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The description analysis and evaluation of the process experienced a teacher-researcher in implementing responsive evaluation as a mode of assessment of literacy development in a whole language classroom

Jannifer Frances Hancock

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THE DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION
OF THE PROCESS EXPERIENCED BY A TEACHER-RESEARCHER
IN IMPLEMENTING RESPONSIVE EVALUATION
AS A MODE OF ASSESSMENT OF
LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN
A WHOLE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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by
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Educational Studies

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To all my teachers:

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ABSTRACT

This research inquiry sets out to describe, analyse and evaluate the process a teacher/researcher experienced in the implementation of Responsive Evaluation as a means of assessing literacy development in a whole-language classroom.

The journey of this inquiry began in a classroom and continued over a period of one school year during which time the inquirer collected and interpreted two levels of data as part of the process of evaluating student growth and development in language learning. The methodology used was naturalistic inquiry drawing on the methods of ethnography, action research, grounded theory and responsive evaluation.

Whilst the focus of the inquiry, the process the action-researcher experienced, was maintained, the practice of self-reflection emerged as the prime means by which the description, analysis and evaluation of the process was achieved. It was within these self-reflective practices of responsive evaluation that the most valuable product of the inquiry was discovered - the means by which a teacher's perceptions of individuals' learning can be found to be enhanced by the learner's own realities of their learning being conveyed through the learner's responses.

Two concepts of 'action' and 'reflection' represented the dialectic nature of this particular inquiry. In claiming that the power of reflection characterised one of the most important meanings of this inquiry the following questions were raised - How can this meaning be gained by other teachers? What processes generated this meaning?

These questions were answered in the model of evaluation that emerged from the inquiry characterising a grounded theory of classroom evaluation, a theory that teachers can employ in their inquiries into and reflections upon the congruency of their teaching and evaluating practices, and the subsequent clarification of their beliefs, their teaching/learning practices and the related evaluation practices which give rise to cues of learning engagement which in turn inform and refine beliefs, practices and evaluation in a continuing cyclical process of meaning making.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE INQUIRY

PURPOSE OF THE INQUIRY

The inquiry set out to describe, analyse and evaluate the process a teacher/researcher experienced in the implementation of Responsive Evaluation as a means of assessing literacy development in a whole-language classroom.

Specifically the research aimed to:

(i) define and clarify the theoretical tenets of language learning and development, as they found expression in a pedagogy known as whole-language.

(ii) illuminate one teacher's practice of the pedagogy and determine the nature of the relationship between the teacher's beliefs, classroom practices and the employment of responsive evaluation as an assessment procedure.

(iii) trace the development, implementation and justification of the emergent set of assessment cues.

(iv) describe the grounded theory of evaluation in a whole-language context that became apparent throughout the inquiry.

As a form of 'action research' this self-reflective inquiry by the class community, that is myself as the class teacher and my students, aimed to achieve a clear articulation and justification of the educational rationale behind the practices employed in a theoretically conceived 'whole language' classroom context. The inquiry is a cameo view of one teacher's theory and the interaction of this theory with classroom practices. Whilst it is a specific episode it will nonetheless shed light on the link between theory and practice generally.
BACKGROUND TO THE INQUIRY

Educational research divorced from the contexts in which it is embedded is impotent in any attempt to gain knowledge and forge the frontiers of educational practice. This inquiry shares a commonality with all educational research in that it was conducted in specific political, social and physical contexts. These contexts evolved over the five to ten years prior to the commencement of the inquiry. Their evolution can be traced via description and discussion and the inquiry rationale was seen to emerge as a direct consequence of them.

It is through the lens of these contexts that the outcomes of the inquiry can be best viewed.

EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT: A pedagogy called "whole language"

To fully understand the current educational context would require a historical examination of the pedagogies of language learning. Whilst such an examination is not within the scope of this inquiry it is appropriate to state that the nature of many curriculum changes in the teaching of literacy have in the past emerged from an expanded knowledge base via research findings which have informed and fostered curriculum innovation.

The cyclic process of new knowledge informing and fostering curriculum change is sometimes accompanied by vicious debate as proponents of conflicting theories try to 'hold the ground' of their particular set of beliefs and practices in face of challenges from those with new knowledge. All theorists must acknowledge the challenges offered them as an opportunity to 'fine tune' their beliefs by checking for incongruency between their theories and practices and accepting the incongruencies that are revealed as a reflection on historical limits of their knowledge and understandings more than individual failure of vision.

In recognising this examination of beliefs as 'an example of an evolutionary process not merely competition between theories' (Altwerger, Edelsky, and Flores 1987) it is possible to strengthen the knowledge base and to push the thinking about language and learning
into new realms. One such realm, in recent times, has been an overriding theory and point of view about language, literacy and content learning encapsulated by the label 'whole-language'.

Whole language as a philosophy of literacy learning has largely rejected many of the findings and traditional research methods of psychology and education (Reutzel and Hollingsworth 1988).

These traditional pedagogies of literacy learning held to the belief that complex skills such as reading and writing are best learned by being broken down into subskills. What is also reflected in these traditional practices is the belief that through habitual practice of these subskills, proficiency will be achieved. Such approaches to literacy learning are based on what could be called a 'fragmented' view of literacy learning.

In contrast to traditional pedagogies the term 'whole language' represents an expression of a pedagogical shift away from a Cartesian-Newtonian fragmented or segmented view of the universe - in which the accent was on parts and elements, to a configuration view, with its emphasis on wholes (Crowell 1989). In this sense the term 'whole-language' was used in reaction to the traditional beliefs that language was learned by compartmentalization of the modes of language and language processes, which were traditionally arranged hierarchically for sequenced exposure and mastery (Zola 1989).

Whole-language has drawn part of its theory base from ethnographic or descriptive investigations into how children acquire their first language. These studies indicate that children learn oral language naturally from immersion in a society in which the 'whole' connected language is used by other members of that society (Smith 1985). Thus proponents of the theory advocate a pedagogy of literacy that parallels and complements the success of early oral language learning.

There is a general agreement among advocates of the whole-language pedagogy that whole-language represents a rejection of a number of long held beliefs and practices associated with literacy teaching including imposed methods, narrow curricula and mandated materials. In addition to rejecting the behavioristic paradigm behind directed learning, narrow curricula and prescriptive textbooks,
advocates also reject traditional evaluation, particularly standardized tests. They believe that the synthetic, contrived, confining, and controlled nature of such evaluative measures is incongruent with modern theory and research on language learning (Goodman 1989).

Therefore it is not surprising that a visible shift away from traditional thinking and practice of literacy learning by whole-language theorists is found in their evaluation practices. By rejecting the traditional modes of assessment and evaluation whole-language theorists present themselves with a challenge, one that involves the need to devise new methods of documenting and reporting children's language growth and development. New ways of conveying outcomes to parents and the community demands processes and procedures that are consistent with the theoretical tenets of the whole language pedagogy.

Within the current educational context the evolutionary process of examining theory and practice, in this instance whole-language theory, is naturally evolving. This examination has only recently focused on the issue of evaluating student growth and development. Highlighting the fact that evaluation processes have been somewhat of an afterthought to the teaching and learning practices. Whilst Kemp explains this as being a result of the explosion of new knowledge;

"the speed of development of the wholistic approach to literacy explains in part the assessment problem. Teachers have not had many years to think through the curriculum principles and thence the assessment implications, to decide their preferences, and design suitable assessment tools" (Kemp 1989, p.2)

Boomer and Cambourne and Turbill caution against proceeding without careful consideration being given to the issue of assessment;

"we may have become so engrossed in the fascinations of what we are learning about our children as learners and ourselves as teachers, that we have lost our perspective on questions ... about whether our efforts are producing the kind of ... results we would wish for...." (Boomer 1987, p.17).
"The principles which underpin a whole-language philosophy are so profoundly different from other traditional approaches to language education that a different approach to assessment is required." (Cambourne and Turbill 1988, p.1).

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

The socio-political context, like that of the educational context, has been taking shape over the last five to ten years. Many factors contribute to its present nature but only those specifically relevant to the inquiry will be discussed.

While the issues identified here are closely associated with the Australian context, their relevance to similar concerns worldwide can be found in most literature related to the issues of assessment and evaluation and their relationship to accountability.

In Australia, over the last five years, calls for higher and more visible forms of accountability for the education dollar have been consistent and steady from both social and political quarters.

Recently these demands have become more and more strident. The Australian education system has come under close scrutiny from business leaders, the media, politicians, educational decision makers, and the general public. The impetus for their scrutiny rests on three frequently identified arguments:

- rationalisation of scarce funds (Vaughan 1989)
- improvements necessary in linking education and economic viability (Dawkins 1988)
- documentation and comparisons of the outcomes of student learning (Metherell 1988).

In times of increased national debt and the growing cost of the provision of services there will always be strong political support for these arguments. Outcomes of this scrutiny have included an increased tendency for governments to move into the daily running of educational systems. While justification is claimed on grounds of "efficiency" many in the education community translate this as delivering minimal service at the least possible cost.
A clear message from a government statement entitled *Strengthening Australia's Schools* (Dawkins 1988) aimed to synchronise education policy with socio-economic movements by gearing education to the market place. Counter to this is the desire by some educationalists to provide an education 'for living' and not to have this reduced to education for 'making a living', it can be claimed that the former includes and transcends greatly the latter.

The outcome with the widest ramifications has been the strong lobby which favours accountability testing in the form of state wide, group-administered, standardised testing of basic literacy and numeracy skills. It is believed by supporters of this lobby that educational accountability can be accurately fixed on the basis of test results (Pearson and Valencia 1987). However most people making the decisions about evaluation tools and models are making those decisions from a management perspective e.g. cost effectiveness, rather than an educational perspective (Carey 1988).

While 'efficiency' and 'economic viability' hold a low priority with some educationists the concern for far more detailed and comparative information on the outcomes of student learning is one all educationalists share with governments and the community. They believe that schools have to serve the interests of the communities outside them as well as their communities inside and that maintaining consensus and co-operativeness in working with clear principles for running a literacy curriculum and assessing its effects is most desirable (Kemp 1989).

Thus the question whether to assess learning outcomes, is not a contentious issue in either the educational or the socio-political context. However, what is in dispute is the question of what practices best act as a guide and resource for the learning, teaching and assessment of those literacy skills commonly perceived as being necessary for effective participation in society.

What both contexts have generated is a debate on the identification and promotion of reliable and valid procedures for assessing student literacy. This debate has been at the forefront of the political agenda in Australia for the last three years.
Tracing the assessment debate in Australia constitutes what might aptly be labelled 'the politics of assessment'.

