Extending her previous work on story language with Brown (Pappas & Brown, 1987a, 1987b, 1988), Pappas (1991a, 1991b, 1993) examined kindergartners' pretend readings of both information books and storybooks just read aloud to them. She determined that young children are able to approximate the language in information books as well as storybooks, and they do so with greater precision with each rereading of the book. These studies have done a great deal to raise our awareness of children's emerging abilities in different genres.

Highest level. The highest level of support provided is direct instruction with revision. This category includes

tasks such as the use of text structure supports, which include teaching story grammar (e.g., Baumann & Bergeron, 1993) or other organizational structures like Wray and Lewis's (1995) frames for report writing. Teaching a strategy then providing time for that strategy to be used and then revised would be the highest possible level of scaffolding a writing-related task could provide.

Methods using varying levels of scaffolding tasks and materials

Some studies have included multiple tasks to get multiple perspectives of children's knowledge (e.g., Cox & Sulzby, 1984; Harste et al., 1984; Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999; King & Rentell, 1981; Langer, 1985, 1986; Purcell-Gates, 1988; Sulzby et al., 1989). Although not the first to use different tasks to gain a sense of children's genre or written discourse understandings, Kamberelis and Bovino (1999) raised the question of how different task conditions might be scaffolding children's abilities, or "cultural artifacts [serving] as scaffolds" (p. 166). Their study used two conditions to examine kindergarten, first-, and second-grade children's information and story genre knowledge at the end of the school year. The "scaffolded" (p. 146) condition, which provided low-level support on our scale, asked children to produce a story or informational text based on a familiar book of that genre. Their "non-scaffolded" (p. 146) condition, which we would see as our lowest level of scaffolding, simply asked children to produce a story or information text. Although there were some exceptions, their findings indicated children produced more complex stories and informational texts in response to the low-level scaffolded task and more complex stories than informational text in either task. On the basis of their findings, they suggested that "relying on cultural artifacts as scaffolds seemed to index and activate textual, intertextual, and contextual knowledge about particular discursive fields that children possessed even if they could not analyze, verbalize, or critique such knowledge" (p. 163).

Other studies using multiple methods had similar findings of greater ability with the more highly supportive tasks (Harste et al., 1984; King & Rentell, 1979). King and Rentell (1979) examined first and second graders' dictated and written original stories as well as a retelling of a fairy tale just read aloud. These tasks demonstrated the difficulty the written task can impose on the production, as the dictated stories were more complex than the written stories. Harste and his colleagues (1984) asked 4-, 5-, and 6-year-old children to read commercial labels, dictate and read a story, read or pretend to read a story, read or pretend to read a letter, write anything they can write, write or pretend to write a story, and write or pretend to write a letter. They found that children could produce appropriate discourse forms in the specific contexts.

Although studies of genre knowledge are growing, there have been relatively few that have used multiple tasks to study this area with young children. Information collected across a variety of tasks that require different levels of explicit control should provide insights to the range of elementary school children's implicit and explicit knowledge of two genres important to school success and clues about possible instructional supports. This knowledge, too, is crucial in exploring children's developing genre knowledge, so that guidance may be supplied to teachers in order that all children be provided access to all of the genres necessary for school success.

Method

Participants and setting

Two children, one boy and one girl, from each of the two participating classrooms at each grade level K–5 were selected by their classroom teachers to participate in an individual interview session ($N = 24$) with the researcher on site. These children were described as above-average writers; none were receiving or identified to receive special education services.

The school served a student population of primarily upper-middle-class European American backgrounds. The researcher on site fit children's expectations of both teacher and parent. This was demonstrated repeatedly as children inquired about whether she was a new teacher at the school or speculated about which student was her child.

The site was selected, as noted earlier, in order to gain insight to the genre knowledge of children who have had multiple experiences related to the genres of the school. Teachers described children's home environments as rich with books and book-reading experiences from birth, but as supplying very little writing experience. They felt that writing at home was relegated to learning the formation of letters, practicing handwriting, and doing homework, but not to composing extended texts of any kind because of an emphasis on correct spelling. Although teachers reported the freedom to choose the approach for their literacy programs, all (K–5) explained extreme pressure from the parent community for high test scores and correct spelling led to certain curricular choices (i.e., spelling lists and tests, traditional worksheet homework) and less of others (i.e., writers' workshop).

All children were asked a series of questions to gain a sense of their reading and writing experiences at home. The teachers' speculations were on target for most of the children, especially those in the primary grades, who

reported not doing any writing at home other than homework. Several of the older children reported writing stories, journals, and thank-you notes, and all children indicated they read or were read to at home.

Data collection

Six tasks were identified from previous work on genre knowledge or were created to afford different opportunities for children to demonstrate their implicit and explicit genre knowledge. These tasks vary in their demands on children's cognitive abilities and, thus, as Kamberelis and Bovino (1999) have suggested, provide different levels of scaffolding of children's knowledge. For clarity, an overview of the different tasks and what they were chosen to determine is presented first. This is followed by the details of data collection in the order in which tasks were presented to children. Finally, we present information concerning the analysis of the collected data.

Multiple tasks and multiple views of children's knowledge

Table 2 presents an overview of all tasks used in the study in order of their presentation to children. For each task, the level of scaffolding it provided and what it was designed to reveal about the nature of children's story and information genre knowledge are described in the following sections.

Task 1: Child-written texts

All children, within their regular classes, were asked to write a story, an informational text, and about the differences between the two. This task was considered to provide the lowest-level scaffolding of children's abilities. A counterbalanced design, where one class was presented the story prompt first and the other class the information prompt first, was employed to account for order effects.

Write a story. To elicit a written story, second- through fifth-grade children were asked to "make up a story about anything you want and write it for other children and teachers to read." Kindergartners and first graders were asked to "make up a story about anything you want and write or pretend to write the story for other children and teachers to read." The "readings," or oral compositions (Pappas, 1991b), were tape recorded,

Table 2 What the different tasks may reveal about the nature of children's genre knowledge

Tasks	These tasks may reveal children's understandings of	Level of support provided
Write a story; write an informational text	Global elements—inclusion of elements (e.g., story grammar) Global structure—content organization	Lowest
Describe differences between writing story and writing informational text (with self-produced texts visible—orally for youngest children; written response for older)	Major distinctions about the two genres	Middle
Pretend-read wordless story and information book (with text covered, but pictures visible)	Global elements Global structure	Middle
Orally define storybook and information book (asked immediately following children's pretend reading of a book from each genre)	Purpose of both Major features of both	Minimal
Sort books by genre (decide from a stack of books whether given book is story or information book)	Salient features attended to Genre-specific features of both Purpose of both	Middle (before book is read aloud) and high level of support (after book is read aloud)
Answer questions about writing: How to write (in general)? How did you write this story? This informational text? (texts produced in first task above)	Their writing process Genre-specific features of both texts Task-specific processes	Minimal

transcribed, and considered the intended text for coding of genre knowledge.

Write an informational text. To elicit a written informational text, second- through fifth-grade children were asked to "think of a topic, something you know a lot about. It can be something you learned in school, a hobby, or something you are just interested in." We then discussed the topics children were considering, and they were instructed to "write about the topic you have chosen for other children and teachers to read." To encourage emergent writing, following brainstorming of potential topics, the kindergartners and first graders had a slightly different prompt. They were instructed to "write or pretend to write about the topic you have chosen for other children and teachers to read" and then to "read or pretend to read your writing to me" when they deemed themselves finished. As was the case for the story prompt, the "readings" or oral compositions of the K–1 participants were tape recorded, transcribed, and considered the intended text for coding of genre knowledge.

Task 2: Describing differences between writing stories and informational texts

A third prompt, seen as middle level in its scaffolding support for children's productions in that children's texts were visible to them, was given during these first sessions to elicit children's descriptions about the differences in writing information and stories. The kindergartners and first graders were asked immediately following their reading of their second composition, "What was different about writing a story [or information] like you did yesterday and writing information [or story] like you did today?" When the child completed the initial response, the prompt "Anything else?" was given. These oral responses were simply tape recorded as an extension of their second text reading and then transcribed. Older children, on a day following the completion of their writing samples, were asked to produce written texts to "describe the differences in writing information and a story."

Task 3: Pretend readings of unknown wordless/textless books

This task was modified from others' work using pretend reading of familiar stories (Pappas, 1993; Pappas & Brown, 1987a, 1987b, 1988; Sulzby, 1985), unfamiliar storybooks (Bamberg, 1985; Berman & Slobin, 1994; Duke & Kays, 1998), and information books (Duke & Kays, 1998; Pappas, 1991b, 1993). This task was designed to gain a sense of children's facility with the book language of each genre, and as it provided visual support the scaffolding level was considered to be middle. For this study, the pretend-reading task was designed to indicate various genre features represented in children's pretend readings of an unfamiliar, wordless storybook—Mercer Mayer's (1969) *Frog, Where Are You?*—and an unfamiliar information book—Angela Royston's (1992) *Baby Animals*—made wordless by masking the text. Further, whereas others (Bamberg, 1985; Berman & Slobin, 1994; Duke & Kays, 1998) oriented the participants to the genre, as in "read the story," participants in this study were not, which allowed us to examine how children interpreted the task by the given features of books. For this study, children were simply handed each book and asked to "pretend to read this to me."

Frog, Where Are You? was chosen to present salient storybook features of characters engaged in goal-directed action, and the information book was chosen for typical topic-oriented presentation of a general class of object or animal. See Table 3 on the following page for an overview of all books used in the study.

Whereas the writing samples had been collected from all students in their classrooms, these pretend-reading tasks were completed only by the 24 focal children, on an individual basis and in a separate classroom not in use at the time. Kindergartners and first graders met twice for approximately 30 minutes, second graders met once for about 45 minutes, and third through fifth graders met once for about 65 minutes. After allowing children to play with the tape recorder and briefly discussing what they were going to do, the researcher on site turned the tape recorder on. She then asked the children about their personal experiences with reading, writing, computer use, and family activities that might have an impact on discourse knowledge—information presented earlier in this article in the description of the participants.

Following the discussion of personal reading and writing, each child was told,

> I brought a lot of books for us to read. The first two books do not have any words. You will pretend to read these to me. Then I will read the others to you. The first book is called *Frog, Where Are You?* [or *Baby Animals*, depending on order of presentation that was counterbalanced by class]. Look through the book to see how it goes and think about what the words would be if someone were reading it to you. Then you will pretend you are reading it to me. Start your pretend reading at the beginning of the book whenever you are ready.

Following the first reading, each child was presented with the second book and given the same instructions, again without reference to the genre.

Task 4: Definitions of story and information books

Upon completion of both pretend readings, the books were put in a pile out of the way and the child was asked, by order of the first genre presented, "What is

Table 3 Descriptions of the books used in the study

Title/author	Genre	Description
Frog, Where Are You? Mercer Mayer	Story	This wordless storybook details through pencil drawings a boy and his dog's search for a pet frog that escaped during the night. The search leads the pair through the forest and many obstacles until they unexpectedly find themselves in a pond with a family of frogs, one of whom is the escaped pet.
Baby Animals Angela Royston	Information	This information book provides color photographs of different baby animals, familiar (e.g., kittens) and unfamiliar (e.g., wallabies). Each animal baby is presented on a double-page spread with one or two paragraphs of text providing description of attributes and characteristic events.
Tunnels Gail Gibbons	Information	This topic-oriented book uses color pictures and text to provide information about tunnels. Category comparisons are present as four different types of tunnels are described. Description of attributes of the different types of tunnels, how they are built, and their uses are also presented.
The Owl and the Woodpecker Brian Wildsmith	Story	This story takes place in the forest, the home of the woodpecker. An owl moves into the tree next door to the woodpecker whose daily tapping infuriates the nocturnal owl. The problem is resolved when a storm knocks down the owl's tree and, to the delight of the other forest animals, he is forced to relocate.
Cockatoos Quenton Blake	Story	This story takes place in the home of a professor and his many pet cockatoos. The cockatoos tire of his daily pronouncement of admiration and decide to run away to teach him a lesson. He searches throughout the house for them. Finally, they return, sure he must have learned his lesson.
Elephants on the Beach Colleen Bare	Information	This topic-oriented information book uses photographs and text to provide details about the elephant seal. Elephant seals are compared in the beginning to real elephants as a play on the title. The book then provides descriptions of attributes and characteristic events about elephant seals.

an information [or story] book?" The answers were recorded on the tape. A neutral response to queries (e.g., the question "Is that right?" was answered with "That's fine") and one "Anything else?" were all the prompting that was given. The second question, "What is a storybook [or information book]?" was then asked. This task provided minimal-level scaffolding as it followed the composition tasks and pretend-reading tasks; in those tasks, the terms *story* and *information* had been used.

Task 5: Sorting books by genre

To gain a sense of children's ability to distinguish between the two genres, even when unable to articulate reasons, and to understand what features might be most salient to children, a set of books was selected that represented two typical storybooks and two typical information books (see Table 3).

