

Concepts About Writing: Native Children in a Cross-cultural Setting

Angela Ward

University of Saskatchewan

Sandra E. Shook

University of Victoria

Leslie V. Marrion

Victoria, British Columbia

Native and non-Native children in primary classrooms in Lytton, British Columbia, were interviewed about their attitudes toward writing. The series of structured interviews elicited information from grade 1 and 2 students on their perceptions concerning the general purposes of writing, personal writing preferences, and their self-concepts as writers. Most children had positive self-images of themselves as writers, and enjoyed writing at home and at school. There were differences between Native and non-Native children in their awareness of the purposes of writing. Native children saw their extended families as more important audiences for their writing than did non-Native children. The findings indicate that families of the Native children in this community were supportive of their children's writing activities.

This article compares the attitudes toward writing of Native and non-Native primary children in a cross-cultural classroom in Lytton, British Columbia. The study was undertaken to broaden understanding of how young children, particularly Native children, come to see themselves as writers. The research literature documents a history of academic underachievement for First Nations peoples in North America. In Canada the National Indian Brotherhood (1988) reports that "only 20% of First Nations students complete grade twelve as opposed to a national average of 70%" (p. 80). Native students in Canada drop out from school at a rate three times that of their non-Native peers. This general lack of school success led us to expect that Native students might demonstrate negative attitudes toward school writing programs. The results of our study of 44 primary students did not support this view. We were able to describe how Native and non-Native children felt as they "joined the literacy club" (Smith, 1988). Few children came to school with extensive exposure to books, but the emphasis on independent reading and writing at school, and the positive involvement of extended families as an audience for the children's work helped the children develop positive attitudes toward writing.

A qualitative, semistructured open-ended interview survey instrument containing general probes (Shook, Marrion, & Ollila, 1989) was developed to aid the children in this study to express their views of the writing process in general and as applied to themselves in particular. Why did they think writing existed? Could they use writing for their own communication? When? What observations could they make about the act of writing, their own writing, and the writing of others?

So that we could describe their attitudes toward writing as fully as possible, all children in the study were interviewed individually and given time to explore their feelings concerning writing with an interviewer they knew and trusted, the Native teaching assistant.

Attitudes toward writing are not developed in a vacuum, but evolve as a result of literacy experiences in the community, home, and school. The children we studied lived and wrote in a small, cross-cultural community. The cultural, community, and school contexts of their writing are described below.

Cultural Context

Children's early experience in both oral and literate styles will vary according to the language functions used in their community. In turn, the family's view of literacy may well be affected by the world view of their subculture (Brice-Heath, 1983). Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (1981) argue that for all children the move from home to school involves a shift from oral to written culture but that "for some children, however, this shift of understanding is sometimes facilitated by early language experience; the child is able early in life to gain processing experience of the written word" (p. 107). Children who have had limited exposure to book reading and decontextualized uses of language are more likely to have problems in generating literary narrative and in talking about books and stories (Wells, 1986). Native children are certainly surrounded with the type of "environmental print" described by Goodman (1985), but have limited exposure to book reading (Ward, 1990) and "ways of taking from books" (Brice-Heath, 1982) at home.

Joining the Writers' Club

Because all children in North America bring some experience of the written word to school with them, one would expect that learning to write in school would be comfortable. However, even for mainstream children, the instructional constraints of school can be discouraging and inhibiting, particularly if teachers focus on the mechanical rather than on the meaning making aspects of writing (Dyson, 1984). School writing activities that do not allow children to use written language naturally may lead to negative attitudes toward writing in school. Shook, Marrion, and Ollila (1989), interviewing primary students in Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, about their attitudes toward writing, found that children preferred the writing activities pursued at home. The researchers speculated that the functional nature of home literacy, along with parents' unconditional acceptance of their children's efforts, made homes more desirable than schools as environments for literacy development. Cultural differences in childrearing practices may affect exposure to books (for instance, in the number of times parents read to their children). There is little documentation of the amount of writing taking place in the homes of Native children, but the frequency of face-to-face contact and the consequent reliance on oral communication in Lytton, BC suggests that children may not see writing used as frequently in their homes as did the children of Salt Spring Island. The current study was undertaken to determine whether different cultural backgrounds (Native and the dominant culture) might affect primary schoolchildren's concepts about writing.