As is the nature of politics, groups with a 'stake' in an issue such as education accountability and assessment, vie for power or advancement within the public arena. On the one hand governments and their opposition parties make political those issues of high community concern in order to seek mandates for leadership. On the other hand educationally progressive groups defend their positions in order to maintain the gains they think they have achieved through research outcomes that have questioned traditional beliefs and practices.

Historically educational policy making reveals a synchronisation with socio-economic movements and hence political power. Post-war and on through the '60s and '70s were economic growth periods, with increasingly high employment levels and plentiful resources. There was a growing emphasis on individual development and increased consultation involving professionals, parents and community groups all leading to the reshaping of educational policies and structures (Vaughan 1989).

By the late '80s concern about national debt and socio-economic ills led to cuts in the cost of education and the tightening of the reins of political control within the educational arena. In April of 1987 an international body known as the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) published a survey on the Australian economy which made the point that 'Australia's level of educational attainment is not high'. It claimed that 'there is reason also to question the quality and depth of the national skills base'. The pressure for 'accountability testing' was building up.

In 1987 the Federal government of the day combined the previous distinct areas of education and employment into a portfolio entitled the Department of Employment, Education and Training (in the Australian context a 'portfolio' is an area of governmental responsibility). This made explicit government aims to tie education more closely to technology and the labour market. Inquiries, reports and policy statements proliferated.
The policy document, *Strengthening Australia's Schools* (Dawkins 1988) proposed a number of improvements that were seen as necessary in the education of young people if Australia was to successfully undertake major economic restructuring. Amongst the arguments in favour of a commonality of goals and a core curriculum were those which advocated a standard approach to assessment and a public and national reporting of educational achievement.

The notion of a standard approach to assessment was not new to the education community. In 1987 challenges were placed before it by the Director of the Commonwealth Schools Commission, Mr Garth Boomer to;

‘... look at the politically and educationally sensitive question of indicators of progress and standards of achievement... in order to demystify what children achieve and might achieve ...’ (Boomer 1987, p. 16).

A Federal government funded organisation, the Curriculum Development Centre, instituted to promote and foster curriculum developments, responded to this challenge. In July 1987, at their National Seminar, 'Organising for Literacy' a project entitled *A National Guide to Literacy* was put forward as a means for the identification and promotion of reliable and valid procedures for assessing student literacy. The intention was that the project would yield publications, primarily written for teachers. The aims of this project included the presentation of studies of literacy achievements in classrooms thereby providing models of how schools and systems might account for literacy achievement (Withers 1989). What was absent from the stated aims of the federal government project was a promotion of rigid frameworks for action on the reporting of achievements in developing literacy. The underlying assumption of the project was that assessment processes should be seen to closely integrate with the process of curriculum development itself, and for this reason, retrospective testing of students was rejected.

A national co-ordinator was commissioned to design the project and work with state liaison personnel. When first drafts of volume one were ready for submission to the Curriculum Development Centre a decision by the Australian Education Council (comprised of State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education who are
elected members of Parliament not necessarily specialists in the field of education) resolved to terminate the roles and functions of the Curriculum Development Council and establish a new national curriculum agency - The Curriculum Corporation of Australia. All matters relating to the The National Guide to Literacy Project were put on file to be handed over to the new agency when it was established.

At another level, a response to the Federal document 'Strengthening Australian Schools' came from state governments. Of the six states and two territories that constitute the Commonwealth of Australia, three states New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia responded to the need for identification and promotion of reliable and valid procedures for assessing student literacy by the legislated introduction of standardised literacy and numeracy tests. The Victorian government mounted a sample assessment of student performance on such tests to assure that standards had been preserved. The New South Wales government administered tests to all final year primary students and a selection of mid-primary year students with an agenda to formally review or change the literacy curriculum if standards were shown to be low.

These mandatory government assessment initiatives were foreshadowed by the educational community;

'In Garth Boomer's address at the 1987 National Reading Conference he prophesised that if we don't come up with a practical means of establishing standards to which teachers can aspire, then the psychometricians and politicians will do it for us' (Cambourne-1988, p.1).

Dialogue surrounding the issues of 'measuring' student learning outcomes in the education community had also begun.

'Demands that children be tested and retested at specified intervals as they pass through the school system' point towards "....an educational productionline mentality. Advocates of such testing seem to believe that it measures the efficacy of educational programs.' they also believe 'that scores in tests are 'hard evidence' ' (Vaughan 1989).
When specifically related to literacy educators claimed such test scores would callously and publicly misrepresent the whole meaning of language (Cohen 1989). About such a measurement view of literacy Cambourne argued that:

'This measurement view of assessment assumes firstly:
- that literacy is a single, monolithic or concrete entity like the amount of water in a container or the amount of gas in a cylinder. ..........or that literacy is a single skill like typing or using a calculator. The underlying metaphor is one of different "containers" (learners) being filled with differing amounts of stuff-like material (literacy) and secondly:
- that basic units of this "stuff" (or skill) can be identified and quantified in much the same way as units of length and mass, to think of literacy in this way is to fall victim to the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, i.e. fallaciously referring to something which is complex and abstract as if it were "thing -like" or concrete (Cambourne 1988, p. 5).

Cambourne holds the belief that literacy is a term which describes a 'whole' collection of behaviours, skills, knowledge, processes and attitudes. In stating that literacy has to do with the ability to use language in negotiations with the world he is reflects a view held by proponents of the literacy learning approach of whole-language.

'When whole language teachers reject traditional evaluating techniques such as standardised tests... it is because the content, nature, and uses of such devices are in direct conflict with the whole language teacher's view of teaching, learning, and curriculum. ..........Whole language evaluation can't be reduced to precise right or wrong scores ' (Goodman 1989, Preface xiii).

Over the last ten to fifteen years the advances in knowledge about how language is learned have found expression in whole-language perspectives towards teaching literacy and have been also been documented in many curriculums one of which was the 1987 New South Wales Department of Education Writing K-12 curriculum statement. With the introduction of standardized testing of literacy much of these advances appeared under threat of reversal, and in face of strong media support for testing, as exemplified by the
following comment from an economist with a national newspaper, the educational lobby seemed powerless:

"Because of our highly centralised education system...educational trendoids...can hold a conference, capture a syllabus committee and produce some material...that imposes their views on all schools across a state. ...teachers should.....reconsider their opposition to formal assessment and their increasing support for watered down syllabuses" (Clark, 1988 The Financial Review January 11th)

In response to such criticisms the educational lobby called on teachers to come to grips with the nature of assessment and evaluation and its place in teaching and learning, in order to work out how information on the outcomes of student literacy learning might be gathered and presented differently from the single score, grade or level resulting from standardised tests.

This struggle represented at the time, and currently continues to represent, the political agenda of assessment. On the one hand governments make decisions about assessment and evaluation tools from a management perspective e.g. cost effectiveness, and on the other hand an educational perspective promotes models of assessment and evaluation that are based on a quite different set of assumptions. These models promote observation of the changes that are taking place in the learners, a process which reveals not only the development of learning, but also supplies information about teacher growth and the degree to which the curriculum has "bitten".

One such model, known as Responsive Evaluation is one that advocates many forms of observation and response to these observations as an invaluable tool for any form of evaluation. Because observation and reaction to the observable is the natural mode of gathering information about children's growth and development used by parents, Cambourne claims it is a naturalistic inquiry model that has relevance to the evaluation of individual learning at the classroom level. The tenets of such a model has parallels with the methods of evaluation employed to assess large scale curriculum initiatives and educational programs. This model is based on a concept of the 'human-as-instrument' pioneered by Stake (1976) and extended by Guba and Lincoln (1981). The model rejects the assumption that assessor-assessee interaction needs to be carefully controlled through
standardisation of procedures or the imposition of some kind of standard instrument (Cambourne 1988).

To achieve acceptance of new models of evaluation such as the one proposed by Stake public understanding of a whole new approach to learning, language learning, and literacy needs to be fostered. Proponents of these new models claim that reports of student progress mean little if the audience to the report is unfamiliar with the literacy agenda, teacher purposes or methods, or the systems of assessment and evaluation (Kemp 1989).

It is proposed that an outcome of increased understanding by the public of the literacy agenda, will be the acceptance of less formal yet more descriptive, qualitative approaches to assessment and evaluation. These procedures whilst being intricately woven into the daily practices of the classroom and therefore to some extent intuitive in nature will nonetheless be recast into propositional forms capable of communication to others (Guba and Lincoln 1982). Cambourne suggests they should be naturalistic methods of assessment and interpretation which stand up to scrutiny and are "do-able" by teachers. They would be methods that get learning and teaching back together (Cambourne 1988).

Kemp claims that whatever models of assessment and reporting procedures that teachers eventually decide to use in place of formal testing, the regard that teachers have for the worth of the literacy curriculum will be reflected in the procedures. Kemp goes on to suggest that once the feeling of worth becomes the over-riding factor for all participants in the curriculum, teachers, children and parents, the now influential politics of assessment should matter less (Kemp 1989).

RATIONALE FOR THE INQUIRY

It is evident from the discussion that current socio-political pressure on education has raised serious concerns related to the assessment and evaluation of learning. These have manifested themselves in calls for a clearer articulation of the kinds of 'markers' and or 'indicators' of growth and development in literacy that teachers could employ, and how these 'markers' or 'indicators' could be applied and reported in ways that are congruent with the language learning theories underpinning classroom practices.
This is a need this inquiry attempted to fulfill. Both the educational and socio-political contexts and the issues of assessment and evaluation provided a strong rationale for the stated purpose of the inquiry - to describe, analyse and evaluate the process a teacher/researcher experienced in the implementation of responsive evaluation as a means of assessing literacy development in a whole-language classroom.

Pearson and Valencia (1987) claim that good ethnographies of the real and perceived uses of assessment devices conducted at the classroom, school and district levels are necessary in order to address the issues of appropriate procedures. It is at the classroom level that this inquiry is set.

It is also a timely inquiry in respect to prevalence of the debate in both educational and socio-political circles related to the implementation of formal, standardised testing. Some educators advocate alternative models of assessment of literacy such as naturalistic and responsive evaluation. By describing, analysing and evaluating the assumptions that underly both the formal, standardised paradigm and the informal, naturalistic paradigm, this inquiry will further inform the debate related to alternative models of assessment and evaluation.

The nature of the theory that supports the values about language learning and development inherent in the whole-language teaching practices evident in the classroom in which this inquiry was conducted, will also be examined. This examination of theory and its interaction with practice will go some way towards fulfilling the need for an expanded knowledge base about language and learning.