Following the definition task, the researcher picked up the books used for the pretend reading one at a time and asked the child, "Is this a storybook or an information book?" She then told the child, "Storybooks will go in a pile right here, and information books over here." The remaining four books were picked up one at a time (in the order presented in Table 3); with each book, she asked the child, "Is this a storybook or an information book?" Upon the child's response, he or she was then asked, "Why do you think that?" The researcher next read the book aloud to the child, again asked for the genre of the book, and concluded by asking for the child's reasons for that decision. At this point, the child was always asked, "Is there anything else that lets you know this is a story [or information book?]"

Children were often convinced they knew the genre after the first page and were ready to classify the book immediately. For example, when "Once upon a time..." began the first sentence children were often certain of the book's genre and ready to move to the next book. However, going through the book provided the opportunity for children to offer more information about additional features of which they were aware, so the response was always "Let's keep reading and see if you notice anything else." When a child was particularly insistent and ready to move on, the book was classified and the next one begun.

We saw this task as providing two levels of scaffolding of children's understandings about genre distinctions. When children were asked to decide the genre based on their initial impression of the book cover, only middle-level support was provided. The child had a visible object to prompt thinking. However, high support

was provided when children are asked to categorize and explain their reasons following the read-aloud of the book. Children not only had the visible object, but also had become familiar with the text through hearing it read aloud.

Kindergarteners and first graders ended the first session after the first two books in Table 3 were read aloud. For them, a second session resumed the following day with a review of what was done in the previous session and what they were to do during the current sorting task. Second through fifth graders went through all tasks in a single session.

Task 6: Answering questions about writing information and story genres

The final task was designed to probe further, through questions about their written stories and informational texts, children's abilities to articulate any additional understandings that might not have been revealed through earlier tasks. Following the book-sorting task, children were told, "Now let's look at your writing." Their compositions produced in response to the prompt for a story and an informational text were placed on the table. To get a sense of what children could articulate about their writing process, we asked them, "What do you do when you write? What do you do first, second, third?" This was followed by "Read me your information [or story writing.]" After reading, the children were asked the following series of questions to gain a sense of prior experience and comfort with, and enjoyment of, the genre: "Have you ever written this type of writing before? Where? Do you like to?" [Following the reading of their second texts, the questions "Which is easier to write, stories or information? Why do think that is?" were inserted here]. Children were then asked, "What is your favorite information book [or storybook]? Why?"

Then children were asked an additional question designed to address the actual processes involved in writing. Regarding their planning, children were asked "How did you get started? What did you think of before you began writing this?" About their topic choice, beginnings, and content, children were asked, "Why did you decide to write about _____?" followed by "Why did you start your writing like this?" and "How do you know what to write next?" Structural questions followed; specific to their informational compositions, they were asked, "How do you know what order the information goes in?" For both pieces, the request "Read me the ending" was followed by "Why did you decide to end it this way?"

The piece written first was examined first for all the above questions. The questions were then repeated for the child's second written text. Although some questions were more abstract than others and therefore supported less by the actual written texts, as a whole the task provided minimal-level support for children's abilities. Children had their texts to refer to, but the texts provided no direct support in helping them answer questions regarding their reasoning.

Data analysis

Next we present the types of analysis that were employed for the collected data. We have organized this section by the nature of the analyses. At times, our analyses have been shaped by emerging categories. At other times, the categories into which the data have been analyzed were taken from other researchers' efforts.

Linguistic analyses

All child-generated written and pretend-reading story and informational texts were analyzed in the same fashion. Following Langer (1986), children's texts were parsed into T-units (Hunt, 1965) and analyzed for inclusion of macrolevel elements. Texts were next considered for their inclusion of genre elements as described by Stein and Glenn (1979) for story and by Pappas, Keifer, and Levstick (1999) for information. Texts were further examined for global structure or organizational level (Donovan, 2001).

Genre elements: Story. The genre elements included the setting, the initiating event, the character's internal reaction, the character's internal plan, the attempts made to achieve the goal, the consequences of these attempts, and finally the reaction of the character to the various story aspects (Stein & Glenn, 1979).

Global structure: Story. The organizational level, or global structure (Donovan, 2001), reflects child-authors' attention to key elements of stories. Because of the key role of temporality in story texts, children's texts were first examined for temporal connections. Those that lacked them have been classified under one of three categories: labels, statements, and descriptive sequences. Labels indicates a single word or sentence-length composition written in present tense. Statements indicates sentence-length compositions that included more genre-specific features such as past tense and fairy tale beginnings. Following Stein and Policastro (1984), multiple-sentence texts that lacked temporal connections but generally included fairy tale openings, story characters, and past tense have been labeled Descriptive Sequence. Texts having temporal connections but lacking causal connections have been termed Action Sequence. Texts both temporally and causally connected, but lacking goal-directed action have been termed Reactive Sequence. At the goal-directed level, children's texts have been labeled either Goal Directed 1 or Goal Directed 2. Although both of these levels go beyond Reactive Sequence to include goal-directed action, Goal

Directed 1 stories lack obstacles for characters to overcome, which Goal Directed 2 texts contain. These highest levels of story texts also often contain some type of evaluative ending.

Genre element: Informational texts. The genre elements for informational texts included topic presentation, descriptions of attributes, characteristic events, and final summaries (all seen as obligatory) as well as category comparisons and afterwards (seen as optional, Pappas et al., 1999).

Global structure: Informational texts. The organizational level, or global structure (Donovan, 2001), reflects child-authors' attention to the ordering of presented information. Texts were examined for the number of T-units present. Those containing only a single T-unit have been termed either Labels or Statements; as with the story texts, Statements contain some genre-specific feature or could possibly be seen as introducing a topic. Texts consisting of more than a single T-unit, but basically random facts about the topic, have been termed Attribute Lists. In the Hierarchical Attribute List, two or more attribute lists serve as subtopics in the composition; no order exists within or between these lists. Texts with related facts fall within four possible categories. In the Simple Couplet, a statement has been followed by a related description. In the Complex Couplet, a collection of simple couplets serves as subtopics in the composition. In Unordered Paragraphs, a topic and subtopics have been introduced. Subtopics appear in paragraph forms, and sentences within paragraphs are connected. However, the paragraphs of these compositions could be reordered without affecting overall text meaning. For Ordered Paragraphs, rearrangement would result in meaning change. These slightly more advanced compositions often achieve their ordering through simple connectives such as "first," "second," "third."

Analyses involving the constant comparative method

We used Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method to create categories that reflected levels of understanding for the following data sets: children's explanations of the differences between writing stories and writing informational texts, children's definitions of story and information books, children's explanations for why they had sorted books as they did, and for their responses on their writing processes. For each data set, the first author initially categorized the children's responses to generate emerging categories. These analyses were then shared with the second author who examined the data within the categories for confirming or disconfirming evidence. We reached consensus through discussion so that ultimately each response made by every child was assigned to a category. The unit of analysis was a child's entire response; no unit was double-coded. Once all responses were categorized, we jointly determined the levels of response.

For the children's definitions of the two genres, for their explanations in the book-sorting task, and for their explanations of their writing processes, we also analyzed responses for genre markers. For the book-sorting task, we additionally considered the accuracy of the students' designation of genre.

Results

Children's written stories: Macrolevel features

Looking across the grades reveals some interesting indications of possible developmental patterns in children's grasp of story components at the macrolevel (see Tables 4 and 5). We look first at organizational levels and then at genre elements.

Organizational levels

Three kindergartners, Alexandra, Andrea, and Andy, (all student names are pseudonyms) produced written texts that not only fell below the level of a goal-directed organization, but also lacked temporal sequencing as well. Andy's text, "zoo, zoo, zoo," for example, is simply the recording of a "word I can spell," as he explained later. Alexandra, however, composed the following Genre-Specific Statement that could easily serve as an initiating event:

> Oen day a beg fihs kam dash tr the wvs
>
> [One day a big fish came dashing through the waves.]

Of the four kindergarten compositions, only Alan's Goal Directed 2 story (temporally and causally connected, with an obstacle), a retelling of a favorite cartoon episode, achieved temporality through the simple connectors "and then."

> Sonic was running really fast and Tails was running really fast and he was in front of Sonic and then Robotnik was coming in really, really fast and *he was about to get Sonic* but he was kind of far so he couldn't really. And then Sonic ran way far away from Robotnik so then Tails he flew up into the air with both of his tails and then he went way up into the air and Robotnik couldn't go that high because he went into outer space. The End

Robotnik's explicit goal, italicized in the text above, was to get Sonic (and if not Sonic, his compatriot, Tails). His attempt to get Sonic is thwarted by distance; his attempt to get Tails is thwarted by height. Alan's sophisticated text derived from his knowledge of the characters and their adventures, a point we will return to later.

Table 4 Macrolevel features of children's written/oral compositions produced in response to the story prompt

Student	Organization level	Genre elements included						
		Setting	Initiating event	Internal reaction	Internal plan	Attempts	Consequences	Reaction
Kindergartners								
1 Alexandra	Genre-Specific Statement	+	+					
2 Alan	Goal Directed 2 implicit		+			+		
3 Andrea	Descriptive Sequence	+						
4 Andy	Label (zoo)							
First graders								
5 Betsy	Goal Directed 1 implicit	+	+	+		+	+	+
6 Ben	Descriptive Sequence	+						
7 Brenda	Goal Directed 1 implicit	+	+			+	+	
8 Brendan	Descriptive Sequence	+						
Second graders								
9 Carrie	Goal Directed 1 explicit	+	+			+	+	
10 Carl	Reactive Sequence	+	+	+		+	+	
11 Christine	Goal Directed 1 explicit	+	+			+	+	+
12 Christopher	Goal Directed 2 explicit	+	+		+	+	+	
Third graders								
13 Debra	Reactive Sequence	+	+			+		
14 Derek	Reactive Sequence	+	+			+		
15 Donna	Descriptive Sequence	+						
16 Donnie	Recount	+				+		
Fourth graders								
17 Elizabeth	Reactive Sequence	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
18 Elijah	Reactive Sequence		+			+		
19 Erin	Goal Directed 1 explicit	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
20 Eric	Goal Directed 1 explicit	+	+			+	+	
Fifth graders								
21 Frances	Reactive Sequence	+	+	+		+		+
22 Frank	Goal Directed 2 explicit	+	+		+	+	+	+
23 Frieda	Goal Directed 2 implicit	+	+	+		+	+	
24 Fred	Reactive Sequence	+	+	+		+	+	

In contrast to the kindergartners, only two first graders, Ben and Brendan, wrote stories that lacked temporal sequencing. Both female first graders produced story texts that not only contained temporal sequencing but also included a goal for their characters (Goal Directed 1, temporally and causally connected but lacking obstacles for characters to overcome). For the four second graders, stories became still more sophisticated: All included temporal sequencing, and three even wrote goal-directed stories. For the third-grade group, the organizational level of the texts seemed more like that of the kindergartners. Asked to produce a story, Donnie instead wrote a Recount of something that has happened to him. Donna's story text contained no temporal sequencing whatsoever, while Debra's and Derek's written stories lacked goals for their characters. The fourth graders' written story texts seemed more like those written by second graders. All students included temporal sequencing; Erin and Eric produced goal-directed stories. At the fifth-grade level, Frank and Frieda produced Goal Directed 2 stories (containing obstacles); the two others did not include goals for their characters.

Genre elements

Alan, relying on the Sonic cartoon, was the only kindergarten child whose story character made an attempt in the text. Like Alexandra's, Alan's written story text contained an initiating event. His text lacked even a rudimentary setting.

The two first-grade girls wrote stories that included attempts and consequences. Betsy's character even had an internal reaction (italicized) in her story, which follows.

One Cat

Oncs a pon a time thir was a cat namend solvistr and He Had a onr [owner] and one day He Hrd a gral [heard a growl] and he was *scird [scared]* thr was a opin windo and

Table 5 Macrolevel features of children's wordless storybook readings of Mercer Mayer's *Frog, Where Are You?*

Student	Organization level	Genre elements included						
		Setting	Initiating	Internal event	Internal reaction	Attempts plan	Consequences	Reaction
Kindergartners								
1 Alexandra	Goal Directed 2		+			+		
2 Alan	Action Sequence		+			+		
3 Andrea	Reactive Sequence	+	+			+		
4 Andy	Goal Directed 2		+	+		+		
First graders								
5 Betsy	Goal Directed 2		+			+	+	
6 Ben	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
7 Brenda	Action Sequence	+	+			+		
8 Brendan	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
Second graders								
9 Carrie	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
10 Carl	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
11 Christine	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
12 Christopher	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
Third graders								
13 Debra	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
14 Derek	Goal Directed 2	+	+	+		+	+	
15 Donna	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	+
16 Donnie	Goal Directed 2		+			+	+	
Fourth graders								
17 Elizabeth	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
18 Elijah	Goal Directed 2		+			+	+	
19 Erin	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
20 Eric	Goal Directed 2	+	+	+		+	+	
Fifth graders								
21 Frances	Goal Directed 2	+	+		+	+	+	+
22 Frank	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
23 Frieda	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	
24 Fred	Goal Directed 2	+	+			+	+	

> He gumt owt [jumped out] the windo and he was gon for abot 30 day's and He coodn't finde wire He livs then He ricnisde [recognized] a man and the man saw the cat and He ricnisde the cat and thay ran up to ech tr [each other] and thay livd appl ever after The ind

Unlike the kindergartners, all four first graders supplied settings for their stories.