Smith (1988) uses the metaphor of "club membership" to describe the way children learn language and literacy. He describes the benefits of membership as collaboration with adults, where children are admitted as junior members who are

not expected to be experts, and where there are many opportunities to try a range of reading and writing activities. In homes where literacy activities are infrequent, however, there are fewer chances of becoming an early writer. The expectation we held was that Native students, using different interactional and cognitive styles from their mainstream peers, and with different early literacy experiences, would have different feelings about writing than non-Native students. We expected that the apparent fewer opportunities for schooling and limited access to books and writing materials might have prevented the Native children in this study from joining the "literacy club."

Community Context

This survey was conducted in the elementary school of a small town in the semi-arid interior of British Columbia. The school's 165 students were drawn from the town (population 475) and from outlying ranches and Indian reserves (area population 1,500), where school buses bring in 60% of the students. During the year of the study, 69% of the students were Native. No students in the school spoke the local Native language as a first language, although some children knew a few words (usually family words and names of common plants and animals). The degree of acculturation to white mainstream life was related to the location of the family home: those who lived farthest from town (for instance, on the west side of the Fraser river, accessible only by footbridge and ferry) tended to retain more traditional values. Students living on the town reserve (adjacent to the school) were more likely to be part of community events. Most homes had power, indoor plumbing, and television; families frequently rented videos from the town's video outlet. If there were children's books in students' homes, they had usually been ordered through commercial book clubs, but many Native students in the school came from homes where there were few books, toys, or writing implements.

School Context

Almost all children (Native and non-Native) had attended the preschool administered by the local Indian band. In kindergarten these children were exposed to literature through daily story reading by the teacher (this included Big Books and language experience stories) and shared book experiences (parents or older students joined in at informal book reading times).

The grade 1 program in the school was based on the whole language approach, where children learn to read by using trade books (including Big Books) and their own stories rather than through the use of a basal reading series. Children wrote daily in their journals and also participated in a group newsletter, which was sent home each afternoon. This newsletter had a space for students to write in at home. Their writing was returned to school and shared with other students. Parents may have helped the children, but the writing was supposed to be the students' own effort.

A wide range of materials was used in the grade 2 reading program, which was largely individualized. The daily writing program was based on the chalk-in-hand technique, where children wrote the first draft of their stories on the class chalkboard and then transferred this to an exercise book. In general, teachers in this elementary school were aware of the mismatch between mainstream expectations and Native cultural patterns. Native children are commonly given more independence at home than is allowed in school; resistance to rules and regulations

is particularly common with Native boys. Children from Native homes may operate with a different time sense than their non-Native teachers. Teachers responded to these cultural differences by making an effort to establish strong personal relationships with the children. Because the elementary teachers in the study had lived in the community for at least five years, they knew many of their students' family members. Adaptations in teaching style included an emphasis on small-group work, a reduction in formal stand-up teaching, and the use of practical, hands-on approaches. A cultural curriculum plan had just been implemented where the teaching of Native traditions and some simple words and phrases was integrated into the kindergarten curriculum. The traditional cultural component was taught by a young teacher assistant who spoke the Native language.

Method

The open-ended, semistructured survey instrument format was developed by Shook in a previous study (Shook, Marrion, & Ollila, 1989) as a transactive means to help children describe and explore their views on three aspects of the writing process. This instrument helps children to describe their perceptions concerning the general purposes for writing, their individual personal preferences, and their self-concepts as writers. Each child was invited to describe what good writers can do when they write, what individual strengths and weaknesses they believe they possess, their purpose for writing, their preferred topics, and their sense of audience.

All of the questions from the original survey were utilized with this sample. Some additional questions that addressed Native traditions were drafted, piloted, and added to the final version.

Data Collection

The Native teaching assistant conducted the writing survey interviews. She was selected because her knowledge of appropriate interactive style and her familiarity with all the children was likely to increase participation by Native students. During May and June 1988, 44 students (26 Native and 18 non-Native) were interviewed. Only two parents withheld permission, so 96% of the grade 1 and 2 students in the school were surveyed. The children were taken from their classrooms and interviewed in the staff room (the quietest available space in the school). Each interview lasted about 20 minutes.

The age, sex, and ethnicity of each child was recorded and a number assigned to each child. Throughout the interviews, the investigator stressed that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions, and that we wanted to know what the children thought about writing. The children's responses were recorded verbatim in writing.