PERSONAL THEORY OF THE TEACHER-RESEARCHER

As a university graduate with twelve years classroom experience I commenced further post-graduate inquiry in the field of literacy, five years prior to this inquiry. The outcome was the development of a greater awareness of contemporary thinking related to language and learning and an understanding of the knowledge base built upon educational ethnographic research into the developmental practices of children learning to read and write. The propositions that this
contemporary thinking about language learning presented was the catalyst for change in my classroom teaching practices. The premise on which much of this thinking was based, that is 'that language learning is fostered successfully in supportive meaning-centred environments, with high regard for the meeting of personal needs and interests', found harmony with my personal beliefs in the rights of individuals and the need to work collaboratively in all learning situations.

With concern for 'meaning' as the central focus to all language learning, I endeavoured to translate the tenets of these contemporary language learning theories into classroom practices. Throughout subsequent years of teaching and continually growing in the understanding of how we learn to be literate I refined these practices to the point at which they found expression in this inquiry.

Consequentially the inquiry is predicated on a personal theory. It is 'personal' in the sense that is built on the basis of knowledge drawn from experiences in teaching and my own learning that have confirmed my belief in the validity of these practices.

PHYSICAL CONTEXT - SITE AND PARTICIPANTS

The inquiry took place in an Australian school in the state of New South Wales. The school was a private Catholic primary school for children aged 5-12 years. It was situated in a semi-urban, medium density suburb of an industrial city on the south coast of the state, and was a large school by Australian standards with a population of over 500 students. Class sizes ranged between twenty-five to thirty students per grade.

The class in which this inquiry was conducted was a Grade Five (ages 10-11 years) totalling twenty-seven students. The majority of class members shared a Catholic religious background and came from two parent families with average socio-economic levels. Most parents were employed in either skilled or semi-skilled occupations, with the exception of one or two employed in semi-professional occupations.

The class community reflected the ethnic/cultural composition of the local community. The city of Wollongong historically has had a high migrant composition, Dapto, the city suburb in which the school
is located, is one of the oldest suburbs and therefore has a base population of established Australian families and second generation migrant families. Of the class of twenty-seven, ten students had parents who were born overseas. For five of these children English was their second-language.

On the whole the students were 'normal' ten year olds with no overt physical or emotional problems. Some children had experienced emotional difficulties in their personal lives, due to parental separation, the death of a relative or close friend and the emotional upheavals related to peer relationships. These stresses were important aspects of the social fabric of the class community and were acknowledged as such by all members, both teacher and students.

The class consisted of eleven girls and sixteen boys. Many of the children knew me personally prior to joining the class due to the fact that I had been teaching at the school for the previous four years, I had taught many of their sisters and brothers, and I had worked closely with them in extra-curricular activities such as drama and sporting groups. Both students and parents appreciated that a research inquiry centred on literacy development would be undertaken throughout the year and that the school principal was most supportive of this endeavour.

At the regular Grade Information Night for parents conducted at the beginning of each school year, I explained how I intended to orchestrate student learning and the monitoring of this learning throughout the year. Parent's queries were answered and their opinions and suggestions sought. They were encouraged to complete an open-ended questionnaire to assist in the initial data collection and they were also encouraged to visit the class at any time to discuss matters relating to their child.

SUMMARY OF INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the educational, socio-political and physical contexts that directly influenced myself the teacher/researcher as I carried out the year-long inquiry. Chapter two reviews the literature of assessment and evaluation in order to address the issues a teacher/researcher faces in coming to understand the assumptions underlying assessment and evaluation.
This necessitated the exploration of the terminology, ideological influences and the determination of the assessment agendas that are evident in the contemporary socio-political and educational contexts. Implicitly the review highlights the need for the development of an understanding regarding the relationship between how language is learned and the assessment and evaluation of that learning.

Chapter three will explore the literature on whole-language for an understanding of the development of the whole-language movement, its theoretical roots and the assessment and evaluation practices that are congruent with its theory of learning, language learning and teaching. The chapter provides the background that influenced the construction of the inquiry focus.

Chapter four outlines the educational and inquiry paradigm of this research. It also discusses the research methods consistent with these paradigms and the subsequent emergent design of the inquiry which traced the process of development, implementation and evaluation of responsive evaluation procedures employed to assess language growth and development in a Year five class. Being both teacher and researcher implied that the presuppositions that I held at the time of the inquiry, and the theoretical beliefs that emerged from these presuppositions were reflected in the research methodological design.

Chapters five and six offer a presentation and analysis of the two levels of data that emerged from the inquiry. This is achieved through the description, explanation and interpretation of the data collected from the observations of the teacher and the the interactions between teacher and students, and the subsequent tracking of student language growth and development throughout the twelve months. As a consequence the assessment procedures that were employed and the set of assessment cues that became apparent are described and evaluated.

In conclusion chapter seven conceptualises and evaluates the whole process that I experienced as a teacher/researcher and in doing so illustrates the model of evaluation grounded in the data that emerges as an outcome of the inquiry. In addition this chapter reviews the contribution the inquiry makes to a broader and deeper understanding of assessment as an integral teaching and learning classroom practice. Implications and recommendations for further research will also be discussed in this chapter.
CHAPTER 2

THE THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND TO ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

This chapter sets out to explore the issues that a teacher/researcher needs to rationalise when considering the impact of historical and ideological concepts of assessment and evaluation on the current debate about the assessment of student learning.

In light of this focus the review of the literature on assessment and evaluation will firstly;

(i) briefly explain the historical concept of the terminology of 'assessment' and 'evaluation' and then explore the terms within contemporary educational perspectives, in order to arrive at a working definition for this inquiry.
(ii) discuss the traditional ideological influences inherent in school curricula, and the means by which these are mediated by other influences.

Secondly it will review contemporary assessment practices by;
(iii) identifying the purposes for the setting of an 'assessment' agenda.
(iv) examining the underlying assumptions and the means of assessment.

The summary discussion will pose the question 'Can the purposes and means of assessment and evaluation as proposed by opposing agendas improve teaching and learning?' In attempting to answer this question a brief discussion of alternative assessment and evaluation directions and practices will conclude the chapter.

1. TERMINOLOGY OF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Throughout the literature the contemporary use of the terms 'assessment' and 'evaluation' is related to the process of determining a student's learning outcome or performance. British and European educators consistently use the term 'assessment' to refer to the act of measuring learning outcomes of students, whilst American and to some extent Canadian, Australian and New Zealand educators use either term to serve this purpose. These different interpretations are drawn from the contexts, the beliefs and the purposes of the authors.
Identifying these interpretations provides a conceptual framework for the discussion of the issues of assessment and evaluation of learning outcomes.

Dictionary definitions of the term 'assessment' do not represent the reality of the term's current use. The verb form of 'assess' is frequently defined as an estimation of value, the fixing or determining of amounts or measuring or evaluating. According to this definition, in the context of scrutinising or examining closely a student's learning, assessing would involve estimating, fixing, determining or measuring the learner's understanding and use of specific knowledge, skills and processes. This definition is not however without challenge in the literature related to the assessment of learning. Discussion most frequently surrounds the issue of whether an assessment of learning need include preordinate measures. As this is a vigorously debated issue it will be explored in some depth in this chapter.

The definition offered for the verb form 'evaluate' equates the term with ascertaining value or the amount of value, and appraising carefully. In this definition there is less emphasis on measurement which may account for the use of the term by some educators in preference to 'assessment' when determining learning outcomes. What is accepted by all users of the term evaluation is that it involves a process of collecting a wide variety of information for decision making. Within this concept measuring learning outcomes is considered to be 'only one means of collecting information and therefore is not synonymous with evaluation' (Farr and Carey 1986 p.1).

Although these explanations constitute distinct understandings of the terms 'assessment' and 'evaluation', in much of the assessment and evaluation literature, the distinctions begin to blur. The following examples illustrate this point.

Costa (1989) writes in an editorial entitled 'Re-Assessing Assessment' of the need 'to overcome our habit of using product-oriented assessment techniques to measure process-oriented education.' He outlines four changes that he sees as necessary for this re-assessment and then concludes 'the ultimate purpose of evaluation is to enable students to evaluate themselves.'
Another example can be found in an article by Clay (1990) titled 'What is and What Might Be in Evaluation'. She writes 'quantifiable test results ... force us ....to single out specific competencies for evaluation.' She goes on to say that, 'Informal evaluations can be designed to give reliable results.' and continues '...these task-involved assessments are real ones'. She concludes with a call for, 'assessment researchers to help me solve some of the challenges identified in my paper'.

The observed juxtaposition of these terms in the current literature suggest they are in the process of being re-defined and it can be shown that historical perspectives and influences of knowledge expansion in educational research account for much of this redefinition.

A historical perspective in relation to this redefined concept of evaluation is gained by viewing the emergence of evaluation as a discipline within curriculum research. The curriculum as a specialised field of study in the USA, can be traced directly to the launching of Sputnik by the USSR in 1957, which was seen as an indicator of the failure of American science education. In all other industrial countries during the 1960s increasing emphasis on the effectiveness of curricula and the introduction of new curriculums brought about an examination of the practices to ascertain whether they achieved improved student learning. This scrutiny relied on either the 'experimental model' to see if those students who were taught using a new curriculum did better than those who had not been exposed to it, or on the 'curriculum objectives' model (Tyler 1931, Bloom 1956), where the task of the evaluator became one of specifying the objectives of the new curriculum in precise terms, so that measurements could be taken after the curriculum had been adopted to see if these objectives were achieved (Easthope, Maclean and Easthope 1990). Achievement was determined by preordinate measures in both models.

'Testing was an integral part of both the so-called measurement movement and Tyler's work on curriculum design.' (Davis 1981 p.24)

By the 1960's doubts about the completeness of these approaches began to appear;
'The measurement approach to evaluation involved a heavy reliance on scores and other indices that could be manipulated mathematically and statistically. Variables which were unmeasurable tended to be ignored and this imposed a serious limitation on the utility of such evaluation' (Henderson 1978, in Davis 1981, p. 18)

Other doubts arising from the fact that few of the new curricula were actually adopted by teachers despite the vast sums of money being pumped into their development. This realisation alerted researchers to problems that required some new answers.