All four second-grade children included settings, initiating events, attempts, and consequences in their stories. Christopher's Goal Directed 2 story below also contained an indication of a character's internal planning (italicized).

> Once there where 8 astronauts in space and they where trying to take pictures of the planets. There names were: David, Steven, Sam, Wally, John, Alex, Kyle, and Jacob. Once they got to Jupiter they autamaticly started going 800-MPh! They Tried to slow down but they couldn't!!! Then commander John said "*I have an idea!*" We could take an escape pod, put the camera on it and and then take pictures because the escape pod only has one speed"! So that's what they did and John was right. It worked perfictley so they took pictures of: the sun, mercury, venus, earth, mars, Jupiter, Satern, Uranas, Neptune, and Pluto. And came back to earth and developed them into books! The end

Just as with their organizational levels, the four third-grade students were less sophisticated in their inclusion of genre elements than the four second-grade students. All third graders included settings; three included attempts. No one produced a text with internal reactions or plans or consequences and reactions.

All fourth-grade students included initiating events; all included attempts. Three even included consequences and settings. Elizabeth and Erin both produced texts in which characters had internal reactions, plans, and reactions.

All fifth-grade students wrote stories that included settings, initiating events, and attempts. Three students indicated internal reactions for their characters, and three included the consequences of the attempts. Two students included reactions. Frank's composition even included an internal plan for his character.

Book-supported pretend story readings: Macrolevel features

In this section, we present the results of our analysis of the pretend readings. Once again, we address the organizational structure first and then the genre elements.

Organizational structure

In terms of organizational structure, the more scaffolded pretend reading enabled two kindergartners, three first graders, and all older children to produce texts categorized as Goal Directed 2. For example, first grader Ben had written the following Descriptive Sequence level written text (lacking temporal connections) for his story composition:

> Once upon a time thair was a deragin naemed Alex he was a vairy bad deragin but he didn't not bit The end

His pretend reading, however, was categorized as more complex with a Goal Directed 2 structure (temporally and causally connected; containing obstacles):

> Samuel got a new frog and his dog was looking at him. When Samuel went to sleep his frog jumped away and he didn't know. *He looked* in his dad's cowboy boots, under his bed, and out the window, and his dog fell out when he was looking out. So he went out and got him. He called out his frog's name. He found the hole under a beehive, but It wasn't his frog's. He looked in a squirrel hole, but his frog wasn't in there. He looked, and a owl came down and he bothered him. And he looked over a rock with a wild, um, deer behind it. And a wild deer stopped and he fell off and fell into the pond. He found another hole. And there was frogs. The End

The pictures of the wordless book drove the child's text construction, and thus explicit goal-directed action was established when the child stated "he looked [for the frog]." Obstacles were included as a result of the difficulties created through the illustrations such as the owl bothering the boy, and the boy getting caught on the antlers of a "wild deer."

Genre elements

In terms of included genre elements, the picture is a bit more complex. With the book's pictures supplying scaffolding, every child included not only an initiating event but also episodes in their pretend readings. The inclusion of consequences is also higher; three instead of two first graders included consequences, as did every child in the higher grades.

On the other hand, the scaffolding appears to have taken children's attention away from characters' internal plans and reactions as well as from supplying a general reaction to the story. Whereas seven children had included internal reactions in their own compositions, only three did so in their pretend readings. The number of internal plans also dropped from four in their written compositions to only one during the pretend reading. Six children had included reactions in their composed stories; only two did so during the pretend readings.

Children's written informational texts: Macrolevel features

Looking across the grades at the children's written informational compositions again reveals some interesting indications of possible developmental patterns in children's grasp of information organization and elements at the macrolevel (see Tables 6 and 7).

Organizational levels

With the exception of Alan who produced a Recount, all students wrote informational texts. Kindergartners produced a variety of texts from Andy's Label (single word) for his picture of a cat to Alexandra's Genre-Specific Statement (sentence) "[At ballet class] We learn ballet." Andrea's composition, consisting of more than a single T-unit, was considered an Attribute List.

Among the first graders, Brendan, just as with stories, produced a lower level of text organization than his peers, in this case a single Genre-Specific Statement "I can change oil in a truck." All three other first graders wrote informational texts at the Attribute-List level (randomly ordered facts). These increases in text organization sophistication continued with the second graders, who produced texts that ranged from Attribute Lists all the way to Unordered Paragraphs (topic introduced; subtopics in paragraphs).

In the third-grade group, both girls wrote informational texts at the paragraph level. Derek's composition on bears appeared in an Attribute List. All fourth graders produced paragraph-level compositions; three of their texts consisted of paragraphs where order did not play a significant role (unordered). In the fifth-grade group, both Frances and Frank produced paragraphs that must appear in a particular order. Frieda's text on her interests, however, appeared as Complex Couplets (collection of simple couplets serving as subtopics in the composition).

Genre elements

Only two kindergartners included those genre elements described by Pappas (1986); both girls described

Table 6 Macrolevel features of children's written/oral compositions produced in response to the information prompt

		Genre Elements Included						
Student	Organization Level	Topic presentation	Description of attributes	Characteristic events	Category comparison	Final summary (optional)	Afterward (optional)	Topic*
Kindergartners								
1 Alexandra	Genre-Specific Statement			+				Ballet
2 Alan	Recount							
3 Andrea	Attribute List			+				My Dog
4 Andy	Label (zoo)							Zoo
First graders								
5 Betsy	Attribute List	+	+	+				Bird(s)
6 Ben	Attribute List	Title	+					Gyroscope(s)
7 Brenda	Attribute List	+		+				Cbad cavs**
8 Brendan	Genre-Specific Statement	+						I can ch oil
Second graders								
9 Carrie	Attribute List	Title	+	+				Soccer
10 Carl	Unordered Paragraph	Title	+					Dinosaurs
11 Christine	Hierarchical Attribute List	+		+				Balloons
12 Christopher	Couplet	+	+	+				My Fish
Third graders								
13 Debra	Ordered Paragraph	+	+	+				Pilgrims
14 Derek	Attribute List	Title		+				Bears
15 Donna	Unordered Paragraph	Title	+	+	+			Reptiles and Amphibians
16 Donnie	Complex Couplet	+	+	+	+			Reptiles and Amphibians
Fourth graders								
17 Elizabeth	Unordered Paragraph	+	+		+			Cats
18 Elijah	Unordered Paragraph	+	+					M.Piazza
19 Erin	Unordered Paragraph	+	+	+	+			Cars
20 Eric	Ordered Paragraph	+	+	+				Presurving
Fifth graders								
21 Frances	Ordered Paragraph	+	+	+		+		Swimming
22 Frank	Ordered Paragraph /Argument	+	+	+		+	+	Eskimoze
23 Frieda	Complex Couplet	Title	+	+		+		Interests
24 Fred	Unordered Paragraph	+	+	+				My team

* Child's spelling
** Cbad cavs = Carlsbad Caverns

characteristic events. All four first graders supplied some element that served as a topic statement; this pattern continued with the children from higher grades. Like the two kindergarten girls, both first-grade girls, Betsy and Brenda, included characteristic events. Betsy and Ben included descriptions of the attributes of birds and gyroscopes, respectively.

Two second graders, Carrie and Christopher, included both descriptions of attributes and characteristic events in their compositions. Carrie's text follows:

Scoor [Soccer]

Scoor you run. You have a ball. You play a nothr tem. You mack golls. You threp. You have lots and lots of fun. A lot of pelpel like it. I like it to. I have bene playing scocr for 4 hears. I bet you wode like it to.

The Attributes of her informational compositions include soccer being fun and requiring a ball; characteristic events include making goals, tripping, and having fun. Like Carrie, Christopher included both these elements in his composition on his fish. The two other second graders, however, each included only one of these elements. Carl, writing about dinosaurs, included only descriptive elements, while Christine, writing about balloons, included only characteristic events.

The element of category comparison appears for the first time in the compositions of third graders Donna and Donnie; both were writing texts on Reptiles and Amphibians. Donnie's informational text appears below.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Reptiles and amphibians are cold blooded animals but amphibians live in water so they are different. Some reptiles are lizards snakes and turtles but there is a snake that is a amphibian such as the water snake. Some amphibians are frogs, toads, and fish. I like these animals because I think they are good pets. Some are poisonous like rattle snakes and gila monsters.

Fourth graders Elizabeth and Erin, writing on cats and cars respectively, also employed category comparisons.

All fifth graders included not only descriptions but also characteristic events in their informational texts, although none of their texts included category comparisons. Three children wrote what might be seen as final summaries for their informational texts.

In this group of texts, Frank's composition on Eskimos, which follows, merits particular attention. In our first examination, we noted that Frank's "Eskimoze" seemed the most complex of the four fifth-grade informational papers, even including an afterword (italicized).

Eskimoze

In the Northwestern most state of Alaska is one of the most Ingeniuse Indian tribes on earth. This wonderful tribe is the eskimoze who have used snow and Ice like no one could have beleaved. It is amazing how they made homes by using snow, ice, root, and other plants to make Ice bricks to build a dome like shelter called an Igloo. The Eskimoze made goggles with slits so the blinding snow would not make them become blind. The Eskimoze had great traspertion metheds using dogs to pull a sled with suppplize and a person or tow. The Eskimoze hunted Seals, otters, walresses, and whales for food, cloths, and a good materile to cover the frame of kayake. They also fished a lot. I still and always will think eskomoze are the best of all Indian tribes and *I hope after reading this you will think the same.*

Further thought on this composition led us to realize that this nonnarrative composition might also be seen as what systemic functional linguists and others consider a separate genre, described by Derewianka (1991) as an argument, a persuasive text. In this light, Frank's composition can be seen as beginning with a thesis statement, setting out his position that the "Eskimoze" are the most "Ingeniuse" of Indian tribes. To support his position, Frank presents his argument with the points that they make their homes of snow and goggles with slits, have transportation with dogs, and make various cultural materials from the animals they hunt. Following this argument, Frank concludes with a restatement of his position.

Fortunately, in this study, we interviewed the children after they had written their compositions. Frank explained that this was the first time that he had truly done something he wanted in information writing. He explained, "I really like the Eskimos... it's just kind of neat how they survived up there, and how they figured everything out." What Frank wanted was for his readers to see the Eskimos as he saw them, "neat." And because of his aim, a point to which we will return in our discussion of our findings, we categorized this piece as a persuasive text.

Book-supported pretend information book readings: Macrolevel features

Table 7 reveals the differences between the informational texts children produced on their own and those they produced during the more highly scaffolded task of pretending to read *Baby Animals.* Again, we look at organizational levels first and then at the genre elements.

Organizational levels

Unlike the pretend readings of the wordless storybook, the pretend readings of the wordless informational text did not result in more sophisticated organizational structures than the children's self-generated written texts. While seven children produced texts that would be categorized at higher levels of organizational sophistication, nine

Table 7 Macrolevel features of children's wordless information book pretend readings of *Baby Animals*

Student	Organization Level	Genre Elements Included					
		Topic Presentation	Description of attributes	Characteristic events	Category comparison	Final summary (optional)	Afterward (optional)
Kindergartners							
1 Alexandra	Labels			+			
2 Alan	Labels		+				
3 Andrea	Genre-Specific Statement		+	+			
4 Andy	Attribute List			+			
First graders							
5 Betsy	Attribute List		+	+			
6 Ben	Complex Couplet	+	+	+			
7 Brenda	Complex Couplet	+	+	+			
8 Brendan	Hierarchical Attribute List		+	+			
Second graders							
9 Carrie	Attribute List		+	+			
10 Carl	Hierarchical Attribute List		+	+			
11 Christine	Complex Couplet	Title	+	+			
12 Chris	Complex Couplet		+	+			
Third graders							
13 Debra	Hierarchical Attribute List		+	+			
14 Derek	Unordered Paragraphs		+	+	+		
15 Donna	Hierarchical Attribute List		+	+			
16 Donnie	Hierarchical Attribute List		+	+	+		
Fourth graders							
17 Elizabeth	Unordered Paragraphs		+	+	+		
18 Elijah	Unordered Paragraphs		+	+	+		
19 Erin	Unordered Paragraphs		+	+	+		
20 Eric	Unordered Paragraphs		+	+	+		
Fifth graders							
21 Frances	Hierarchical Attribute List						
22 Frank	Unordered Paragraphs		+	+	+		
23 Frieda	Unordered Paragraphs		+	+	+		
24 Fred	Unordered Paragraphs		+	+			

produced pretend-reading texts that would be seen at lower levels. An example of a child's increased organization due to scaffolding of the book is Brendan's move from the single Statement "I can change oil in a truck." to the following Hierarchical Attribute List text in which some subtopics are beginning to include connected information.