Results

The results of this survey were generally surprising. We found that the Native children, contrary to other research findings (Marcuzzi, 1986; Dumont, 1972), had a wide, supportive home-based audience for their writings, which included many of their extended family members. The implications of this support for writing run through the findings and are explicated in the discussion.

Although Native children did not answer some of the questions at all, the higher proportion of Native students in the "no response" category is related to the

interactional differences between perceived obligations in dialogue. Non-Native students are socialized to feel an obligation to respond even if they are unsure of what to say, and are therefore more likely to use talk to explore and find an answer. Native students, especially in the presence of an elder, will not respond if they do not understand a question.

For the possible 44 answers given to each survey question a simple tally was taken of each different response. What the children actually said formed the basis of the data interpretation, and the categories that emerged from the children's actual responses are described in Table 1.

Table 1. *Perception of the General Purposes of Writing*

Question	Native n=26 %	Non-Native n=18 %	Total N=44 %
<i>1. What kinds of things do people print and write on paper?</i>			
5 items listed	0.0	11.0	4.5
4 items listed	3.8	11.0	6.8
3 items listed	7.6	5.5	6.8
2 items listed	50.0	22.0	38.6
1 item listed	34.6	44.0	38.6
<i>2. Did you write anything today?</i>			
yes	85.0	78.0	81.8
<i>3. Who does most writing in your family?</i>			
mother	38.5	33.0	36.4
father	15.4	22.0	18.2
mother and father	15.4	22.0	18.2
self	11.5	11.0	11.6
sister	11.5	11.0	11.6
brother	3.8	0.0	2.3
aunt	3.8	0.0	2.3
cousin	3.8	0.0	2.3
<i>4. What is a story?</i>			
don't know, no response	23.0	11.1	18.2
something you write that you can read, sentences	46.0	61.0	52.3
something that you tell, the concept of expressing	31.0	28.0	29.5
<i>5. What makes a good story?</i>			
don't know, no response	11.5	11.1	11.4
characters: pirates, animals, family	42.3	38.9	40.9
feelings evoked by story: fear, interest, fun	11.5	33.3	20.5
action and sense of drama	23.1	38.9	29.5
<i>6. What is reading?</i>			
don't know, no response	7.7	5.6	6.8
looking at works, sounding out words	57.7	61.1	59.1
Indication of story as a whole	34.6	33.3	34.1

Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 for each question because the don't know or no answer conditions are not always illustrated. Also, some subjects gave more than one response to some questions.

Native students were able to list fewer forms of writing than their non-Native peers. The suggested genres included stories, calendars, letters, posters, instructions, what people in movies write, poems, and shopping lists. This difference could be attributed to different levels of family involvement in literacy and also to the predominantly oral contacts between adults in a small village. Compared with children in a previous writing study (Shook, Marrion, & Ollila, 1989), Lytton students as a whole named fewer purposes for writing, but more of them had actually done some writing on the day of the interview. The Lytton school program, as described earlier, emphasized writing, and students in primary classes were expected to complete journals at home.

Native children had difficulty in describing what a story was and often used circular definitions: "Something that you write and something that you read." The content analysis of responses to the question "What is a story?" revealed that most Lytton children focused on specific story topics ("I have to write something about animals") or on the mechanics of narrative, rather than on the process of creating a story. In responding to "What makes a story good?" the Native children in this study were convinced that action was important: "Lots of fights" ... "when something is magic in there in your story" ... "just about a dragon starts to get people scared of it." This emphasis on preferred story content rather than on conceptualization of the whole situation is a concrete response to a difficult, abstract question. Non-Native children also reflected on story ingredients, but in a more generalized way: "A villain and a good guy" ... "A happy story." Similarly, many children had difficulty answering "What is reading?" Most children described some aspect of the book rather than the meaning making process as shown in Table 2.