In response a search for new modes of evaluation began. Researchers such as Lawrence Stenhouse leading a group of researchers in England called CARE (Centre for Applied Research in Education) began developing a series of issues and topics for discussion that have since become central to the field of curriculum evaluation. Their work in educational evaluation continues today through others such as Robert Stake (1967), Elliot Eisner (1972) and Lincoln and Guba (1985). When these evaluators address issues specifically related to the classroom they turn their attention to describing the situation of the teacher and the teaching of the curriculum occurring in the classroom. They draw on anthropological and ethnographic research and inquiry from a theoretical base known as an 'illuminative paradigm', or as it has been more recently termed the 'naturalistic paradigm', which rejects the assumptions upon which the previously employed 'rationalistic paradigm' was based.

The evaluations they employ are not measurement based 'and do not depend upon the capacity to manipulate esoteric instruments' (Skilbeck 1977, in Davis 1981 p.17). They do not employ a preordinate approach dependent on the capacity to state education outcomes in terms of student behaviour or, and the capacity to discern the accomplishments of prior stated purposes. They do not design achievement tests, performance tests, or observation checklists to provide evidence that pre-specified goals are or are not achieved (Stake 1975). The new modes of evaluation in educational context were primarily employed to evaluate curriculum. They relied on a variety of information collected continuously, and acknowledged that both process and product information were important for educational decision making.
Educators today in the field of evaluating student learning outcomes recognise the value of these methods to 'carefully appraise' student learning outcomes and as a result new directions in student assessment are being taken. This involves judging learning performance based on input obtained from a variety of contexts in order to make decisions related to improving student learning outcomes. The new direction is one explanation for the emergence of the term 'evaluation' in preference to 'assessment' when referring to the process of making an educational decision in relation to student learning outcomes. It is now becoming accepted that systematic evaluations can provide both 'close scrutiny' and 'careful appraisal' in the evaluand (that which is being evaluated) contributing to the determination of learning outcomes without the use of measurement indices.

In conjunction with these historical influences, knowledge expansion as reflected in the writing of contemporary researchers in the field of evaluation has also contributed to improved means of determining student learning outcomes.

Back in 1969 Stake and Denny characterised the broad concept of evaluation in this way:

'evaluation is the discovery of the nature and worth of something' (Stake and Denny 1969, in Kemmis and Stake, 1988, p.15).

This definition was compatible with the view of evaluation as a pervasive aspect of human activity, present in a range of individual and public processes which required the exercise of human and social judgment (Kemmis and Stake 1988).

The definition was refined soon after by specialists in the field of educational evaluation of curriculum. The definition took on a technical emphasis as 'discovery' was refined and broadened to:

'a process of delineating, obtaining and providing information useful for making decisions' (Stufflebeam et al 1971 and Groundwater-Smith and Nicoll 1980, p. 1).

Inherent in this definition was the notion that evaluation was performed in the service of decision making because it provided
information for those who made decisions in the educational context. This assumption forms the basis of the New South Wales Government Committee of Review of Schools Statement (1989) relating to evaluation:

"The ultimate purpose of evaluation is to help in decision making. ...No matter what the focus of evaluation (teacher, classroom, student, program, school) the subsequent decisions can involve planning, formative and summative aspects" (Carrick Report - The Committee of Review of New South Wales Schools Report 1989, p.27).

Another assumption drawn from this definition is that it is a cyclic process implemented through a systematic program. Its three main process steps of delineating, obtaining and providing become the basis for a methodology of evaluation. The understand that is conveyed is that delineating and providing require collaboration between decision maker and the evaluator, but that obtaining is largely a technical activity which is executed mainly by the evaluator (Kemmis and Stake 1988, p. 16). There is also an assumption that a range of distinct alternatives can be articulated and that a specific value can be placed on each. Defined in this way evaluation becomes a technical matter rather than a matter of practical judgments by thoughtful people (Reid 1978).

By 1980s Kemmis, Stake and other educational evaluators (McTaggart 1984 in Kemmis and Stake 1988, Bates 1988) considered that acceptance of these assumptions as an interpretation of evaluation reduced the process of evaluation to a rationalistic, technical process which reinforced a hierarchical, bureaucratic and managerial perspective (Kemmis and Stake 1988, Reid 1978 and Bates 1988). Kemmis suggested that such evaluation practices negate the use of informed judgment. In response he offered an alternative definition for evaluation;

'.....it is the process of marshalling information and arguments which enable interested individuals and groups to participate in the critical debate about a specific programme' (Kemmis 1982a, p.222).

Kemmis' definition of evaluation becomes a process employed 'in the judging of circumstances and systems that shape the opportunities to learn'. (Kemmis and Stake 1988, p.21).
He identifies four levels at which this form of judgment occurs:

(1) at the level of curriculum evaluation, concerning the educational arrangements of the whole curricula and particular courses,
(2) at the level of program evaluation, concerning general institutional arrangements,
(3) at the level of student learning evaluation, concerning the opportunities for learning from a particular teaching/learning encounter; and
(4) at the level of student assessment concerning the outcomes of student learning (Kemmis 1982 b, p.340-1).

The distinction drawn by Kemmis between the level of 'student learning evaluation' and at of 'student assessment' is an example of the way in which knowledge expansion in the field has begun to re-define the use of the terms. Other writers such as Elliott, Harlen and Simons (1979, in Davis 1981) also drew distinctions and in doing so revealed the multi-dimensional nature of the term 'assessment'. In an attempt to explain the relationship between 'evaluation', 'assessment' and 'measurement' they offered the following diagram;

![Diagram showing the relationship between assessment, measurement, evaluation, information, description, and judgement about the information.](image)

This interpretation indicates that assessment involved some attempt at measurement in order 'to quantify the information, whilst in description only qualitative information is gathered' (ibid, p.17).

Rowntree questions this interpretation he claims that;

'Despite one of the assumptions commonly made in the literature, assessment is not obtained only, or even necessarily, through tests and examinations. Finding out about a student's abilities ... may not involve testing him {or her} or measuring his {or her} performance in any formal way.' (Rowntree 1975, p.4).
Davis (1981, p.17) agrees with this view and explains that the role of measurement within evaluation should be viewed as only one method of obtaining some kinds of data or information. However he also suggests that to criticise an overemphasis on measurement is not to deny the value of measurement in certain types of evaluation or in providing part of the information in an evaluation. Teale, Hiebert and Chittenden suggest that;

"Assessing means gathering information to meet diverse needs .... it draws upon a variety of instruments and strategies, depending upon conditions. Testing, by contrast, refers to one particular method for obtaining this information about learning" (1987, p.723).

This broadening of the term 'measurement' as it relates to assessment was reflected in a recent change of title for a column in an American journal dealing with the measurement of reading. Previously entitled Test Reviews it was renamed Assessment due to the fact that editors requested a broader view then, 'the administration of published tests' (Pikulski 1989, p.81).

Arthur L. Costa, also expressed the need for a broader view of assessment when as guest editor to the journal Educational Leadership (April 1989) he stated;

"We must expand the range and variety of assessment techniques we use ....authentic assessments include direct observation of behaviour, portfolios of student's work, long-term projects, logs and journals, student interviews, videotapes of student performance, and writing samples. A variety of assessment data yields a more vivid and reliable picture of student growth than standardised test scores alone".

The shift away from measurement being the sole index of assessment is supported by Satterly in a book titled Assessment in Schools (1981). Satterly claims that the term 'assessment' is best described by its Latin root assidere meaning 'to sit beside'. This view is well expressed by Rowntree (1977);

' Assessment in education can be thought of as occurring whenever one person, in some kind of interaction, direct or indirect, with another, is conscious of obtaining and interpreting information
about the knowledge and understandings, or abilities and attitudes of
that other person. To some extent or other it is an attempt to know
that person. In this light, assessment can be seen as human
encounter. In education we are mainly conscious of this 'encounter' in
the shape of teachers finding out about their students ... or (the
student or teacher) finding out about himself (herself) - via self
assessment ' (Rowntree 1977, p.4).

Rowntree believes that assessment is integral to learning, that it
is a process of interaction between those participating in a learning
context, that is the teacher and the student attempting to discover
what the student is becoming or has accomplished. This perspective
closely matches the notion of evaluation as being a process of the
discovering of value and the careful appraisal of the evaluand, in this
case the student.

In summary then, the debate surrounding the terms 'assessment'
and 'evaluation' is centred around two issues. The first relates to the
historical perception of 'evaluation', now finding expression in the
definition drawn by researchers in the field of curriculum evaluation.
The second issue relates to the debate on the use of measurement
indices as whole or part of the redefined process of
evaluation/assessment as a result of knowledge expansion in the field
of assessment and evaluation of student learning.

(i) The first issue relates to the distinction some curriculum
researchers draw between the terms expressed thus;

' ... in education these days, we speak about assessment mostly in
reference to measuring and judging the quality of student
performance; we speak of evaluation in reference to judging the
quality of curricula, educational programs or whole education systems'.
The term assessment is more specialised; it is reserved for the
measurement of student learning as an outcome of performance. The
term evaluation is used in the judging of circumstances and systems
that shape opportunities to learn ' (Kemmis and Stake 1988, p. 21).

Adoption of concepts such as these, result in the following
curriculum statements ;
'Assessment is the process of gathering evidence and of making judgments about students' needs, strengths, and abilities and achievements. Evaluation is the process of gathering evidence of and making judgments about the effectiveness of teaching programs, policies and procedures.' (NSW Department of School Education Draft English K-6 1990, p. 69)

In contrast to this, other educators have extended the curriculum evaluation concept and merged the different components into one and the same process for determining student learning outcomes.

'In education in Britain it is common to use the two words to refer to two different though closely-related activities. If assessment tries to discover what the student is becoming or has accomplished, then evaluation tries to do the same for a course or learning experience or episode of teaching.

It may seem that there are two processes here, however Rowntree goes on to clarify this by suggesting that:

'If evaluation is an attempt to identify and explain the effects (and effectiveness) of the teaching, assessment is clearly a necessary component in this attempt' (Rowntree 1977, p.6-7).

The perception held by Rowntree, which is also reflected in comments by many other contemporary educators, is that the processes used in evaluation methodologies complement the close scrutiny data obtained from assessment procedures used in assessing student learning outcomes. This combination they now call 'evaluation' with a student-centred focus.

The merger of 'curriculum evaluation' concepts with 'assessment' practices within the context of student-centred evaluation, creates a macro or holistic view of student learning outcomes. Acceptance of this merger does not however render the roles of evaluation and assessment indistinguishable. 'Assessment' maintains its feature of being a practice of close scrutiny of specific learning tasks and can involve measurement of various types. 'Evaluation' can still maintain its role of accounting for the learning contexts but in addition it becomes a summative process of drawing together the focused assessments in order to provide a macro view of student learning.
outcomes.

(ii) The second issue related to the two terms is the concept of measurement in respect to evaluation and assessment.