> There are different kinds of kitties. And there are different kinds of cats. There are ducks. Little baby ducks are yellow and they're different kind of bird things that can swim. This is a leopard cub and it has good skills. It can eat very well. Pigs can live on farms and pigs are wild animals. Pigs are very dirty. This is a baby wallaby. A wallaby has sharp nails. A wallaby is in the family of kangaroos, maybe, because it looks like a kangaroo so much. Puppies. Puppies are very good pets for humans to have. They are very easy to train. Some dogs are easy to train. A fawn is kind of like a deer. A fawn is a baby deer. It does not have teeth and it has a very good sense of smell and ear. A gorilla. Gorillas are very good at swinging from trees. And they like everything, they always smell everything. Gorillas have four hands because their feet are hands and their hands are hands. (Brendan, first grader)

Not all children, however, were supported in the same way by the book; some produced more complex organizational levels in their self-generated written texts. This was the case for Frances, whose informational composition and pretend readings of *Baby Animals* appear below.

> Swimming
>
> Swimming is a very fun sport, but it takes lots of skill and work. There are many different kinds of swimming too! Like racing or synchronized swimming. Or just swimming for fun and many more. One of my favorite parts of swiming are lifeguarding and strokes.

> Strokes are so fun. All of the strokes I know about are: Side Stroke, Butterfly, Breast Crawl, Inverted Breast, Inverted Side, and the Dead Man's float. The hardes one would have to be the butterfly because you have to circle your arms, wiggle your body, and kick your feet all at the same time!
>
> My favorite one is the dead man's float because you just lay there and you can fake people out.
>
> Lifeguarding is fun too because you learn a bunch of ways to jump off of a diving board and you get to help people when they need help. My favorite jump is the Saving Jump because you can jump in without going underwater! The point of this jump is that if someone went under you can jump in and still see them! Well, that is some important facts about swimming! The End (Frances's written informational text)

This is one of the most mature informational texts produced. Frances has created Ordered Paragraphs (in which rearrangement results in meaning change) that are connected through the use of lexical and coclassification cohesive devices. Frances's pretend reading of *Baby Animals*, however, is a much simpler text; a Hierarchical Attribute List text, it consists of simple and complex statements, along with a few couplets of information that provide attributes of the animals pictured. Her text follows.

> Baby cats have fur, eyes, hair and paws. Ducks have webbed fee, beaks and also have fur. Leopards have tails, paws, fur and are related, are in the cat family. Pigs have snouts, tails, and Wallabies have fur, tails and claws. Puppies have paws, fur, whiskers and tails. Fawns have a short tail which is hard to see. They have noes just like dogs. Gorillas have hands that are like humans, kind of, and they have fur and ears and look like humans.

Genre elements

Topic presentation declined with the pretend readings of *Baby Animals*. No third, fourth, or fifth grader included any topical information at all. Topic presentation dropped at second- and first-grade levels as well.

On the other hand, the pretend-reading task supported a greater use of descriptions. Whereas no kindergarten child produced this genre element in their self-generated compositions, Alan and Andrea included these in their pretend readings. And whereas only two first graders, Betsy and Ben, included attribute descriptions in their own compositions, all four children did so in their pretend readings. This general trend of greater attribute descriptions in the pretend readings is seen for upper grade children as well.

A similar picture appears with the characteristic-events element. Whereas 7 of the 24 children did not include any characteristic events in their self-generated compositions, only 2 children did not do so in their pretend readings.

As regards the element of category comparison, the more scaffolded pretend reading made little difference. As with the written compositions, no child younger than third grade created comparisons. Final summary and afterward, both present only in the written compositions of fifth graders, did not appear in any child's pretend reading.

What children say about their writing versus what they do in their writing

As explained in the methods section, the final task for all 24 children, which provided minimal scaffolding by placing their compositions in front of them, was having them describe the various processes used in producing their written pieces. In the two sections that follow, we look at what children explained about writing stories and informational texts. In each section, we point to differences between what children were able to articulate and what they had actually displayed in their compositions.

What children said about writing stories

As was indicated earlier, children were asked four different questions about writing stories. Their responses to each question appear in the four sections that follow.

How do you write a story? As can be seen in Table 8, children's responses to this question were seen as falling into one of four categories. At the lowest level, basically "just do it" responses, are the four kindergarten students and second-grader Christopher. Of the four kindergartners, only Alan had produced a Goal Directed story (see Table 4). Even he was unable to verbalize his process, responding, "You write something." Similarly, second grader Christopher's response "I just thought of it" in no way reflects the sophistication of his story. His Goal Directed 2 story (containing obstacles) about astronauts, presented earlier, even contained a character's internal planning. Over half of the children provided responses that fell in the second level, that they had made the story up. This group included first- through fifth-grade students. Interestingly, 3 of the 4 fourth and 2 of the 4 fifth graders offered "I made it up" explanations. "Making up" a story seems to refer to its fictional quality.

Six children supplied more detailed thinking about their thought processes; all mentioned the characters they had created. Carl, the only second grader who failed to produce a Goal Directed 1 or 2 story, was nonetheless the only second grader to have included an internal reaction for his character—"he got so scared." Third graders Debra, Derek, and Donnie all included attempts in their compositions. Donna, the other third grader, is found in the "I made it up" category; her composition, a Descriptive Sequence (lacking temporal and causal con-

Table 8 The nature of children's responses to questions about writing story texts

Question	Examples of children's responses	Children (grade)
How do you write a story?	"I just do." "Draw a picture and write words."	Alexandra, Alan, Andrea, Andy (K) Christopher (2)
	"I made it up."	Betsy, Ben, Brenda, Brendan (1) Carrie, Christine (2) Donna (3) Elizabeth, Elijah, Erin (4) Frances, Fred (5)
	"I think about what I want to write then I put 'Once upon a time' and then write about the main characters."	Carl (2) Debra, Derek, Donnie (3) Eric (4)
	"First you think of an idea from your imagination and after that you think of what's going to happen and how you're going to have a solution to your story."	Frank, Frieda (5)
Why did you start your story like this?	"I don't know."	Alexandra (K) Carrie (2) Donnie (3)
	"Because that's the start of a story." "It's a fairy tale."	Alan, Andrea, Andy (K) Betsy, Ben, Brenda, Brendan (1) Carl, Christopher (2) Derek, Donna (3) Elizabeth, Elijah, Erin (4) Frances, Fred, Frank (5)
	"That's how you start a story, what it's gonna be about and what it's gonna do."	Christine (2) , Debra (3) Eric (4), Frieda (5)
How did you know what to write next and what order to put it in?	"I don't know."	Alexandra, Andy (K) Carrie (2) Donnie (3)
	"I just added on things." "I just think of it.	Alan, Andrea (K) Betsy, Ben, Brenda, Brendan (1) Carl, Christine, Chris (2) Debra, Derek, Donna (3) Elijah (4) Frances, Frieda (5)
	"They need to know characters before you put the story. Tells what they're doing."	Elizabeth , Eric (4) Fred (5)
	"You put the main thing that happens and little details. There's a beginning, and a middle where there's a problem, and there's a conclusion."	Erin (4) Frank (5)
Why did you end your story like this?	"I don't know."	Alexandra, Alan, Andrea, Andy (K) Brenda (1) Carrie, Carl (2) Debra (3)
	"That's how it ended."	Betsy (1) Christopher (2) Derek (3) Elizabeth, Elijah (4) Fred (5)
	"I like happy endings."	Ben, Brendan (1) Christine (2) Donna, Donnie (3) Eric (4) Frances, Frank, Frieda (5)
	"To tell the plan succeeded and then I put 'The End.'"	Erin (4)

nections), contained only one genre element—setting (see Table 4). Eric is one of two fourth graders to produce a Goal Directed 1 story (no obstacles for character to overcome); his response to the question also falls in this category.

Fifth graders Frank and Frieda, both writers of Goal-Directed 2 stories (temporally, causally connected, containing obstacles), offered more complicated explanations. Frieda's included an audience awareness, "You catch the reader's attention in the beginning and then just put little details of what happened in the story." Frank's explanation, which appears in Table 8, stresses the complication and resolution.

Why did you start your story like that? Children's responses to this question were seen as falling within three different categories. Third grader Donnie, who had supplied one of the more articulate responses to the first question, simply indicated that he did not know why he had started his story as he did. It should be recalled, however, that Donnie did not write a story. Instead, his text was a Recount, in which he described catching lizards on a camping trip. By far, the majority of children, from kindergarten through fifth grade, indicated that they began their stories as they did because of their knowledge of how stories start. Only second grader Christine, third grader Debra, fourth grader Eric, and fifth grader Frieda supplied an answer that suggested that how a story began might in some way be influenced by the larger text. An example is third grader Debra's response that "I had an idea of my story, and Shiloh was always going to be sleepy, and I wanted people to know what type of day it was." She was asked, "Why not start with 'Once upon a time'?" to which Debra replied "because that's a little too ordinary." Surprisingly, of this third group, only Debra's story falls below the Goal Directed 1 level.

How did you know what to write next? Children were asked to describe their process for moving beyond story beginnings and for considering how story texts should be ordered. For this response, kindergartner Andy joined Alexandra, Carrie, and Donnie in indicating that he did not know (or could not explain) how he had determined what to write. Once again, the majority of children's responses fall into a single category, in this case, a category that indicates that little prior planning was done. From kindergarten through fifth grade, children simply said that they thought about it and added more to their stories. Frieda, normally articulate about her approach to writing, is found in this group.

Only fourth and fifth graders supplied information that indicated that more planning might be involved. Fifth grader Frank and fourth grader Erin, authors of two of the most sophisticated story texts produced in the study in terms of genre elements (both even include Reactions), moved beyond their peers to define a story's structure. Erin described the process in the following way:

> I start thinking about what I want to write first or I think about how I write a story and what I want to write. And so I have either written a story about this, or something similar to this before or I had read it, but I changed it, either way, and I first put once upon a time because that's how a lot of stories start. And I wrote about the main character and I told about what the main character had.

Frank's description is even more specific about the nature of the problem/solution aspect of stories, not surprising given that he had focused on it in an earlier response.

> First I had to think of what the problem was at the beginning and I thought it should be a demon because that's what usually happens in fantasy stories. I made it so they could defeat the demon. A great warrior comes, saves them, and that's how they defeat the demon.

Why did you end your story this way? For this question, the "don't know" group expanded to include first grader Brenda, second grader Carl, and third grader Debra, all of whom had supplied somewhat more in-depth responses to all previous questions. This question seemed difficult for all the children; only 10 were able to articulate something more than "that's how it ended." Nine of these responses, including those from three of the fifth graders, fell into a "happy ending" category. Only fourth grader Erin indicated that the ending in some way links to the character's goal. She explained her choice of ending, "Because they wanted to get rid of the baby bothering them and so at the end they said 'and after that the baby never bothered them again' after their plan succeeded."

What children said about writing informational texts

In a procedure identical to that followed with their story texts, children were also asked four different questions about writing informational texts. Their responses to each question appear in the four sections that follow.

How do you write about information? Children's responses to this opening question on writing informational pieces once again fall into four categories (see Table 9).

The "don't know" group is almost identical to the "don't know" group for stories. Betsy, who knew she had made her story up, was unable to discuss the process she had used to create her Attribute List on birds.

Eight children, from kindergarten through fourth grade, indicated that the topic must be something true (or real). Carl and Eric, both in a higher category for this question in their responses to writing stories, had been able to describe writing stories with much greater detail. Carl had explained, "First you put 'Once upon a time there was a boy' or something or 'Once there was a boy'

Table 9 The nature of children's responses to questions about writing information texts

Question	Examples of children's responses	Children (grade)
How do you write about information?	"I don't know."	Alan, Alexandra, Andrea, Andy (K) Betsy (1) Christopher (2)
	"You write something you know that's true."	Ben, Brenda, Brendan (1) Carrie, Carl (2) Derek, Donnie (3) Eric (4)
	"Just tell facts; write facts about the person, animal, or thing."	Christine (2) Donna (3) Elizabeth, Elijah (4) Frieda, Fred (5)
	"I thought of something I know a lot about and put swimming is a fun sport. Then you say different types and how to do them. Say what's important."	Debra (3) Erin (4) Frances, Frank (5)
Why did you start your informational writing like this?	"I don't know." "I just thought it up."	Alexandra, Alan, Andrea, Andy (K) Brendan, Ben (1) Carrie, Carl, Christopher (2) Donnie (3)
	"I wanted them to know I know about parrots."	Betsy (1) Debra, Donna (3) Elizabeth, Elijah (4) Frances, Frank, Frieda, Fred (5)
	"Because it's information. You don't do it like a story. You start it by the topic"	Brenda (1) Christine (2) Derek (3) Eric, Erin (4)
How did you know what to write next and what order to put it in?	"I don't know."	Alexandra, Alan, Andrea, Andy (K) Brenda, Brendan (1) Carrie (2) Donnie (3)
	"What goes there."	Carl (2) Donna (3)
	"I just think what they do and write it down."	Betsy, Ben (1) Christine, Christopher (2)
	"Write what was important about it. I just choose one fact and write it down. Then I choose another."	Debra, Derek (3) Elizabeth, Elijah, Eric (4) Frank, Frieda, Fred (5)
	"In the beginning I put 'Cars are neat' and in the middle I told why neat and interesting, and the end is to tell the reader you're finished."	Erin (4) Frances (5)
Why did you end your piece like this?	"I don't know."	Alexandra, Alan, Andrea, Andy (K) Brenda, Brendan (1) Carrie (2)
	"That's the only thing to put."	Betsy, Ben (1) Carl, Christine, Christopher (2) Derek (3) Elizabeth (4) Frances, Frieda (5)
	"It's the last thing."	Debra, Donna, Donnie (3) Eric (4) Frank, Fred (5)
	"The end. Is kind of telling the reader that you're done. You don't put 'The End' because it doesn't have that."	Elijah, Erin (4)

or 'Once there was a girl.' You write what he did and stuff." For his informational text explanation, he replied, "I just know stuff."