Many Lytton children expressed a preference for writing about imaginary situations. Logically enough, because most of their extended family members live in town, Native children wrote fewer letters than non-Native children. Writing was seen as associated with artwork (painting and drawing) by many of the children, probably because primary teachers encouraged illustration as part of journal writing and the "publishing cycle," and also because of the strong appeal of the visual for these children. One of the most encouraging findings was that Lytton children enjoyed writing at home, at school, and in both places. The fairly positive attitude toward school writing contrasts with the findings of the Salt Spring study (Shook, Marrion, & Ollila, 1989) where more children preferred writing at home to writing at school. Indeed, *all* the Native children said that they wrote at home. This may have been because the home journal program initiated by the school was being carried out. In addition, most Native students enjoyed writing stories, a higher proportion than their non-Native peers. The importance of children's writing to their families is reflected in the number of family members involved in helping them write and in reading their work. In Lytton parents were perceived by most children as helping them to write. Few of the Native students saw the teacher as helping them, whereas she was seen by about a third of the non-Native children as helpful to their writing. This either indicates that Native children were less teacher-oriented than their classmates, or else were more reluctant to ask for help. Given the peer-oriented nature of traditional cultures, either explanation is viable. The family was seen by the children in this study as the main audience for their work. The wide range of family members described by Native children as an audience for their work is probably a function of the traditional extended family structure,

Table 2. *Personal Preferences About Writing Activities*

<i>Question</i>	<i>Native n=26 %</i>	<i>Non-Native n=18 %</i>	<i>Total N=44 %</i>
<i>1. What do you like to write about most?</i>			
animals	19.2	11.1	15.9
people	23.1	27.8	25.0
imaginary things and adventures	42.3	38.9	40.9
traveling and vehicles	11.5	16.7	13.6
<i>2. Do you like to write notes to your friends; lists; and/or diaries?</i>			
yes	80.8	77.8	79.5
<i>3. Do you write letters to someone in the mail?</i>			
yes	57.7	83.3	68.2
<i>4. Do you do writing together with painting and/or drawing?</i>			
both accompany writing	69.2	66.6	68.2
writing alone	23.1	5.6	15.9
sometimes both	7.7	16.7	11.4
<i>5. Do you write at home?</i>			
yes	100.0	94.4	97.7
<i>6. Do you like to write stories?</i>			
yes	96.1	88.8	93.2
<i>7. Where do you like to write stories best?</i>			
home	42.3	38.8	40.9
school	46.1	38.8	43.2
both	11.5	22.2	15.9
<i>8. Do you like to write stories about things that are close to your home or far away?</i>			
close	46.1	27.7	38.6
far away	46.1	44.4	45.5
both	7.7	22.2	13.6
<i>9. Who helps you write?</i>			
parents	53.8	100.0	72.7
extended family members	27.9	27.8	27.3
teacher	7.7	38.9	22.7
friends, classmates	3.8	5.5	4.5
<i>10. Who will read what you write?</i>			
parents	50.0	50.0	50.0
extended family members	26.9	27.8	27.2
teacher	23.1	38.9	29.5
friends, classmates	3.8	11.1	6.8

Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 for each question because the don't know or no answer conditions are not always illustrated. Also, some subjects gave more than one response to some questions.

where different family members may live in the home for short periods of time. This audience included maternal and paternal grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and siblings. It could be that Native children were using anyone who happened to be at home to read their work (see Table 3).

Lytton students saw adults, particularly parents, as the writers in their community rather than their classmates. Non-Native students saw their parents rather than their teachers as writers, whereas for Native students teachers, parents, and extended family members shared the role of adult writers in their lives. Native parents, despite an obvious interest in their children's work, may have fewer personal uses for literacy than mainstream parents, because they come from a culture that maintains aspects of its oral tradition. Their writing skills probably differ from the non-Native parents' as their corresponding formal education is more limited.

Native and non-Native children did not differ in who they considered to be the best story writer in the class: another child was considered the best. For neither group was the teacher considered to be the best writer. There are two explanations for this. For many children the teacher would not be part of the class. It could also be that teachers had not produced any personal writing or shared it with the children. The present study showed that most children were preoccupied with the surface aspects of writing (such as improving printing, practicing, using better equipment) rather than with ideas. Shook, Marrion, and Ollila's (1989) previous research indicates that Salt Spring Island children also found spelling and word choice difficult, but were more concerned with content than children in the present study. Most of the children in this study considered themselves to be good storywriters and had realistic views of their comparative abilities. Native children were statistically accurate in predicting where they stood in relation to others in the class. Keen observation of peer group characteristics has long been a survival skill for Native societies, so accurate knowledge of personal standing in a class is not a surprising finding. Most Native children enjoyed writing, but not as much as their non-Native classmates did, although the reasons given for writing were similar in frequency for "learning more words," "fun," and "for creating a product for someone." These positive attitudes were reflected in their responses to the probe "Why do you write?"