Some writers claim that measurement of outcomes plays only a contributing role in this close scrutiny (Gipps, Steadman, Blackstone and Stierer 1983, in Madaus 1985, and Wick 1987). While many concede that measurement is integral to an assessment act (Masters 1990), there is much debate as to what form of measurement most effectively serves particular purposes.

The quantitative aspect, or the 'formal' aspect of the measurement concept, commonly conceived to be a standardised form of testing, faces many challenges to its reliability in determining learning outcomes due to its decontextualised nature. It is claimed that in reality 'formal measures' are 'indirect measures' of assessing, that is they are constructed without consideration of the learners, the learning content or the learning environment (Madaus 1985, Pearson and Valencia 1987, Barrs 1989, Salinger 1990, Clay 1990).

Qualitative or 'informal' measures, on the other hand can be deemed 'direct' measures of assessing, due to their sensitivity to the the learner, the learning content and the learning environment (Pearson and Valencia 1987, Anthony, Field, Johnson, Mickelson and Preece undated). Examples of these such as logs, journals, surveys, interviews, frequency tallies, and records of observable patterns of performance, can contain both description and measurement.

Those educators who adopt a student-centred focused evaluation, place very little emphasis on indirect measures of assessing as part of evaluation. This accounts for their use of the term 'evaluation' even when speaking of assessing practices. Within this perspective 'assessment strategies' have become 'evaluation strategies' and reflect the redefining process evident in the literature.

**WORKING DEFINITIONS FOR ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

In view of the discussion drawn from the perspectives of the literature reviewed here, the following working definitions will be adopted for the purposes of this inquiry.
'Assessment' will refer to the processes, the judgments and decisions that are drawn from specific teaching/learning episodes.

'Evaluation' will refer to the judgments and decisions formed from these assessments within the total teaching/learning context.

These definitions place the teaching program or curriculum, the teacher's practices and procedures set up to support learning, under close scrutiny within the assessment episode. The practices and procedures are considered in terms of their effectiveness or ineffectiveness in the support of student learning. In this way assessment is in partnership with evaluation when the judgment and decision making aspect of an overall evaluation is called for. At the classroom level the distinction between the terms fades. Assessment and evaluation are viewed as simultaneous occurrences.

Therefore throughout this review and the subsequent report of the inquiry under examination it will be accepted that when the process of evaluation is referred to it is implicit that assessment is an inherent part of that process. When assessment is used it will be accepted that it explicitly relates to specific incidents or procedures and as such is the 'micro' component of a broader 'macro' process of evaluation.

2. IDEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES ON ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Educational evaluation in its broadest sense involves intense observations or 'ways of seeing'. Aspects of evaluation encapsulate orientations to the idea of quality, to questions of understanding and interpretation, and to action as a result of these understandings and interpretations. Evaluation invites people to think about the relationship between the actual and the possible. This attitude of critical appraisal arouses the possibility of improving, through action, what has been evaluated (Kemmis and Stake 1988).

Due to the fact that individual orientations, understandings, interpretations and critical appraisal play such a profound role in any evaluative process, the political characteristic of evaluation cannot be denied.
'...the very impulse of evaluation is to link the thoughts - the understandings and interpretations - of real people to action and to real contexts of action. Whose questions does it answer? Whose perspectives does it recognise and emphasis? Whose work does it affect? Whose interests does it serve? Though it may pretend to be impartial or even to conceal the interests it serves, an evaluation's stock-in-trade is the values and interests of specific groups '(Kemmis and Stake 1988, p. 9).

Political beliefs and values, orientate individual interpretations and understandings. Such orientations can be defined in terms of ideologies. It could be said that ideologies are defined by the ideas and beliefs that emerge from the process of interaction between consciousness, and the social and political world.

Generally the concept of ideology is treated as meaning a form of beliefs. But Apple and Weis (1983) encourage an ideology concept of social processes that overlap, compete, drown out, and clash with each other. He stresses the notion that ideology not only subjects people to pre-existing social order, but that it also qualifies members of that order to bring about social action and change.

"In this way ideologies function as much more than the cement that holds society together. They empower as well as depower." (Therborn 1980, in Apple and Weis 1983, p. 24 )

In accepting Apple and Weis' concept of ideology an assumption can be drawn that when people begin to assign value to phenomena as they do in an act of evaluation, they call into play their ideological viewpoint.

Karier perceives the connection between evaluation and ideology to be,

'a complex process, [wherein] evaluation involves assigning value to phenomena while ideology is the set of values and attitudes that make up the composite picture of social and individual philosophy 'by which men [sic] in a given culture profess to live. In this context, evaluation inevitably occurs within some kind of value orientation as part of an ideological framework' (Karier 1974 p. 279 ).
Schools activate their members' collective ideologies when value orientations are employed in the educational activity of evaluating student learning outcomes. Given that ideologies expressed through value orientations can reflect and reproduce the wider society it is necessary to understand ideologies and how they are reflected in educational evaluation.

Over the last two decades, various theories for the explanation of how schooling transmits ideology have emerged. One such theory was that of Bowles and Gintis's who claimed in *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976) that the ideological function of the school was determined by the economic needs of the emerging American economy. In their view the meritocratic system of school administration, curriculum, and assessment, functioned efficiently to reproduce class stratification and labour needs in an expanding industrial society (Luke 1988).

In recent years curriculum and culture theorists such as Apple and Weis (1983) whilst still agreeing with the basic notion of schools as centres where society is reproduced, nevertheless believe that schools are not passive mirrors of an economy, but are instead active agents in the process of reproduction and contestation of dominant social relations. Williams believes that schools do not teach 'an imposed ideology ...the isolable meanings and practices of the ruling class' but rather 'tolerate a range of forms of knowledge and competences' (Williams in Luke 1988, p. 23).

Henry Giroux in *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling* believes that there is naivety in stressing the economic, rather than the cultural basis of curricula content. He argues that schools are more than 'ideological reflections of the dominant interests of the wider community' and that the process of knowledge transmission is mediated by the cultural field of the classroom and human subjects engaged in educational practice at all levels, in a manner which precludes 'predeterminate effects' (Giroux 1982 in Luke 1988, p. 26).

Luke supports this claim stating that the selection of practices, knowledge, and what counts as competences in school curricula serve the interests of particular classes and forms of social organisation, but that they need not constitute a mirror reflection of ruling-class ideas, imposed in an unmediated and coercive manner (Luke 1988).
These views are in concert with the theories of contestation of reproduction linking curriculum and culture espoused earlier by Gramsci (1957). He drew attention to the processes of contestation by which reproduction and transformation of culture, society and the economy occur. He claimed that the school not only constructs views of culture and society, which it selects and represents in the formal, 'official' curriculum, but that it is also a part of the fabric of the contestation processes characteristic of that society at large.

Evaluation is a practice that determines the concrete action of teachers and students in a teaching/learning context. It is a social practice within the routine activities of the classroom (Giroux’s previously mentioned cultural field) and as such is a fundamental and contentious 'mediating' tool, providing one of the arenas in which the questions of what is taught, how it is taught, and how what is taught will be assessed, and to whom and by whom these activities occur.

Contestation within this arena can take many forms as is evident in the following statement.

'Various groups will disagree over the curriculum. Some employers, for example, will argue for greater attention to certain skill; others will prefer schools to take responsibility for providing a good general education, from which more specialised skills can be developed. Employers and tertiary institutions, parents and teachers, politicians and officers of education departments may all disagree over what should be emphasised. These disagreements may emerge at the level of the state, the system, the region, or the school. In the realisation of the curriculum (that is in its practice in schools and classrooms) there is also conflict; between teachers within schools, between teachers and students, and between the interests of different groups of students, in terms of gender, class, ethnicity or other dimensions' (Kemmis and Stake 1988, p. 47).

Conflict and therefore 'contestation' has been recently evident in the Australian educational context. Part of the New South Wales State Government plans to strengthen schools included the introduction of basic skills testing in primary schools in 1989. This decision itself is drawn from an ideology with underlying assumptions that will be dealt with further on in this chapter. The tests were to cover aspects of
literacy and numeracy. The first evidence of contestation in respect to this practice became apparent at an annual research seminar for tertiary institutions where research into the impact of the testing program on teaching and other school practices, was listed as a priority. A request that an evaluation be undertaken was made to the Department of School Education, and following discussions it was agreed that such a study should take place (Outhred, Bouchner and Cooney 1990).

Further evidence of contestation came about as parents and teachers voiced their concerns in the data of the evaluation study. The study involved a series of case studies in a sample of schools. It was undertaken over a period of time covering the preparation for the introduction of the tests, the administration of the tests and the reports of the test results to schools and parents.

Twenty-seven recommendations represented the outcomes of the study which was completed in March 1990. However these were not officially released until May of 1990. The final public release of these recommendation had been preceded by pressure from the New South Wales Teachers' Federation on behalf of concerned teachers. This was evidence of contestation yet again.

The evaluation report found that the original rationale for the testing program, that of diagnosis of individual learning problems or areas of weakness, was unfounded, and that:

'testing should only continue for the next three years, as a 'census-style' monitoring of standards, informing parents and general screening of students, rather than the diagnosis of individual learning areas of weakness'. and

Unless there is evidence that the tests serve a purpose other than monitoring Statewide standards, then from 1993 the census-style Testing Program should be replaced by large-sample testing to monitor Statewide standards (Outhred, Bouchner and Cooney 1990, p. 77).

These incidents can be viewed as manifestations of the concept of 'contestation' at various levels. At the 'grass roots' level criticism such as the following was evident.
The NSW Government's decision to introduce statewide testing in literacy and numeracy in 1989 was immediately opposed by various professional associations of English and Mathematics teachers, the NSW Parents and Citizen Federation, the NSW Aboriginal Consultative Group, the Teachers Federation, the Independent Teachers' Association and various migrant groups; later opposition came from within the Catholic School community. Just prior to the administration of the tests, some sixty academics and researchers took out a press advertisement calling for parents to withdraw their children from the testing program' (Dwyer 1990, p. 8).

And at a formalised level the following statements from the previously cited report, were voiced.

'Teachers considered that some of the important issues inadequately explained included, the purpose of the Testing Program, the use of the results, exemptions, and special provisions. They felt that these problems could be minimised if the officers responsible for writing such documents interviewed a small sample of teachers from schools with widely different student populations, to ensure that the documents that they were preparing focused on teacher concerns' (Outhred, Bouchner and Cooney 1990, p. 35).