On the other hand, Christine, Donna, Elizabeth, Elijah, Fred, and Frank, who had been in the "made it up" category for writing stories (see Table 8), all supplied more detail about writing an informational text. Frieda, whose answer for stories (presented above) had been one of the most complex, was also placed in the third-level group.

Third grader Debra, fourth grader Erin, and fifth graders Francis and Frank all offered a response that indicated that the planning for informational texts involved a consideration of openings, major points, and relative importance. All four had been placed in lower categories for their story responses (see Table 8); Erin, Frances, and Frank were in the "made it up" category. Of this group, only Erin composed an informational text that fell below the Ordered Paragraphs level (see Table 6). Her Unordered Paragraph text (topic introduced; subtopics in paragraphs; order unimportant to meaning), which follows, is still quite complex in its inclusion of a topic orientation, attribute descriptions, comparisons, characteristic events, and even a final summary. The paragraphs could, however, be reorganized without loss of meaning.

> Cars
>
> Cars are neat. Cars have a lot of things. They have transmissions, engines, a fan belt, and a lot more. Cars are useful for many things. I like cars because they are faster than bikes or skates. Every good thing has its bads. Cars need gasoline because the engine uses it to burn and make the car go. If you go through an Emmissions test, and your car puts out too much exhaust, you will need to buy a new engine. An Emmissions test is something your car has to take every few years. The Emmissions test is making sure your car is not polluting the air too much, and that your car is safe to drive.
>
> Cars need to get cleaned, just like people do, but not as often. Cars often need mechanics to fix them. A mechanic is a person who has studied all about cars, and how to fix them. If your car has an ail leak or an anti-freeze leak, you need to go to a mechanic. Cars also need hoods, doors, and maybe even an opening in the roof. Cars also need rubber tube covering over the plugs, so if water gets in it, the engine will not die. Cars are very interesting.

Erin's response, "In the beginning I put 'Cars are neat,' and in the middle I told why neat and interesting, and the end is to tell the reader you're finished," closely matches her composition and even includes audience awareness.

Why did you start your informational writing this way? While only 3 children had been unable to answer this question for stories, 10 children, ranging from kindergarten through third grade, were unable to articulate a reason for how they began their informational pieces. Nine children, however, gave responses that indicated audience awareness; this group included all 4 fifth-grade students. All members of this second category had included a topic presentation genre element in their compositions (see Table 6). Betsy, the youngest child in this group, was the only first grader to include both descriptions and characteristic events. In the final category, five children indicated that informational texts began differently from stories and that writers needed to begin with topical information. Interestingly, despite her rather higher-level response to the question, which appears as the example for the category in Table 9, first grader Brenda's composition on Carlsbad Caverns is not as sophisticated in its range of genre elements as Betsy's.

How did you know what to write next and what order to put it in? Ten of the 24 children could offer little beyond "the next thing" in response to this question. Twelve children, whose compositions range from Attribute Lists (randomly ordered facts) to Ordered Paragraphs (rearrangement results in meaning change), indicated that some thought was involved in determining what to write next. First graders Betsy's and Ben's compositions, on birds and gyroscopes respectively, are Attribute Lists; each includes descriptions. Ben's text reads, "I like my gyroscope because it's science. It runs by speed." Ben's response "Well I gotta write something that goes with the first thing I wrote" is demonstrated in his composition about his gyroscope in which the second fact "it runs by speed" is clearly referring to the gyroscope.

Fourth grader Erin and fifth grader Frances both indicated that the "next" in informational compositions must serve to support the topic. Frances, who had explained that "you just think of what would fit in next" for her story response, indicated that importance to the topic was key in determining what would come next for informational writing.

Why did you end your piece like this? With answers that ranged from a straight up "don't know" to "it's the last thing," 22 children had difficulty responding to this question. Despite the fact that their compositions include final summaries, Frances, Frank, and Frieda were members of this group.

Only fourth graders Elijah and Erin indicated that the end of an informational text must differ from that of a story, as explained by Erin below (questions in brackets are additional prompts).

> At the ending I put cars are interesting and in the middle I told why they were neat and why they were interesting. It's just kind of telling the reader you're done. [Why not "The End"?] because information things don't have that. I put it in the story I think but information writing doesn't have that. [Why not?] Cuz...you don't have a plot and you don't figure out something and then say "The End" that was the end, we figured it out, now go. In this, we just say "Cars are very interesting," and that's in other words saying "the end."

Elijah, who had written about Mike Piazza, explained that he had based his ending on the chronological ordering in his text. His response to the same question for story texts had simply been "That's how it ended."

How stories and informational texts differ

The third writing prompt for second through fifth graders had asked for them to discuss how stories and informational texts differed; younger children were asked this question during their interview sessions. Many of the younger children were unable to explain the differences. Alan, Andrea, Andy, and Ben said they didn't know. Carrie and Christine simply said the two were different. Alexandra and Christopher noted that each of their writings was on a different topic. However, children as young as first grade were able to refer to a fiction/nonfiction distinction. In this category were Betsy, Carl, Debra, Derek, Donnie, and Frieda. Some children elaborated on the fiction/nonfiction distinction, calling attention to other features of the texts, such as tone. In this category were first graders Brenda and Brendan, as well as the upper-grade students Donna, Eric, and Frank. Certain fourth and fifth graders went beyond the simple fiction/nonfiction distinction to indicate that stories were not necessarily made up but could be based on actual occurrences. As Elijah succinctly explained, "Writing about information, you can write facts about animals, places or peoples. And in a story you can write something that's nonfiction or fiction."

Children's thoughts on ease of story and informational writing

As explained in the methods section, during their interviews children were asked whether they found informational texts or stories easier to write. Six children, Alexandra, Alan, Carrie, Carl, Christopher, and Donnie, could not say which was easier. As Tables 8 and 9 indicate, these children frequently found themselves unable to explain their thinking. Eleven children, Ben, Christine, Debra, Derek, Donna, Elizabeth, Erin, Francis, Frank, Frieda, and Fred, thought that stories were easier to write. Most of them indicated that stories could simply be thought up, whereas information might need to be researched.

Six children, Andrea, Andy, Betsy, Brenda, Elijah, and Eric, thought that informational texts were easier to write. Their reasons for informational writing being easier ranged from thoughts that "stories have more pages" to Eric's comment that "you don't have to come up with a story."

Genre knowledge in texts produced and read by others

The pretend readings of wordless-story and informational texts, described in an earlier results section, were immediately followed by a middle level scaffolding task in which children were asked for definitions of story and information books. Table 10 presents this information in the columns Storybook Definition and Information Book Definition.

Storybook definitions

Our constant comparative analysis revealed five different categories of response. These ranged from a "don't know" category to a "words and pictures" category to the "story" category to the "made up" category to the "action/plot" category. As we have noted throughout the results, younger children generally supplied rather simplistic responses, from not knowing to simply saying that a story was a story. Eleven children, including first graders Betsy and Ben, spoke of the imaginary or "made up" nature of stories. Other children went beyond the fictional aspects to indicate that plot was an important facet of story. Of note is the definition offered by first grader Brendan: "A story tells about something that happens that is good or bad at the end and you never know what happens until you read it."

Information book definitions

For the children's information book definitions, our analysis revealed four categories. These ranged from the "don't know" to the "truth about" to the "information about" to the "explanation" category. Only two children, Alexandra and Carrie, fell into a "don't know" category. All other 22 students, as Table 10 indicates, were able to indicate that information books dealt with a topic. Five children, Alan, Ben, Donna, Donnie, and Frank, indicated that the information must be true (truth about). The majority of children (15) offered a definition that included the word *information* (information about). The sophisticated fourth-grade writers Eric and Erin supplied definitions that included genre elements and a function of informational books, to explain (explains).

Table 10 Children's performance across tasks

Children by grade	Story organization*	Information organization	Easier to write	How stories and information texts differ*	Storybook definition	Information book definition	Storybooks*		Information books*	
							Owl	*Cockatoos*	*Tunnels*	*Elephant*
Kindergarten										
1 Alexandra	Statement	Genre-Specific Statement	Not sure	Topic	Words/pictures	Don't know	+ Same	DK; same	+ Word/pictures	DK/pictures
2 Alan	Goal Directed 2	Recount	Not sure	Don't know	Words/pictures	Truth about	+ Not real	+ Pictures	– About	+ Pictures
3 Andrea	Descriptive Sequence	Attribute List	Info–shorter	Don't know	Don't know	Info about	– Not about	– Not about	+ About	+ About
4 Andy	Label	Label	Info–shorter	Don't know	Words/pictures	Info about	+ OUAT	+ Story	– Describes	– About
First										
5 Betsy	Goal Directed 1	Attribute List	Info–any topic	Fiction/nonfiction	Made up	Info about	+ Sounds	– Made up	– About	+ About
6 Ben	Descriptive Sequence	Attribute List	Story–made up	Don't know	Made up	Truth about	+ OUAT	+ Imaginary	+ About	+ Not imaginary
7 Brenda	Goal Directed 2	Attribute List	Info–shorter	Fiction/nonfiction +	Story	Info about	+ Not real	+ Not about	– About	+ Not imaginary
8 Brendan	Descriptive Sequence	Genre-Specific Statement	Info–any topic	Fiction/nonfiction +	Action/plot	Info about	+ Not about	+ Not about	+ About	+ About
Second										
9 Carrie	Goal Directed 1	Attribute List	Not sure	Different	Words/pictures	Don't know	+ Not about	– not about	+ About	+ About
10 Carl	Reactive Sequence	Unordered Paragraph	Not sure	Fiction/nonfiction	Story	Info about	+ No info	– Not about	+ About	+ About
11Christine	Goal Directed 1	Hierarchical Attribute List	Story–made up	Different	Story	Info about	+ Not real	+ Not real	– Process	+ Describes
12 Chris	Goal Directed 2	Couplet	Not sure	Topic	Story	Info about	+ No info	+ Not about	– About	+ About
Third										
13 Debra	Reactive Sequence	Ordered Paragraph	Info	Fiction/nonfiction	Made up	Info about	+ Talking animal	– Not real	+ Describes	– About
14 Derek	Reactive Sequence	Attribute List	Story–made up	Fiction/nonfiction	Made up	Info about	+ Talking animal	+ Not real	– Tell info	+ Describes
15 Donna	Descriptive Sequence	Unordered Paragraph	Story–made up	Fiction/nonfiction +	Made up	Truth about	+ OUAT	– Not real	– About	+ About
16 Donnie	Recount	Complex Couplet	Not sure	Fiction/nonfiction	Made up	Truth about	+ Talking animal	+ Not real	– True	+ About
Fourth										
17 Elizabeth	Reactive Sequence	Unordered Paragraph	Story–no research	Some stories true	Made up	Info about	+ Talking animal	+ No facts	+ Process	+ About
18 Elijah	Reactive Sequence	Unordered Paragraph	Info–shorter	Some stories true	Made up	Info about	+ Not real	+ Goal	+ About	+ About
19 Erin	Goal Directed 1	Unordered Paragraph	Story–no research	Some stories true	Action/plot	Explains	+ OUAT	– Problem	+ About	+ About
20 Eric	Goal Directed 1	Ordered Paragraph	Info–no story	Fiction/nonfiction +	Action/plot	Explains	+ Problem	+ Moral	+ About	+ About
Fifth										
21 Frances	Reactive Sequence	Ordered Paragraph	Story–no research	Some stories true	Made up	Info about	+ 1 woodpecker	– Character	+ About	+ About
22 Frank	Goal Directed 2	Argument	Story–made up	Fiction/nonfiction +	Made up	Truth about	+ Problem	+ 1 person	+ About	+ About
23 Frieda	Goal Directed 2	Complex Couplet	Story–made up	Fiction/nonfiction	Action/plot	Info about	+ Problem	+ Problem	+ About	+ About
24 Fred	Reactive Sequence	Unordered Paragraph	Story–made up	Some stories true	Made up	Info about	+ Not info	– A trick	+ Describes	+ Describes

* Under How stories and information texts differ: Fiction/nonfiction + = Answer beyond simple distinction
Under Storybooks and Information books: + = accurate prediction as to genre; – = inaccurate prediction as to genre; DK = Don't know; OUAT = Once upon a time

Judging a book by its cover: Criteria for determining genre before reading a book

In the middle level-scaffolded, book-sorting task that immediately followed the definitions task, children suggested a number of features that led them to believe that the book they were looking at was either a story or informational text (see Table 11). These features included title length, reality versus fantasy content, and cover illustrations.