"If you don't write, you won't get anything done!" "Something might happen funny." "So your moms and dads can see it."

As in the Shook, Marrion, and Ollila (1989) study, only a small proportion of Lytton children felt they wrote because the "teacher says to." Overall, all the children in this study were positive about themselves as writers, and in contrast to children surveyed in the Salt Spring Island study, enjoyed writing at school as much as at home.

Discussion

In our exploration of the data three major themes emerged, demonstrating how young Native writers were beginning to see themselves as members of the "writers' club." We were interested in young children's views of themselves as writers and learners, because self-concept is tied to motivation and consequent achievement. Writers communicate to readers: for the children we talked with, their audience was important. The answers to questions about the nature of read-

Table 3. *The Young Writer’s Self-concept*

<i>Question</i>	<i>Native n=26 %</i>	<i>Non-Native n=18 %</i>	<i>Total N=44 %</i>
<i>1. Who do you know that does a lot of writing?</i>			
parents	34.6	50.0	40.9
extended family	38.5	22.2	31.8
teacher	15.4	11.1	13.6
classmates, friends	11.5	22.2	15.9
<i>2. What do you need to make your writing better?</i>			
improve printing	38.5	16.7	29.5
don't know	3.8	27.8	13.6
more practice	15.4	16.7	15.9
dictionary use	3.8	11.1	6.8
parental help	0.0	11.1	4.5
improve quality of content	7.6	5.5	6.8
slow down, be careful, think	7.6	5.5	6.8
mechanics—better pencils, erasers, etc.	7.6	0.0	4.5
quiet	7.6	0.0	4.5
<i>3. What is the hardest thing for you to do when you are writing a story?</i>			
spelling	38.5	38.8	38.6
thinking	15.4	16.7	15.9
printing neatly	7.7	11.1	9.1
don't know	15.4	5.5	11.4
<i>4. What is the easiest thing your you to do when you are writing a story?</i>			
spelling words I know	15.4	33.3	22.7
drawing illustrations	3.8	44.4	20.5
story ideas	30.1	22.2	27.2
proofreading and final copying	11.5	0.0	6.8
<i>5. Are you a good story writer?</i>			
yes	69.2	66.6	68.2
<i>6. As a writer, where do you fit in your class?</i>			
top third	19.2	33.3	25.0
middle third	73.1	66.6	68.2
<i>7. Who is the best story writer in your class?</i>			
(an)other child(ren)	88.5	88.9	88.6
teacher	11.5	11.1	11.4
<i>8. Who is the best storyteller in your class?</i>			
(an)other child(ren)	34.6	55.6	43.2
teacher	50.0	38.9	45.5
<i>9. How do you feel when you are writing a story?</i>			
positive: happy, amazed, smart	73.1	88.9	79.5
negative: sad, tired, not good	19.2	11.1	15.9
<i>10. How do you feel when you are telling a story?</i>			
positive: happy, excellent, funny	53.8	83.3	65.9
negative: shy, bad, sad, embarrassed	34.6	16.7	27.3

Table 3 (continued)

Question	Native n=26 %	Non-Native n=18 %	Total N=44 %
11. <i>Why do you write?</i>			
enjoyment: it's fun	26.9	27.8	27.3
contextual requirements: I have to	23.1	22.2	22.7
for audiences: to create a product, for someone	19.2	22.2	20.5
process-related: to learn	15.4	22.2	18.2

Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 for each question because the don't know or no answer conditions are not always illustrated. Also, some subjects gave more than one response to some questions.

ing and writing led us to consider the views of literacy held by Native and non-Native writers.

We expected to find that young Native writers, given their history of academic problems in North American schools, would have low self-esteem as writers. This was not the case: a slightly higher percentage of Native than non-Native children in this study saw themselves as good writers, and young Native writers also had realistic self-views of how they rated as writers in the classroom. Children in this study were equally likely to enjoy writing at school and at home, which reflects a more positive attitude toward school as a writing environment than was found in the previous study (Shook, Marrion & Ollila, 1989). Native students' enjoyment of writing was also strongly reinforced by their extended families' interest.