The testing introduced into New South Wales schools was seen by many as a bureaucratic intrusion into schools (Dwyer, Shrub, Cohen, Cambourne and Little 1989). Dwyer believed that 'this technocratic approach to schooling is now emerging as a dominating influence in Australian schooling. ... As the political selling of this 'reform' and its underpinning ideology warms up, various myths about testing have been created and popularised ' (1989, p. 3).

What is needed according to these educators who oppose such testing is the exposure of the myths and assumptions that underly the world of mass testing. These myths, assumptions and ideologies that surround assessment and evaluation practices are revealed in the purposes and means of any assessment agenda.
3. **ASSESSMENT AGENDAS**

The broad concept of an agenda is of things to be done. It can be a program or plan and is usually preceded by a process of 'agenda setting', that is, raising awareness of the issues publicly. An agenda for assessment conforms to this concept. Its 'thing to be done' is the determination of learning outcomes.

The setting of an agenda presupposes a set of purposes with inherent ideologies, out of which an agenda emerges. The agenda, or the program of things to be achieved from the process of assessing, becomes a public manifestation of these underlying assumptions and beliefs.

The literature reveals the following two interrelated and interdependent aspects of an assessment agenda that reflect ideologies.

(i) the purposes that an assessment agenda serves, and
(ii) the means by which the purposes are achieved.

The purposes served by student assessment can be represented on a continuum. Broadly stated one extremity represents the maintenance of society's established procedures by fulfilling the purpose of accountability, selection and standardisation. This involves measuring 'standards' of students to determine the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. The other end of the continuum represents the critique of teaching and learning practices. This involves monitoring teaching and learning in order to inform and improve teaching and learning processes.

Blackmore (1988) claims that when the purpose of student assessment becomes that of 'taking account of' (accountability) of the education service offered by teachers and schools, or it serves the purpose of selection and allocation on the basis of ability then it becomes 'an instrument for broader contexts outside schools' and therefore serves as an 'instrumental' purpose. In contrast when the purposes are related to the improvement of the teaching and learning process it can be deemed an 'educative' purpose (1988, p. 5).
The clear distinction between these purposes presupposes that there are two agendas. The education policy makers, formulators of mandated assessment practices and educators with selection purposes set an agenda that employs assessment as an 'instrument' to achieve stated objectives and structures external to the school. An agenda that is drawn up by those whose purpose it is to increase the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process for all participants in education, students, parents, teachers, teachers-of-teachers, educational commentators and researchers is called an 'educative' agenda, one that Kemmis suggests aims to provide 'explanations of student's learning outcomes that are informative for those directly involved in shaping the opportunities to learn' (1988, p. 21).

The 'instrumental' and the 'educative' agendas both claim their purposes of education to be the development of the young intellectually, socially, physically and morally. There is also agreement on the enhancement of the knowledge, skills and values of the young towards achievement of personal fulfilment and contribution to a better society. However it has been suggested that there is a necessity, 'long overdue for bringing to life the potential buried in some of the rhetoric' (Edelsky 1988, p.70) that there is a very different interpretation by each agenda of what education is really for.

With this in mind the purposes of the instrumental and educative agenda need to be drawn out for broader professional inspection.

THE INSTRUMENTAL AGENDA

In Australia the instrumental agenda has become evident in statements such as 'Strengthening Australia's Schools' as part of the Government's May Economic statement by the Federal Minister of Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins. In it he stated that:

'The Australian economy is part way through a process of substantial structural change. The lesson we have learned is a need for a more balanced industrial structure and increased flexibility and responsiveness in the economy.'
Adjustment of our economy is inevitable and necessary if we and our children are to have meaningful and fulfilling lives. ...As part of this adjustment, parents and the community generally have rightly come to expect schools to provide young Australians with all the knowledge and skills, and especially contemporary skills, they will need in life' (Dawkins 1988, p. 1).

These same underlying beliefs are also reflected in state documents;

'Schooling cannot be oblivious to the major economic and technological challenges that face Australia. Australia is a debtor nation facing the urgent task of re-structuring its economy and greatly increasing its productivity and competitiveness. That urgency has to be reflected in our schools' (Excellence and Equity 1989, p. 10).

In another official discussion of the purposes of education in a comprehensive review (1989 Carrick Report) conducted in New South Wales, a call was made for the traditional concept of general education to be broadened to include economic, technical and practical knowledge. This call was addressed in a subsequent Curriculum Reform Document in which the broadened concept became 'contemporary education'.

'The Government's overall goal is to provide a broad and balanced high quality, contemporary education relevant both to individual development and fulfilment and to the social and economic challenges facing Australia' (Excellence and Equity 1989, p.11 emphasis added).

These examples from the Australian context reveal purposes with inherent ideologies that manifest a clear relationship between education and the nation's economic needs.

These perceptions are not confined to the Australian context. Apple and Jungck (1990) claim that in Britain and the United States;

'...educators have witnessed a massive attempt at exporting the crisis in the economy ...to the schools. If schools and their teachers were more tightly controlled, more closely linked to the needs of business and industry, more technically orientated, with more stress on traditional values and workplace norms and dispositions, then the
problems of achievement, of unemployment, of international economic competitiveness and so on would largely disappear, or so it is claimed (Apple and Jungck 1990, p. 228)

In offering another explanation why federal and state governments identify education as the arena for attention in time of crisis, Edelsky suggests it is used 'as a convenient scapegoat'. She suggests that 'the most charitable explanation for the connection made between trade deficits and kindergarten teachers is that people feel impotent in the face of overwhelming problems. ...... they substitute what is amenable to relatively immediate blame for what is not. Among all public domains, it is education that is imminently controllable' (1988, p. 397).

Farr and Carey (1986) also draw attention to the current 'corporation era' concept in education. They suggest that the corporate metaphor clouds judgments of what should happen in schools and implicitly requires application of criteria for excellence that are simplistic, misinformed, or both.

Discussion related to the instrumental agenda highlights the fact that economic rationalisation in education has become a substantial part of the explanation of what education is actually for. This ideology is manifested in the agenda's purposes which are summarised as:

(i) standardisation - the need to compare students, teachers and programs, across classes, schools and systems.
(ii) rationalisation - the need to determine efficient use of limited resources, and accountability on the part of teachers related to their teaching performance, and students in terms of their learning outcomes.
(iii) centralisation - the need for continuity in curriculum planning and determination i.e. the establishment of a 'core curriculum' (Apple and Jungck 1990).
Although justification can be established for these purposes in that they serve 'the organisational and material realities brought about by the fiscal crisis of the state' (ibid, p. 236) it may be the case that these purposes do not serve the needs of the recipients of the agenda, the teachers, the students and their parents.

In Australia Boomer suggests that because:

'we have seen governments setting the educational agenda as never before, ....largely driven by economic imperatives to lift national productivity ....it is important that curriculum thinkers find a way to re-enter the the debate to offset the worst effects of vested interests, particularly those with narrow, short term economic goals' (1990, p. 16-17)

Dwyer also alerts the community 'in allowing thinking and planning about its school to be dominated by technocratic forces and the ideology of the market place, [we are] being led into great folly - one that will ....distract us from the real issues of productive teaching and growth-enhancing learning' (Dwyer 1989, p. 8).

**THE EDUCATIVE AGENDA**

Those who attempt to set an educative agenda have quite different purposes. As previously mentioned this agenda does have in common with the instrumental agenda purposes of equality of opportunity and the concept of education for the whole of life with the aim of achieving the highest quality of education for all. However it does not have an overt concern for public expenditure restraint nor a concept of corporate planning and co-ordination. The perspective of educators who articulate this agenda claim that education should aim for the growth and development of the young in an atmosphere of shared and co-operative learning.

The purposes that this agenda serve include:

(i) gaining information regarding the progress of students
(ii) providing feedback to teachers, students and parents
(iii) diagnosing student learning needs and capacities
(iv) developing and improving teaching procedures and materials (Blackmore 1988).
Given that the educative agenda is primarily concerned for the enhancement of learning for all through an emphasis on social interaction, then interactions between, teacher and learner, the learning environment and the experience of the learner in the classroom need to be examined for their potential to enhance learning via the employment of alternative assessment practices (Broadfoot 1979).

Another issue needing to be addressed in relation to this agenda is the argument that the purposes ascribed to the educative agenda are implicit in the instrumental agenda. Whilst not denying this, educators who support the educative agenda believe that the 'value orientations' of the instrumental agenda contradict such a claim.

The discussion that follows will focus on the means used by each agenda to bring about the stated purposes relevant to each.

4. UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS AND MEANS OF PARTICULAR AGENDAS

In much of the literature the debate that 'rages' most visible is the one related to the means or the mode of assessment. The parameters of the argument are represented by statements such as;

' There must be an explicit recognition that the assessment and monitoring of student progress lies at the very heart of the learning process. ..... Regular feedback on student progress is essential not only to deciding on appropriate learning activities for individuals, but also to making intelligent decisions about areas of priority and special need for entire classes, schools and cohorts of students. In this process, carefully constructed assessment instruments (e.g. tests) have a crucial role to play' (Masters 1990, p. 32).

on the one hand, and;

' ...assessment can be practised without any kind of measurement that implies absolute standards .... there need be no requirement to compare the findings for one student with those for another, let alone arrange students in some kind of order as a result of such comparisons' (Rowntree 1977, p. 5).

on the other hand,
These positions frame the following discussion in which the various means of assessment will be examined for their underlying assumptions. Quantitative means of testing that characterise the instrumental agenda will be the initial focus. Informal means of assessment that are proposed by the educative agenda will also be examined for their ability to realise the stated purposes of the educative agenda.

The ideology driving the instrumental assessment agenda has been mentioned previously as that of overt concern for national concerns specifically economic. This ideology finds expression in the rhetoric of curriculum reform statements where the 'means' by which purposes will be achieved are clearly stated as being,

'fair, publicly credible systems of assessment, examination, certification and credentialling promoting equity and excellence and (with) regular testing of student's basic skills (being) implemented. (1989 Excellence and Equity New South Wales Department of School Education, p. 6)

and

'Teachers should ensure that all students are assessed formally ...a test is sometimes the simplest, fairest and most effective way to assess formally' (Student Record: Guidelines for Schools New South Wales Department of School Education 1990 p. 5).

Similar value was placed on formal testing by President Reagan on the occasion of an address to the United States Education Department's Annual Secondary School Recognition awards in 1984 when he said that the first goal of education was 'to regain at least half the losses of the past twenty years' on combined Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores. This is a 'big challenge', Reagan said, 'but it can be done if we try' (Farr and Carey 1986, p. 200).

Madaus (1985) claims:

'In mandating tests, policy makers have created the illusion that test performance is synonymous with the quality of education.