Title length

Kindergartner Andrea, all four first graders, all four second graders, all four fourth graders, as well as all four fifth graders relied upon the title of the book to suggest book type. In general, the children's responses indicated that one-word titles were likely to be information books, while longer titles would probably signify storybooks. This occasionally led to some problems. As can be seen by the plusses in the *Owl* column of Table 10, most children who used title as a criteria correctly identified *The Owl and the Woodpecker* as a storybook; kindergartner Andrea, however, thought this would be an information book. The title of *Cockatoos* led a number of students, including fifth graders Frances and Frank, to incorrectly identify the text as an information book (note the minuses in the *Cockatoos* column in Table 10). For the information book *Elephants on the Beach*, first graders Brenda and Brendan, second grader Carl, fourth grader Erin, and fifth grader Frank indicated that the title sounded like it would supply information. However, fifth grader Fred thought that particular title might fit a story. As the *Elephant* column of Table 10 indicates, most children correctly identified *Elephants on the Beach* as an information book before hearing it read aloud.

Reality/fantasy

A smaller number of children used a real/nonreal distinction to guide their thoughts about genre. Third grader Debra particularly relied upon this criterion, mentioning it for three of the four books presented. Most commonly, this criterion resulted in incorrect identifications. First grader Betsy, third graders Debra and Donna, and fourth grader Erin all considered this in deciding that Quenton Blake's (1992) *Cockatoos* was likely an information book. Debra decided that *Elephants on the Beach* must be a storybook. Interestingly, five boys, first grader Brendan, third graders Derek and Donnie, fourth grader Elijah, and fifth grader Frank all decided that *Cockatoos* must be a story because cockatoos were not likely real.

Cover illustrations

The medium employed in the cover illustration guided quite a few children in their determinations of genre. Gail Gibbons's (1984) *Tunnels*, like her other self-illustrated works, features painted illustrations. Colleen Bare's (1990) *Elephants on the Beach*, on the other hand, contains numerous photographs. For the children of this study, the photograph versus painted illustration was a compelling distinction. Only six of the children—kindergartner Alexandra, first graders Brenda and Brendan, second grader Christine, third grader Debra, and fourth grader Donnie—did not use the photographs in deciding that *Elephants on the Beach* was an information book. This reliance upon the photographs-reality link caused children from kindergarten through third grade to incorrectly assume that Gibbons's (1984) *Tunnels* was a story text.

Criteria for determining genre after reading a book

After listening to the researcher read the books, the children were given a second opportunity to assess genre (see the second column of Table 11 for a detailed presentation of the children's responses). Table 10, in the columns labeled Storybooks and Information Books, presents only the children's first response to what had finally led them to their decision about the genres of the books.

What indicates that a storybook is a story?

A first look at the children's final determining factor reveals that 9 children used a negative—"not real," not about," "not information"—as their most salient criterion for deciding the genre of Brian Wildsmith's *The Owl and the Woodpecker*. This number jumps to 12 for the frequently misidentified *Cockatoos*. The reality/fantasy distinction (including "talking animals") proved important to most of the children.

Four children noted that the formulaic opening of the book, "Once upon a time" (OUAT), let them know the book was a story. It may have been this that first grader Betsy was indicating when she said it sounded like a story. Sensitivity to language was also evident in the responses of fifth graders Frances and Frank. Each indicated that a book that focused on one character, as opposed to describing a group, was likely to be a storybook. As Frances explained after listening to the book, "You can tell [it's a story] because it's talking about one woodpecker. And if it were a book of woodpeckers or owls, it would be talking about woodpeckers not just *a* woodpecker."

Other fourth and fifth graders used similarly sophisticated aspects of stories to explain their decisions. Elijah indicated that the character had a goal. Erin, Eric, Frank, and Frieda all noted that a storybook had a problem for a character; Fred spoke about a trick that had been played. Eric noted that there seemed to be a moral to the story in *Cockatoos*.

Table 11 Salient criteria in children's determinations of genre during the book-sorting task before and after reading

Books	Criteria children used for initial decisions before reading	Criteria that altered or confirmed children's decisions following the reading
Tunnels Information	One-word title = Information "Because the title is *Tunnels*" 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 Reality = Information "Tunnels are a real thing" 13 Colorful illustrations = Story "Looks like a story" 2, 4, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16 Words = Story "Stories have words" 1, 5	Purpose: Tells about "It tells about it like a tunnel is wide" 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 119, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 Reality "It's true like moles make holes" 16 Language "It's telling kind of info like 'Most tunnels are long and dug underground'" 14 Words and Pictures = Story "Words and pictures are in stories" 1
The Owl and the Woodpecker Story	No reason "It's a story" 6 Title = Story "Sounds like a story" 5, 7, 11, 17, 21 "Because the title didn't just say one word" 8, 9, 10, 12, 20 Title=Information "It will tell about an owl and a woodpecker" 3 Cover illustration = Story "Animals on cover look like friends" 12, 15 "It looks like the owl might be talking to the woodpecker" 4, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24 "Not real pictures" 2	Purpose: Not telling about "It's not telling about them [owl & woodpecker]" 3, 8, 9, 10, 12 Goal: Solve the problem "Its telling about the owl gets mad and he..." 19, 20, 22, 23, 24 Language "It has 'Once upon a time'!" 4, 5, 6, 15, 18, 19 "It's talking about one woodpecker. In a book of owls it would be talking about woodpeckers and owls not just *a* woodpecker and *a* owl. 21 Reality/fantasy "It's a make-believe story, animals can't talk" 2, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21
Cockatoos Story	No reason "It's a story" 4, 6 One-word title = Information "By the title it might be about birds and how they fly" 3, 9, 10, 11, 21, 23, 24 Reality = Information "I have one.... It is a real bird" 5, 13, 15, 19 Fantasy = Story "I don't think cockadoodles are real" (story) 8, 14, 16, 18, 22 Colorful illustrations = Story "It looks like it" 2, 7, 12, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23 Either "It could be both" 19, 21, 23	Purpose: Not telling about "It's not telling about cockatoos" 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 19 Language "I was wrong. It was a story cuz, see, most stories make up words...and it did really sound like a story" 4, 5, 8, 22 Goal: Solve the problem "He's trying to find his cockatoos" 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24 Reality fantasy "It's a made-up story...birds wouldn't really want to play a game with him" 6, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21 Illustrations "Pictures are like a storybook" 2
Elephants on the Beach Information	Title = Information "Information book because it goes 'Elephants on the Beach'" 7, 8, 10, 19, 22 Title = Story "Sounds like a story" 24 Photographs = Information "It's information because of the real photographs" 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 Reality/fantasy "It's a story, elephants don't go on the beach" 11, 13	Purpose: Tells about "It tells about elephants" 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 19 "It's telling where they live and what they do" 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24 Language "Because a person wrote it, and they're saying 'They' not, um, imaginary things" 6 Photographs "It has real pictures" 2

Numbers correspond to those used in all previous tables. 1–4 = Kindergartners, 5–8 = first graders, 9–12 = second graders, 13–16 = third graders, 17–20 = fourth graders, 21–24 = fifth graders

What indicates that an information book is an information book?

What is impressive in the children's final determining factor in deciding that the book was an information book is the number who used the word *about.* From kindergarten through fifth grade, children indicated that the book they had just listened to told *about* something. Many of those who did not use the word *about* indicated that the book supplied descriptions of the typology or supplied information about a process whereby the reader could make tunnels just like the people in the book. Unlike the storybook definitions, only two children supplied a negative cast to the final factor. First graders Ben and Brenda both indicated that *Elephants on the Beach* was not imaginary. Fourth grader Donnie echoed this reality/fantasy distinction; he said the book was true.

What children could explain versus their actual performance

Table 10 enables us to look across the tasks that the children completed for the study. In the following sections, we will examine the children by grade level.

Kindergartners

Kindergartners were clearly less sophisticated than the older children in their abilities to produce and to explain. Alexandra produced Statements for both of her compositions, was unable to say which had been easier to write, and repeatedly responded "I don't know" to the various questions. Alan, too, had great difficulty answering questions. He had produced a Goal-Directed 1 story, produced a Recount instead of an informational text, and while unsure how his compositions differed, was able to indicate that information books were true. He used this true/not real distinction in being sure that *The Owl and the Woodpecker* was a story, and he understood that *Tunnels* was an information book because it told about tunnels. Andrea operated with an understanding that writing was "about." Both her compositions consisted of descriptive items; for her, storybooks were not about a topic while information books were. Andy's compositions were the least sophisticated; each was a Label (single word). However, Andy's responses to questions indicated that he understood that language marked a particular genre. Hearing "Once upon a time" as the researcher began *The Owl and the Woodpecker,* Andy shouted, "It's this!" and indicated the book was a story. He also understood that information books were about a topic; this he indicated in both his definition and his response to *Elephants on the Beach.*

First graders

First graders were far more sophisticated than their kindergarten colleagues. Betsy produced a Goal Directed 1 story, knew that storybooks were "made up" and that they "sounded" a certain way. She created an Attribute-List-level informational text, knew that information books told about something, and believed that they were easier to write because they could be written on anything. (Certainly, an informational text that was basically a list had to have been easier to produce than her goal-directed story.) Ben's answers indicated that he was quite clear on the imaginary/true distinctions between story and informational texts, although he was unable to tell how his Descriptive-Sequence story (lacking temporal connections) and Attribute-List texts differed. Ben also knew that stories had particular language associated with them, and used the "Once upon a time" opening to determine that *The Owl and the Woodpecker* was a storybook. Although Brenda wrote a Goal-Directed-2-level story, her ability to articulate her understandings was similar to Ben's.

Brendan was unique amongst the first graders. His written texts display relatively low-level organizational structures; he was the only first grader who produced a Genre-Specific Statement for an informational text. However, he understood that there was a fiction/nonfiction distinction to the two genres. His extremely sophisticated story definition appeared earlier in this article, and his awareness that informational texts were about something was reflected in all his book-identification tasks.

Second graders

The second graders present an interesting picture. The compositions they produced were sophisticated. Three of the four students wrote goal-directed stories, while the fourth, Carl, produced an informational composition with an Unordered Paragraph structure (topic introduced; subtopics in paragraphs). However, their ability to discuss what they had done was less sophisticated than the first graders. Where first graders were able to state definitively which text had been easier to produce, only one second grader, Christine, could suggest that for her a story was easier to write because it could be made up. Their comments on how their texts differed were also unsophisticated; only Carl was able to discuss a fiction/nonfiction distinction. None of them could define a storybook with anything beyond the words that it told a story. Three of them were, however, able to articulate that information books were about something. Though Christine had only been able to say the two texts were different, she did understand that real/imaginary difference. Her responses to the information books in the book-sorting task indicated that she understood the genre elements common to information books.

This attention to genre elements at second grade is visible in Tables 4 and 6 as well. While Carrie created an Attribute List on soccer for her informational text, it contained topic presentation, descriptions, and characteristic events. As noted earlier, all second graders included settings, initiating events, attempts, and consequences in their story compositions.

Third graders

No third grader produced a goal-directed story; in fact, Donnie wrote a Recount. None of them included any consequences and only two supplied initiating events. All focused their definitions of stories on the imaginary quality; all indicated that *Cockatoos* had to be a story because it was not real. Three of them noted that *The Owl and the Woodpecker* was a story because there were no real talking animals; Donna focused upon its formulaic "once upon a time" opening.

However, the informational texts written by the third graders were all more sophisticated than those produced by the second graders. Three children included descriptions of attributes, all included characteristic events, and two, Donna and Donnie, even included category comparison as they wrote about reptiles and amphibians.

Fourth graders

Fourth graders in general wrote texts and understood genre in a far more sophisticated way than the third graders. Both girls produced very sophisticated stories, each including all possible genre elements, even though Elizabeth's text was determined to be only at the Reactive-Sequence level of organization (lacking goal-directed action). Both also produced very successful informational compositions. Writing on cats, Elizabeth's composition contained all obligatory genre elements except characteristic events, while Erin's composition on cars had them all.