Audience at home for Native children is extensive (all of them said that they wrote at home). This appreciation by parents and extended family contributed to the Native children's positive self-concept and their sense of being real writers. However, because Native children had great difficulty in talking about the purposes of reading and writing (some children did not attempt to answer these questions), it may be that the audience support they have at home is focused on their children's writing as a product rather than on its meaning. More information is needed on how Native families respond to children's writing so that we can determine if there are important cultural differences (related to literacy experiences) in taking meaning from literature. Some of the more abstract probes (e.g., "Do you like to write stories about things that are close to your home or far away?") evoked strongly visual responses from Native children, tapping specific memories of stories rather than a metacognitive understanding of how narrative works. These children were not able to perform the mental gymnastics required for reflection on their own language knowledge. Olson (1977) states that North American schools are predominantly "literate enterprises" where the only path to intellectual achievement is through the ability to manipulate autonomous text. Learning to decode is not the only factor in ensuring success in school. In our study Native children responded best to stories which made them feel excited, scared, or in tension; they needed to become involved through the drama of the story. This sounds much like an intermediate step between an oral and literacy approach to narrative. In a sense these children were responding by creating a "world in their

head," which is a natural and appropriate way to respond to fiction. The second-order response would be to describe how this process happens, and this was a difficult process for the Native children in the group. The ability to talk about these processes may be a necessary prerequisite to internalizing them (Vygotsky, 1978). Talking and writing have often been described as co-occurring (Goodman, 1985); this practice should be encouraged for the children in this study.

The Native children in this study had surprisingly positive views of themselves as writers in the literacy club: teachers can build on this strong foundation by helping their students to verbalize their intuitive responses to literacy.

Implications

Despite the view sometimes expressed by teachers that "parents don't care," both families and the school were encouraging the children as writers in this study. Because all the Native students said that they wrote at home and that their family audience was so wide, a positive start has been made in communicating with the home about the value of literacy. The next stage should be an effort to help students and their home audience understand the underlying purposes for reading and writing. Teachers need to continue a focus on *meaning* (Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1982) rather than on the surface features of text, because most children were preoccupied with accuracy rather than content.

Even more important, given the traditional Native use of the oral transmission mode for education, is an emphasis on using literature and writing for personal interpretation. Family members could be encouraged and helped to become critical audiences for their children's writing. As a first step it may be reasonable to focus on helping parents to react positively to children's writing at home; the training of parents as audience would be the second step.

Further Research

It became evident from the survey that the role of extended family as audience is particularly important for Native children. However, we have very little information on what it means to have someone "read your story" or "help you write." Native children did not perceive many of their family members as writers. Would this make a difference to the kinds of response given to a child bringing writing home? What is the relationship between types of feedback (e.g., focusing on meaning as opposed to focusing on mechanics) to the process and product of the writer? One way to pursue these questions would be to observe, record, or survey family members who respond to children's writing at home. Another way would be to interview the children's parents and extended family utilizing the same survey questions in order to assess their understanding and perceptions of themselves as writers.

Documenting the ways teachers respond as audiences to student writing would also be a useful adjunct to the current survey. If particular types of response were related to writing improvement, then these strategies might help teachers improve their responses to student writing and could also be relayed to parents.

The strength of Native children's visual response may be a clue to the cognitive differences between the learner's role in transmission and transformation models of education. Traditional societies used imitation (kinaesthetic) and observation (visual) as learning tools; this worked well because the goal was transmission of previously known skills or information. Transformation of information into a new

form may require the mental abilities described by Olson (1977). An intervention study could have teachers model oral response to literature from very early in the Native students' literacy experience.

Last, we need to identify the roots of the constraints children feel as writers. Despite a positive school climate for writing, and great support from home, the children in this study were still more concerned with spelling, punctuation, and printing than with writing a story "when something is magic." The constraints may be coming from casual remarks from parents, teachers, and peers or from the framework where writing activities occur. Beginning writers have genuine difficulty with the mechanics of writing. The occasional use of scribes could free children's imaginations from the mechanical constraints of writing. In this way students who have difficulty in writing could still have the artistic freedom to compose.

If young Native students are supported by their cultural audience at home and by their teachers in the school environment to consider themselves as valued, creative writers and users of language, they may well choose to continue in their quest for literacy.

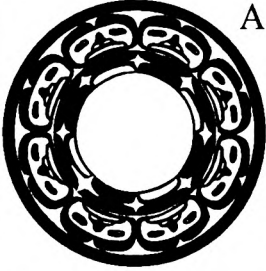
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