The philosophy underlying this illusion is utilitarian, concerned with social efficiency at the expense of wider, deeper purpose for education.
The debate about the use of tests in policy matters is really a debate about what we want from our schools. It is a debate about educational values and competing philosophies of education. It is a debate about means and ends. (1985, p. 617)

Pikulski (1990) reports that much of what is read and heard about these 'means' or measurement driven assessments is negative, and standardised tests are the target of much of the criticism. In spite of the fact that they are routinely criticised for their limitations and the harm that they do in progressing learning and teaching, they are nonetheless used extensively and increasingly throughout the world. What then are the reasons for this apparent anomaly?

It has been suggested that programs of mass-testing can be made attractive because they appeal to our rational side. 'Much of life is nebulous, subjective, clouded by value judgment, ambiguous, and complex. There are precious few times in an individual's life when a clear, concise, comprehensible bottom line exists.' (Farr and Carey 1986), 'testing ...seems to offer simple solutions to complex problems. The community reacts to issues that cause concern by demanding 'stricter tests'. Alarm over road safety (particular in light of the recent high incident of tragic accidents) for instance, leads to calls for the testing of interstate drivers and their buses' (Dwyer 1990, p.9).

One way to describe the value orientations that underly the means of assessment represented by the instrumental agenda is demonstrated succinctly by Cambourne when he says that this agenda believes;

(i) that learning is quantifiable and therefore measurable
(ii) that tests are objective and valid measurements
(iii) that the results obtained from the objective and valid measures can be generalised to the real world and used to improve teaching and learning (Cambourne 1988).

Each one of these assumptions is rigourously challenged in much of the literature.
ASSUMPTION 1. LEARNING IS QUANTIFIABLE AND MEASURABLE

'Whatever exists at all exists in some amount ... This is obviously the same creed as that of the physicist or chemist or physiologist engaged in quantitative thinking .... And, in general, the nature of educational measurements is the same as that of all scientific measurements' (Thorndike 1918, pp. 16-17, in Farr and Carey 1986, p.7).

It is the notion of science that has been all persuasive in respect to the use of tests in education. Faith in validity lead some educators to believe that a test would be the great equaliser of educational and economic opportunity regardless of social background. Since they were first employed by Binet in 1904 test proponents have adhered to the belief that learning can be measured. It is believed by these same proponents that via an instrument (a standardised test) a single measure can be attributed to an individual's abilities.

Many of the tests took the form known as standardised tests, that is norms have been established on a separate, but similar population. This form of test is composed of empirically selected items, has definite instructions for use, data on reliability, and validity; are norm-referenced i.e. the interpretation of scores is based on comparing the performance of one test taker against that of another in a specified group, or criterion-referenced i.e. the interpretation of the scores is made in relation to a previously specified performance level, or set of criteria.

It is believed by many however that appealing to a notion of testing in order to know how well students are learning, is a superficial response to a complex activity. Dwyer suggests;

'.. to accept that by means of simple test, we will know exactly how well children are being educated' is to accept 'with this exact knowledge we will be able to identify and attend to weaknesses as well as demonstrate how standards are rising as a result of our programs' is to deny what '..those in the world of schooling know, that human learning is complex and in reality tends to defy precise quantification' (Dwyer 1990, p. 8).
What Dwyer reveals is a basic assumption underpinning the dichotomy in setting an assessment agenda. Those who set and adopt an instrumental agenda employ measurement as the means of achieving its purposes and in doing so assume that human learning can be quantified. It is quantifiable because it can be broken down into discrete steps or fragments each of which can be measured. This constitutes a particular theory of learning. It also reflects a theory of knowledge that assumes knowledge is understood to be transmittable and fails to take into account the student's role as 'constructor of a continually developing view of the world and continually developing capabilities' (Boomer 1990, p. 20). Bruner (1975) and Cazden (1972) also allude to this notion of meaning being constructed by learners as opposed to being transmitted.

These theories are contested in much of the discussion surrounding standardised testing as a means of evaluation.

Donmoyer suggests that the theory of learning underpinning standardised tests is one of linear curricula structuring. By this he means 'learning that refers to the ability to demonstrate specific behaviours which curriculum developers have arranged in a logical step-by-step sequence; teaching refers to the transmission of these behaviours to students (usually through direct instruction) in the sequence specified by curriculum developers' (Donmoyer 1990, p. 275-276).

Masters (1990) in supporting the use of testing acknowledges this linear process and claims that methods of assessment of learning can define levels of achievement along carefully constructed learning continuums. Each of these levels is described in terms of the general types of tasks that readers at particular levels are likely to be able to perform, thus providing standards referenced interpretations of reading proficiency.

Edelsky expresses the view that there is a problem in the understanding that knowing is about knowing bits of information or fragments. The problem in this is that knowledge should not be characterised as information alone or a matter of imparting skills. Knowledge is a connected many-layered understanding of information. Also that knowledge can be viewed in terms of being god-given and handed down, that can be captured in a list or 'dictionary' is a misrepresentation of reality (Edelsky and Harman 1989).
Clay argues that with quantifiable test results we are forced to single out specific competences for evaluation, when a large part of education should be concerned with how we co-ordinate our information. She asks:

'Are we teaching children to store information so it can be recalled, or is learning how to use what we know, our real goal. .... Assessment must address this distinction' (Clay 1990, p. 294).

These arguments are well represented in the discussion related to standardised tests of reading.

'The conception of reading underlying standardised tests is fundamental flawed. Test writers ... think reading consists of separate skills, so tests have sections which separate word attack skills from vocabulary and from sentence comprehension and passage comprehension. ... Test makers ignore the interconnections and interdependence among the various language sub-systems., ...the activity can be analyzed after the fact into the ability to recognize words or identify main ideas.. . But just because the total activity can be analyzed into parts does not mean the separate parts add up to the total activity or that the part done outside the total act of reading works the same way as it does during real reading ' (Edelsky and Harman 1988, p. 158-159).

'Contrary to the testers' conception, reading is a complex whole activity' (Edelsky 1989, Goodman 1986, Haste et al., 1983, Smith 1986). This suggests that the tests are built on an outmoded and inadequate model of reading and its relation to language learning. Carey acknowledges this belief and advocates that there be a shift in the model of evaluation. He suggests that 'an evaluation should be something that is built from multiple experiences and as many different kinds of evidence as there are available. It's a lot more work then giving a bunch of kids a test. And it's never complete, because the experience of language learning is never complete’ (Carey 1988, p.13).

Pearson and Valencia also suggest that 'the model that underlies reading research, theory and practice comes into conflict with the model which governs our reading assessment practices, policies, and
decision-making' and they propose' an alternative way of conceptualising the relationship between assessment and instruction' as a remedy to the dilemma (Pearson and Valencia 1987, p. 3).

Langer and Pradl suggest that 'we must continually guard against the assumptions and misconceptions that surround standardised testing in the language arts. Many assumption stem from this one misconception, that a single measure can adequately capture an individual's abilities, especially for complex cognitive tasks such as those involved in critical thinking and language use.' (1984, p.766)

The skills of critical thinking, resilience, self reliance and flexibility can never be measured in the manner suggested by proponents of the 'measurement and quantification' lobby. Therefore within the instrumental agenda there exists a contradiction. By advocating these testing practices the very' attributes of critical thinking, responsibility and flexibility that analysts of business and industry tell us we need if we are to become economically competitive' are not able to be fostered (Boomer 1990, p. 16).

This apparent contradiction is claimed by Madaus as possibly 'reaping the reverse' to the instrumentalist's objectives of developing the young intellectually, socially, physically and mentally as a contribution towards a better society. Despite this criticism those educators who have purposes such as, determining a student's suitability for educational promotion or remedial work, allocation of students to ability groups or excluding students from opportunities for further education and training, believe in an instrumental agenda and also believe that its inherent value orientation towards quantification of learning outcomes is an efficient means of achieving their stated purposes.

Whilst not claiming that tests are infallible there still remains a belief 'that properly conceived and conducted tests can help to identify children in a school who need extra attention. Testing can help teachers to see how their classes and schools stand in relation to others and the outside world' (Gipps, Steadman, Blackstone and Stierer 1983, in Madaus 1985, p. 614).

But an expectation that '...knowledge of test scores can be useful for classification and comparison of children, classes, or schools is
several steps removed from teaching them effectively' (Clay 1990). The question Clay poses is whether the standardised testing mode of assessment and evaluation is an effective and equitable means of improving learning?

ASSUMPTION 2. TESTS ARE OBJECTIVE AND VALID MEASUREMENTS

Cambourne states that;

'Society has been subtly indoctrinated over the years into believing that the "truth" can only be arrived at through carefully controlled, detached, objectivity. This notion of objectivity has spilled over into the assessment field, partly as a result of a view of science, and partly as a consequence of the belief that accurate measurement is at the core of any scientific enterprise. In assessment this lust for objectivity is achieved by interposing some objective instrument (a test) between the tester and the testee and then standardising the procedures of administration and interpretation. By doing this it is claimed that objectivity is achieved' (1988, p. 6).

The notion of objectivity in testing as being either obtainable or desirable has been seriously questioned by scientists and philosophers. Polanyi, Feyerabend and Einstein agreed that, 'there is no objectivity without subjectivity' (Read 1984, p. 25).

Johnston also claims that there is no 'objective' measurement. He argues that education and psychology have been slow to realise what other sciences such as quantum physics have long known that there is no 'concept of the truly real' (Heisenberg in Johnston 1989). He states;

'... in education we are concerned with aspects of mental activity that we cannot see. Even children's overt behaviour, which is presumed to reflect mental activity, cannot be seen without being interpreted. .... We look with our eyes, but we choose what we look at and we see (interpret make sense) with our minds and describe with our language. The point is no matter how we go about educational evaluation, it involves interpretation' (Johnston 1989, p 510).

In relation to test objectivity Johnston suggests that people construct tests, other people respond to them, and still other people analyze these responses. All sets of people have their own 'frames of
reality' yet the results are treated as though they 'were not a reflection of its' authors' view' (ibid p 511).

The inference here is that there are three levels of interpretation. In relation to the first level, those who construct the tests according to Farr and Carey use individual'frames of reality'. In minimal competency or basic skills testing these frames of reality determine that there are some pieces of knowledge, some structured domains of human intellectual development, that are indispensable; i.e. the "critical list" (Wolf 1981). This they say 'goes right to the heart of epistemology (that part of philosophy which seeks to examine knowledge: where it comes from, how it is to be valued, and how we come to know' (Farr and Carey 1986, p. 185). They go on to say that conventional wisdom would have us assume that there are some things everyone has to know to get through life, or school successfully, however upon examination this wisdom falls apart.