Both fourth-grade boys thought informational texts were easier to write than stories, although their reasoning was rather different. Elijah produced Unordered Paragraphs on Michael Piazza (topic introduced; subtopics in paragraphs); his story, however, which contained only the genre elements of initiating event and attempts was categorized at the Reactive Sequence level (lacking goal-directed action). Elijah explained that information was easier to write because stories tended to have more pages. Eric, on the other hand, was a rather sophisticated writer. His Ordered Paragraphs on the topic of preserving (rearrangement results in meaning change) seemed equivalent in complexity to his Goal Directed 1 story (lacking obstacles for character). In terms of included genre elements, Eric's story does appear to have been more difficult for him to produce; no internal aspects are included for his characters.

The fourth graders' responses to questions also revealed sophisticated understandings. Three of the four students even indicated that stories could be true as well as imaginary. Erin and Eric, writers of the two Goal Directed level texts, explained that stories had action and plot, and that information books served to explain things to people. Eric mentioned the problem and the moral as his deciding factors in determining genre, while Erin also mentioned the problem as a determining factor.

Fifth graders

Like the fourth graders, two fifth graders produced Reactive Sequence organizations for their stories; Frank and Frieda, on the other hand, both wrote Goal Directed 2 stories. All four children indicated that for them stories were easier to compose. Though Frieda's informational text reflected a Complex Couplet organization (several statements, each with related description), her understanding of story structure was quite sophisticated. Her storybook definition addressed action and plot, and the problems in the two storybooks of the book-sorting task guided her decisions. While Frances's story composition was less sophisticated in organization than her informational text, she was quite sophisticated in her answers to questions. She, too, indicated that not all stories were imaginary, and she noted a very sophisticated linguistic characteristic of stories that we presented earlier; stories are about a specific individual and groups rather than about general groups.

Frank's strength in writing has been noted earlier. His Goal Directed 2 story contained every genre element with the exception of an internal reaction for his character. In his informational composition on Eskimos, Frank was the only child to produce a text with an afterward (if his text is seen as an informational report). Just like Frances, Frank noted the general/specific distinction between stories as he explained his final decision about the genre of *Cockatoos*. Fred composed less sophisticated texts than Frances and Frank; his story's organization was categorized at the relatively lower level of Reactive Sequence (lacking goal-directed action). Fred understood that not all stories were imaginary. While he was not able to use terminology in as sophisticated a fashion as the other fifth graders, Fred focused upon genre elements as deciding factors in his categorization of three of the books in the book-sorting task.

Discussion

Before turning to a discussion of our findings, we would like to acknowledge the limitations of this study.

First and foremost, we are bound in our findings by our choices—choices of theories to follow, types of tasks we administered and the order in which we administered them, the numbers and backgrounds of the students we studied, and the types of analyses we chose to conduct.

We might, for example, have relied upon the work of Propp (1968) for our examination of story structures rather than looking to Stein (Stein & Albro, 1997; Stein & Glenn, 1979; Stein & Policastro, 1984) for our model. Or we might instead have adopted a definition of story that required only temporally related events instead of a goal orientation, a point to which we return shortly. We might have chosen to do a longitudinal ethnographic study that supplied information on the instruction children received and its influence on their writing. We might have chosen to observe children as they wrote two texts from each of the school genres—one from our prompt and another that they developed over time with instructional support.

We chose to begin this basic research by looking at upper-middle-class, mainstream students. We did so because this population, in general, has had the greatest opportunity for frequent exposure to many types of written texts. We might, however, have created a larger, cross-cultural study. We might have decided to look at more children in fewer grades.

Our findings on the children's pretend readings were surely affected by the nature of the books we selected to use. While *Baby Animals*, for example, worked well in eliciting pretend readings from younger children, its topic and format may not have been of sufficient interest to children above second grade. This may have led them to produce less sophisticated pretend readings than they might have with a book on a more intriguing topic for older children. We might have asked children to create their own categories during the book-sorting task, rather than limiting them (and ourselves) to looking merely at story and informational texts. Such a choice would, no doubt, have yielded a very different slice of the generic pie.

Then, too, the order of presentation we chose might have enabled certain children to learn more about genre and to expand their understandings of genre through the series of tasks. As Smagorinsky (1995) has suggested, this may simply be a part of the relationship between researcher, participants, context, and data collection means. Or, we might have inserted additional probes. For instance, we might have sought to discover whether children found similarities between the books we used and books with which they were already familiar, then questioned their reasoning. Given, then, these cautions, we will proceed to examine what our findings may indicate about tasks, scaffolding, children's genre knowledge development, and the broader field of genres.

Tasks

Our various tasks generated different pieces of information that, combined, created a fuller picture of a child's developing genre knowledge. Consider, for example, first grader Brendan. His story composition contained a Descriptive Sequence organization (lacking temporal connections) that featured a setting. Brendan's imagined moments of being a pilot preparing to fly suggested an emphasis on make-believe. However, his pretend reading of *Frog, Where Are You?* revealed that Brendan could produce a Goal Directed 2 story that contained setting, initiating event, attempts, and consequences. A similar variation in products is shown between Brendan's informational composition and his pretend reading of *Baby Animals*. Restricted to a Genre-Specific Statement with topic presentation in his "I can change oil" composition, Brendan moved to a Hierarchical Attribute List organization that included not only topic presentation but also descriptions of attributes and characteristic events in his pretend reading of *Baby Animals*. Asked to discuss the differences between writing the two text types, Brendan explained, "Stories aren't saying like, 'This is what this is.' A story is about, is something someone is doing, and it's not telling about something." His answer suggests that the function of informational texts is to tell about something. It also accurately reflects his understanding of story composition. In a story, someone will be doing something, just as he, Brendan, was pretending to be a pilot. Following the pretend-reading task, Brendan had given more thought to stories and informational texts. Asked to define an information book, Brendan stuck close to his previous stance: An information book is "a book that tells how animals or tells about computers or tells how stuff is made. It tells about stuff. That's what information is." Asked to define a storybook, Brendan provided an unexpected definition, to which we alluded earlier.

> A storybook is a story. And a story is something that tells about something that does something and something happens that is good at the end or is bad at the end. And you never know what happens at the end, only if you read it before and you read it again.

This definition contains three previously missing aspects of stories: They have events, they have resolutions, and they contain suspense.

None of these early tasks, however, lets us know that Brendan believes titles to be critical in considering genre, yet all of his prereading evaluations in the book-sorting task relied upon this single focus. He employed a one-word-means-information theory in deciding that *Tunnels* was an information book and that *The Owl and the Woodpecker* would be a story, but abandoned this to indicate that *Elephants on the Beach* was likely an infor-

mation book. The book-sorting task also reinforced the notion that Brendan saw make-believe as a key element in stories. If *cockatoos* is a made-up word, reasoned Brendan, the book that features them will likely be a story. Brendan's concern with function, based upon his informational text conceptions, continued in his postreading comments in the book-sorting task. Books with content that "told about" were information books; those that didn't do this seemed almost by default to be stories. In the final task, when asked which genre is easier to write, Brendan's response stressed his focus on function. Writing an informational text is easier because it is easy to find something to write *about*.

What these various tasks reveal is a rather complete picture of Brendan's developing genre knowledge. The pretend-reading task alone would have given indications that Brendan, with a Goal Directed 2 level of organization for his story text, was more sophisticated in his understandings of stories than of informational texts. The multiple tasks indicate that Brendan is working hard at understanding stories; however, his focus shifts from task to task. He is sure that they involve people doing things. He sometimes thinks that these things can contribute to suspense. He is also fairly confident that stories involve things that are made up. Brendan's understanding of informational texts is bound to their function. These texts serve to tell *about* something; their content can be anything about which the writer knows. The multiple tasks provide insight to more and less secure concepts about genre. And, in a sense, these multiple tasks help prevent a slide down the slippery slope of considering component functions as separate rather than linked (Smagorinsky, 1995).

Scaffolding

In considering the tasks for the children in this study, we thought long and hard about how various scaffolds would support children, diminishing their cognitive load. In the following sections, we present our current thinking on when scaffolding indeed helps children, on how children may call upon it to support themselves, and when it impedes instead of assists.

When scaffolding helps

In the results section, it became clear that children could produce organizationally more sophisticated story texts during the middle-level scaffolding task of pretend reading than they could during the minimal-level scaffolding task of writing from prompts. Kindergartner Andy, for example, moved from producing a text that consisted only of a Label (single word) to narrating a Goal Directed 2 story that even included an internal reaction. Only in the case of first grader Brenda was the story she composed more organizationally sophisticated than her pretend reading of *Frog, Where Are You?*

Though Vygotsky (1978) described his zone of proximal development as determined by human assistance, others (e.g., Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999; Palincsar, 1998; Smagorinsky, 1995) have made the point that activities, even research tasks, can scaffold students' achievement. In this study, two different levels of task scaffolding suggest different points on a developmental continuum. The first, the lowest scaffolding writing prompt, reveals what children can do with virtually no assistance. The second, the middle-level scaffolding pretend reading, reveals what children can do when the cognitive subtasks of creation and memory have been eliminated from compositional effort.

Brendan's more developed definition of a story text represents a third point on this developmental continuum. By the time he completed this task, Brendan had written compositions, had been probed for answers about the differences between them, and had completed pretend readings of each genre. An articulate and thoughtful student, Brendan learned more about the genres through these tasks. The question of whether another story-writing task administered after the definitions would have produced a more sophisticated story organization must await future research. However, all three of these points suggest places at which instruction would have proved useful in supporting his genre-knowledge development.

Calling upon other forms of scaffolding

Children in this study also found support for their written compositions in texts they already knew. A Sonic the Hedgehog cartoon [from the Sonic the Hedgehog Video game series, © Service Games (SEGA)] was incorporated into kindergartner Alan's story, which seemed to be a retelling of a cartoon episode. He explained that his mother read Sonic books and he said, "I watch it every day." This reliance upon a character that continually engaged in action-laden episodes may have contributed to Alan's text being more sophisticated than his other kindergarten peers'. Certainly, this was the case in Kamberelis and Bovino's (1999) study. When children in that study were asked to write stories based on known "cultural artifacts" (p. 162), their texts were more sophisticated than those they produced in a nonscaffolded condition in which they were instructed to write an original story.

As noted earlier, this was also the case in the Stein and Albro study (1997). Fifty-two percent of kindergartners who were supported by a story stem (e.g., "Once there was a big gray fox who lived in a cave near a forest," p. 19) were able to write goal-directed stories.

Bamberg (1997), commenting on Stein and Albro's work, noted, "The use of story stems (with familiar characters), given to children in the study that is reported in detail in their chapter, strikes as a methodologically ideal exemplar to bring out children's optimal narrative abilities" (p. 2). In a later footnote, Bamberg continued his thought: "The use of story stems resembles in many ways Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, inasmuch as it represents a condition that assists children in coming to grips with certain aspects of storytelling abilities, such as creating connections between episodes" (p. 2). This indeed seems to have been the case for Alan, whose Goal Directed 2 story contained two attempts, and therefore two episodes, in which Robotnik sought to "get" Sonic and Tails. Although the connection between episodes that Alan made in his text might not be seen as masterful ("so then Tails he flew up into the air with both of his tails"), it nonetheless is present.

Known texts can also be supports for creating new ones by slightly altering the content, changing characters or setting, but building on the main foundation of the known text, a point made for us by fourth grader Erin, as she explained how to write a story: "And so I have either written a story about this, something similar to this before, or I had read it, but I changed it." Teachers often encourage appropriations of this kind with assignments that take a familiar story such as the "The Three Little Pigs" and change the characters, or put some twist on a well-known story. Wray and Lewis's (e.g., Lewis, Wray, & Rospigliosi, 1994; Wray & Lewis, 1995) frames for writing informational texts are another way of scaffolding from known or unknown texts by providing the opening sentences of each paragraph as cues for the writer.

Drawing from Barthes (1979), deBeaugrand (1980), and Kristeva (1980), Cairney (1996) defined intertextuality as

> The process of interpreting and constructing one text by means of a previously composed text. Texts are composed using many different sign systems for making meaning including reading, writing, viewing, listening, drawing, dramatization, and firsthand experiences. Every text can be linked to every other text we have ever constructed. (p. 170)

These links are found in children's written compositions and discussions about their writing processes (e.g., Cairney, 1992), and discussions about reading (Cairney, 1990). This creation of meaning by building on known and previously created and experienced "texts" has many implications for understanding the scaffolding that cultural artifacts (books, cartoons, movies, materials, and tasks) can provide. Cairney (1992) described grade 1 children's fascination with the books of a particular author and how the students began to emulate those stories in their own written compositions. Those "look-alikes" were often at first retellings of the stories, but with time the links became less concrete, leading Cairney to determine, "children's writing is influenced in a complex way by texts that have been read to them. It appears that intertextual ties are often made consciously. But no doubt they occur even more frequently at a subconscious level" (p. 506).

In the scaffolding of "look-alikes" (Cairney, 1992, p. 505) or retellings, the known text acts as a model, "scripts" of the most supportive kind, where children simply retell a known story or information book (or encyclopedia). Here, the known text, like other scripts (e.g., ordering from a fast food counter; Schank & Abelson, 1977) directs the use of language in very specific ways. This type of intertextual scaffolding based on known scripts is found in Kamberelis and Bovino's (1999) task "write an information book you know," which required children to draw upon a known text (information book) and recreate it on paper.

Intertextuality also seems to provide support for the use of structure that can be appropriated, but in which content or wording may be changed in certain ways. For example, fourth grader Debra's knowledge of the typical ways of using story structure was demonstrated when she noted that she did not begin her story with "Once upon a time." She explained, "that's a little too ordinary." Fifth grader Frank also demonstrated this awareness when he indicated he followed the pattern of the fantasies he had read. "It's like in the Hobbit book," he said. "I thought it should be a demon because that's what usually happens in fantasy stories."

Kamberelis and Bovino (1999), noting the increased success that intertextual scaffolding afforded most of the kindergartners, first graders, and second graders in their study, concluded that these tasks and others, such as copying new genres when they are introduced, may provide the scaffolding necessary for children's successful appropriation of a genre. This stance on instruction certainly matches that of systemic functional linguists, a point to which we return later.

When scaffolding conceals

Interestingly, a scaffolded task does not guarantee higher levels of performance. As our results suggested, the influence of increased scaffolding (from lowest self-generated informational text to middle-level pretend-reading) was somewhat less consistent in supporting higher levels of macro-organization than the story pretend-reading task was. Three kindergartners produced less sophisticated texts during the pretend reading of *Baby Animals*, as did one second grader, two third graders, one fourth grader, and one fifth grader.

The effect of the *Baby Animals* pretend reading for older children was negative in a number of ways. Whereas all third, fourth, and fifth graders had employed some type of topic presentation in their own compositions, no one did so in their pretend readings. Third, fourth, and fifth graders produced sophisticated organizations in their own writing; only two students, both third graders, produced an organization below the paragraph level. With the pretend readings, three of the third graders and fifth grader Frances had texts with structures below paragraph organization. Had the pretend-reading task alone been the source of our information about these children's genre knowledge, we would have grossly underestimated certain children's understandings.

Why, then, didn't *Baby Animals* support children in the same way as did *Frog, Where Are You?* We suspect there are a number of different reasons. For Frances, we believe that topic mattered a great deal. Her composition on swimming conveyed her immense interest in and knowledge about her topic. As Frances explained to us, she did write reports for school but did not like to do so; they were not interesting. However, writing about swimming had been fun because she had been able to think about her favorite sport and write about what she knew. *Baby Animals*, yet one more topic over which she had no choice, seems to have bored her. All the voice so beautifully present in her swimming text is absolutely missing in her pretend reading.

Then, too, many of our older children were already producing informational texts at higher levels of sophistication than they had in their story compositions. Perhaps the simple concepts and organization of *Baby Animals* got in their way. In a task that was in many ways beneath them, a number of those capable of more underperformed.

Performance in genre: Conscious access and reasoning

In 1992, Karmiloff-Smith published *Beyond Modularity: A Developmental Perspective on Cognitive Science*. In this work, Karmiloff-Smith, interested in how children's cognition changes over time, proposed her Representational Redescription model, which suggested that a great deal of children's development entailed increasingly conscious access to implicitly held forms that might have been rudimentary in nature. She made the point that the ability to perform might be rather different from the ability to know. In her model, knowledge is redescribed, recoded into successively more explicit formats. In her continuum, Karmiloff-Smith postulated that there would be a period of time during which a child moved from an implicit understanding to an explicit understanding that might lead the child to perform with less success than those still at implicit levels. This period, which Karmiloff-Smith labeled E-1 (Explicit 1), represented a first stage of theory building. While the data she had collected did not support a Level E-2, she hypothesized that children at this level would have representations of the phenomenon available to conscious access, but would not be able to render a verbal report that described them. Level E-3 would have representations of a concept that were available to conscious access and verbal report.

We see that our data contribute to Karmiloff-Smith's notions. Our data show that first graders in our study wrote more sophisticated texts than the kindergartners did. They also offered relatively sophisticated answers to the questions they were asked. However, as our results indicate, the second graders wrote still more sophisticated compositions, but their explanations were far less explicit than those of the first graders. To us it seems that our second-grade participants were at Karmiloff-Smith's Level E-2. For example, we noted that second grader Christopher produced a Goal Directed 2 organization for his story composition. However, he seemed to have little direct access to his process of creating this text. "I thought of it," Christopher replied when asked to describe his compositional acts. How strongly this contrasts with Frieda, clearly at Karmiloff-Smith's Level E-3, who also produced a Goal Directed 2 story. Explaining her compositional efforts, Frieda comfortably replied, "You catch the reader's attention in the beginning and then just put little details of what happened in the story." It is clear in this example that children who produce texts of similar organizational sophistication do not necessarily have the same level of genre knowledge development.

A question we must answer is why first graders, at a lower level of actual performance than their second-grade peers, were more comfortable answering questions, that is, bringing their implicit knowledge to an explicit form. The answer, we think, lies in the complexity of genre knowledge. For instance, more than most other school-related tasks, writing requires the manipulation of numerous components simultaneously. Creating a comprehensive picture of what is involved in story writing remains difficult even for adults. And so it is that somewhere between Christopher and Frieda falls Debra, who was quoted earlier for her description of writing the beginning of her story text. She had much to say about story beginnings but appeared to have little understanding of the key component of stories. For stories of the Stein and Glenn (1979) variety to succeed, characters must have goals and readers must be brought to care whether or not the character achieves those goals.

Nested within this complexity of the writing task may lie the change in children's reasoning abilities, a point to which we have devoted considerable attention in

our recent thinking (Donovan & Smolkin, 2002; Smolkin & Donovan, 2001). Particularly during the period known as the five-to-seven shift, children are moving from somewhat unidimensional reasoning to more multidimensional thinking (Siegler, 1996; White, 1996). As van den Broek (1997) noted, young children labor over story texts; they struggle to recall the goals of characters, attending to characters' actions instead. This multidimensional struggle is particularly apparent in the self-composed stories of our kindergarten participants but is visible in the compositions of older children as well.

Genre, genres: Our shifting writing landscape

When we collected data for this study and as we moved through our data analysis, our thinking was influenced by the work of others (Duke & Kays, 1998; Kamberelis, 1999; Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999; Pappas, 1986, 1991b, 1993). These individuals, heavily influenced by Systemic Functional Linguistics, cast their studies by looking chiefly at two important school genres—the story and the informational text—and text organization and language features as defined by Australian genre theorists. Our multiple tasks in this study revealed an aspect of genre knowledge beyond the structures and features that we sought to explore—an author's aim. The presence of this aspect of writing in children's explanations, though not completely new to our understanding (Donovan & Smolkin, 2001, 2002), has forced us to reexamine the thinking behind the genre instruction of Systemic Functional Linguists.

In his early work, Martin (1984) indicated that there were two semiotic levels responsible for the meanings of texts—genre and register. Genre attended to the distinctive stages of various social processes that represented the forms through which purposes could be achieved. Register, the second semiotic level, dealt with three other aspects of meaning—the subject, the audience/speaker relations, and whether the produced text was oral or written. Though register was said to be equally as important as genre in successful language use, those systemic functional linguists who worked in school settings tended to focus in the main on genre. Rothery (1989a) pointed to the reasoning behind this direction.

> I would suggest that in educational contexts where the emphasis is on students' learning to use language appropriately or effectively for different purposes, that genre, the stages passed through to achieve goals within a given culture, provides a more readily accessible starting point for learning about language. (p. 228)

She further supported this decision by noting that schools were already aware of varieties of texts, and so, again, it seemed reasonable to focus upon genre.

Looking to other important discourse analysts (e.g., Kinneavy, Cope, & Campbell, 1976), we are reminded of a related factor, also with less import in the systemic functional linguistics model, that authors may have particular aims in mind. Authors may decide to write, for example, poetically in their nonnarrative works; their aim would be to produce a more literary piece (Kinneavy et al., 1976). Or they may do what Frank did in his information piece on Eskimos. He, in his readings on Eskimos, had been impressed by Eskimo ingenuity as reflected in their use of environment. He wanted his writing to inform his audience (the purpose for the writing) about the ingenious aspects of Eskimo culture, and he sought to have them see Eskimos as he did (his aim). We have noted this same impact of aim in our discussion of science trade books (Donovan & Smolkin, 2001, 2002). In the category we described as "dual purpose" texts, authors intend to present facts but choose to do so in a fashion humorous and entertaining for children. The author's aim was to entertain children; the purpose was to deliver information on a topic; the resulting genre carried language features and text organization from both stories and report genres. As with Frank's writing, author aim, an expression of individuality, altered the socially expected product.

Author aim reintroduces individuality to the writing landscape, a point with which certain Systemic Functional linguists were not particularly comfortable. Christie (1989) faulted a commonly held view that an important function of schooling was the development of individuals. The appropriate place to focus, she explained, had been suggested by Halliday. Individual creativity had been overemphasized; the place to focus on instruction was the social nature of the human being, shaped by interactions with others.

Unlike others who are made uncomfortable with directly instructing children in the stages of a genre (e.g., Freedman, 1993a), we are not distressed by the idea of instructing children in form. We are, however, concerned that individuals, authors and their aims, receive so little focus in considerations of structure-based instruction. And we have come to this concern by attending to what the children described as they answered questions about writing their stories and their informational texts, one of our low-level scaffolded tasks. Audience, not a much visited component of writing in the Systemic Functional linguists' papers, was a key consideration for several of our young participants. Debra indicated that a "once upon a time" beginning would be "too ordinary"; Frieda insisted that writers must "catch the reader's attention in the beginning." Even beginning first grader Betsy, in response to the question "Why did you start your informational piece like this?" hinted at audience awareness. "I just

wanted them (the reading audience) to know that I know about parrots because I have four birds."

Our present thinking is that the function of text, and therefore the genre (text type), may be superseded by the author's aim (Kinneavy et al., 1976), intention (Chapman, 1995), or motive (Freedman, 1993b). We find our current view of genre much in line with the classification scheme Chapman (1995) created to account for the texts produced by her first-grade subjects. Texts, regardless of their function, fall within two basic types—narrative (a recounting of events) and nonnarrative (attending to a topic). Key to this major distinction is the element, or language feature, of temporality. In this scheme, narrative (European-based story structure) and recount would not appear as separate as they do in the Systemic Functional linguists' model. Both would fall within the larger narrative category, the distinction being that well-formed, European-based literary stories contain complications that must be overcome. With temporality as the determining language feature, Donnie's Recount of how he acquired the three lizards he kept as pets falls squarely in the narrative mode, just like stories offered by Heath's (1983) Trackton and Roadville communities. Also under narrative would fall texts that are informational in content, but time-oriented—biographies, historical recounts, and life-cycle science books. Even narrative poetry, such as *The Odyssey* or *Beowulf*, would reasonably be placed here. Under nonnarrative would fall those works in which temporality does not figure prominently. Here would be located reports, exposition, argument, and even nonnarrative poetry.

Such a typology has better enabled us to see that author aim could manifest itself on either branch of what we have come to think of as a genre tree: Not only could authors persuade through the standard persuasive essay (argument) but also through the stories they selected to tell. Although it is far more difficult to conduct studies that move beyond text examination, especially with larger sample sizes, we do feel that the individuals who compose texts have much to offer those of us who analyze their products.

Implications for future research

Having been compelled by the students in our study to see their aims in their writing, we are now interested in research that more fully addresses all four aspects of genre identified by Freedman (1993b)—situation, motive, substance, form. Given our shifting thoughts on genre and writing, we are curious to know more about genres in which audience plays a greater role, particularly those pieces that are designated as persuasive texts. We are curious how elementary children would respond to a prompt that asked them to persuade someone of something. How would they respond to questions that explored the way they had used situation, motivation, substance, and form? We also remain quite interested in knowing about the development of school genres in children whose cultural backgrounds do not mirror school. Having looked at the products and thinking of mainstream students in the writing of narrative and nonnarrative texts, we would now like to replicate this study with children from other populations. As we mentioned earlier, we are also interested in longitudinal ethnographic studies like Chapman's (1995) or Wollman-Bonilla's (2001) research, studies that supply information on the instruction children receive and its evidence in their writing. We have also become quite interested in situations in which more highly scaffolded tasks conceal children's abilities, and we are curious to know more about how various approaches to classroom writing instruction, including those that focus on genre, differentially affect highly able and less able elementary writers.

With our increased interest in authors and their perspectives, we choose to close this article with Frank's comments on the difference between story and informational writing.

> If you are reading this, you want to know about information writing and story writing. Well, I say you should know what story writing is first. Well, story writing is mainly a long, short, or medium story about things that are make believe or about an adventure but mainly to let your imagination run wild. Now you should learn about information writing. Well, informational writing is more like more serious and more about facts like Eskimos, soccer, Europe as long as that thing you write about exists and you know about it or you are going to read about it, then write. I hope all of this information on writing makes it a lot easier.

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