'Chances are that the things we perceive to be on the critical list are the things we know. In other words, there is an inherent subjectivity in deciding what the content of any minimal competency test will include. (ibid p. 186).

At the second level of interpretation, that of the student taking the test, another'frame of reality' is revealed. Edelsky and Harman write '[test] situations consist not only of what is outside the head, but also how what is outside is interpreted. Humans interpret constantly. Since no two people interpret identically, it is difficult to describe a "standard" situation. For example when Jesse was six, he told his mother he thought the way to take a test was to pick the answer he liked, so he read all of them and found the ones that sounded nicest' (Edelsky and Harman 1988, p. 160).

Evidence to support the concept of different 'frames of reality' at the level of student interpretation and analyst interpretation, can be found in the report of a two year research project by Judith Langer. In this project she '....examined the strategies students used to comprehend and answer questions from selected norm-based, standardised, multiple-choice test items'. In the findings Langer suggests that teachers should be cautious in using the results of tests 'to make decisions about any individual's performance or ability. From her detailed interview procedures, she discovered that all too
frequently students selected the "right' answer for the wrong reasons, or the "wrong" answer for the right reasons.

She drew conclusions from her study that warned against making:

(1) interpretations of the scores ...as if the test items invoke comparable understandings and strategies from each member of the population being tested;

2) interpretations of the scores across different kinds of tests as if the test type (multiple choice, fill in, cloze) or subtest title (comprehension, vocabulary, language) made similar literacy demands on the test taker.'

( Langer and Pradl 1984, p.766)

In discussing what we know from research into reading and how we traditionally assessed reading Pearson and Valencia state:

' Prior knowledge and inferential thinking work together to help the reader construct meaning ....... these attributes vary across individuals (and within individuals from one situation to the next) ..... because texts may invite many plausible interpretations, we would expect many possible inferences to fit a given text or a question. Reading comprehension, however, continues to be assessed using multiple-choice items with only one correct answer' (Pearson and Valencia 1987, p.7).

Cambourne questions the assumption of objectivity in tests when he stated that:

' ... while certain 'safeguards' like standardising the tester-testee relationship and context, may reduce the interactivity between the tester and testee, interactivity itself can never be eliminated. Despite all the controls a larger amount will always remain, and it is not only fruitless to pretend that it is not there, it's also intellectually dishonest' (1988, p. 6).

Johnston proposes that ' when we are assessing literacy, we are engaged in examining something that is personal and (consequently) cultural in nature ... in doing so we engage in a social interaction with the individual or group being evaluated, and thus influence in powerful ways the nature of the understanding constructed by all parties. ...Objective? Hardly' ( Johnst 1989, p. 511).
It has been suggested that certain forms of inherent subjectivity in assessment other than tests can be beneficial to the overall goal of improving teaching and learning. Johnston points out that 'trying to place sufficient distance between teacher and student and parent so that the human activity can be seen without invoking the "subjective" human response' is counterproductive (ibid, p.512).

Cambourne asks 'Does it really matter? We need to ask whether or not assessor-assessee interaction is such a bad thing anyway particularly with respect to the assessment of learning of multidimensional entities like language and literacy' (Cambourne 1988, p.7).

Read believes that:

We have over-rated objectivity, confusing it with mere quantification and linking it to the spurious explicitness of numbers and letters. And we have under-rated subjectivity, mistakenly equating it with unreliability and lack of rigour. Yet we have seen that the teacher's subjectivity is a more subtle instrument for perceiving and evaluating student's work than any grade or symbol' (Read 1984, p. 9).

Therefore the assumption of objectivity in tests remains questionable as does the issue of validity.Validity relates to the issue of whether a test measures what it is supposed to measure. 'In this sense it is the most important characteristic of a test, but the search for validity evidence is much more elusive than this definition suggests' (Farr and Carey 1986).

Test are constructed for a variety of purposes and the questions of validity relate to how well these purposes are fulfilled by the test. There are two types of validity - content validity related to whether the items match the curriculum being taught, and construct validity, which refers to whether the test items actually measure the construct (or behaviour) that is supposedly being measured. A test may have content validity for a particular reading curriculum, but there may be some question whether the construct being assessed is actual reading behaviour (Farr and Carey 1986).
The question of validity of interpretation according to Johnston (1989) is a more complex construction. He quotes Messick who suggests that the 'process of interpretation' carries 'a variety of value connotations stemming from three main sources' they are 'the evaluative overtones of the construct rubrics themselves, the value connotations of the broader theories ...in which the constructs are embedded, and the valuative implications of the still broader ideologies about the nature of humanity and society that frame the construct theories' (Messick cited in Johnston 1989, p. 513).

In respect to the 'construct rubrics' Carey suggests that 'the theory and practice of psychometrics (the science of testing) have made tests more valid and more reliable than ever. What he goes on to highlight however is that these new aspects of test construction have more to do with the internal validity of tests than they have to do with the conceptual relationship of tests to what goes on in classroom'. He further explains that 'the tests we have at our disposal are built upon outmoded and inadequate models of human learning, of reading and writing and of language development' (Carey 1988, p. 5-6).

In reviewing a widely used standardised test of reading Cooter and Bingham found that validity was questionable. '...while there was a degree of content validity, left unattended by the authors was the issue of construct validity (how well the test conforms to a comprehensive model of reading). Clearly the ...test measures only a few, limited aspects of reading' (Cooter, Bingham, Curry 1989, p.257).

The assumption of objectivity and validity that underlies the measurement driven assessment agenda is, according to Rowntree, 'a pseudo-objective facade on what is a very delicate personal judgment ...The grade seems god-given and immutable whereas the grounds on which it was decided might seem only to human and open to dispute' (1977, p. 70).

Johnston voices similar concerns expressed by Madaus '..psychometrics with its endless searches for objective valid measures of human characteristics' has little to do with the goal of 'developing our educational system in such a way that we provide high-quality instruction for all.' He suggests that 'psychometrics rests on the assumption that it is possible to obtain an objective, valid, unbiased, empirical description of human learning activity and that it will serve
educational stakeholders (students, teachers, parents and administrators) to do so’ (1989, p. 509).

Those who support an instrumental agenda argue that standardised achievement tests are needed to validate educational practice and monitor the progress of students. However Carey contends that ‘to provide parents or the community with a single digit that allegedly represents the complex process of learning is to do a disservice’ (Carey 1988, p. 8).

ASSUMPTION 3. TEST RESULTS CAN BE USED TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Within this assumption emphasis is placed on three assertions:

1) That tests can match the behaviours that students employ in the regular classroom use of the aspects encompassed in the test.

(ii) That the test can truly reflect the curriculum and lead to better learning of the objectives of the curriculum.

(iii) That test results are valid and reliable and that decisions relating to teaching and learning drawn from them will be to the student’s benefit.

In respect to the first assertion Cambourne believes that ‘test results generated in a standardised, controlled context cannot be generalised to the real world. The highly unusual context of the standardised test does affect the performance of readers, writers, or talkers placed in that context.’ (1988, p. 7)

Likewise Pearson and Valencia state that ‘Strategic readers are too flexible and adaptive to allow us to capture their skill in a small sample of situations and options. For many readers these strategies operate at an unconscious automatic level inaccessible to verbalisation or even reflection. In short ..., the assessment strategies that really count are likely to occur at the classroom or individual level’ (1987, p. 12).

Tests performances have been likened to taking a ‘snapshot' of performance (Salinger 1990). Clay and Cambourne both indicate that test procedures are only indicative of "product" and that "process" is
ignored. Cambourne explains that test constructors believe either that the processes that created the product are unimportant or that processes can be inferred from the examination of the product (1988, p.10). Clay reiterates this:

"Standardised testing aims to capture perfected performing, which yields little information about how the learning process is shaping up. ..... A teacher seeking maximum information for teaching will wish to see the student working and observe the process of arriving at the final product" (1990, p. 294).

Test proponents such as Masters admit to these limitations of existing commercially-developed tests but suggest that they can be improved. He cites their limitations as being only able to ascertain whether or not students are able to recall and apply facts, procedures and principles. Apple and Jungck (1990) call this 'knowledge that' e.g. facts, and 'knowledge how' e.g. skills. Masters suggests that what we need to know is 'why students have gone wrong or how they are thinking'. His solution lies in further research using the recent breakthroughs in computer technology to 'place in the hands of Australian teachers a new generation of assessment instruments which are more closely linked to instruction based on up-to-date research.' Rowntree (1977) claims this is merely 'seeking improvement through increasing efficiency'.

(ii) In respect to the second assertion related to the assessment/instruction link many writers have voiced their concerns. Shepard (1989) claims that researchers have found ample evidence that testing shapes instruction. 'When scores have serious consequences [sometimes referred to as 'high-stakes' testing (Madaus 1988), i.e. important decisions for both student and teacher will result] - teachers will teach to the tests.' Shannon (1986) reports on a practice of paying teachers according to their instructional effectiveness. This instructional effectiveness is tied to instructional output in the form of achievement test scores.

In attempts to increase their productivity, schools have adopted not only the practice of merit pay but also the underlying assumptions of American business called formal rationality" (Shannon 1986, p. 21).

Shannon carried out a study to describe teachers' and administrators' thoughts concerning merit pay and other business
practices to increase student's standardised test scores. The findings revealed that 66% of the teachers were disenchanted with reading instruction and the generalization that was drawn was; '.... that programs which combine merit pay and formal rationality will alter teachers' usual patterns of instructional behaviour by standardising their definitions of reading as being equivalent to tested skills' (Shannon 1986, p. 31).

Shepard (1989) quotes a study by Darling-Hammond and Wise (1985) in which it was found that even within the bounds of test-driven content there was "dumping down" of instruction. 'Teachers taught the precise content of the tests rather than the underlying concepts; and skills were taught in the same format as the test rather than as they would be used in the real world' (Shepard 1989, p.5).

The issue of overreliance on test scores leading to a narrowing of the curriculum, a tendency to teach to the test, and an emphasis on the lower level, more easily tested skills (Linn 1985) is frequently discussed in assessment literature. However proponents of the measurement-driven instruction claim that competency testing programs have a positive influence on student learning and the achievement of curriculum objectives.

Popham, Cruse, Rankin, Sandifer, and Williams (1985) report on the monitoring of performance on specific performance skills in three American states and one city. In each of the four situations it was concluded that student performance gains were achieved since the legislative bodies imposed their standards. If a narrowed set of objectives are to be tested it is highly probable that teachers will give more attention to these objectives and therefore create an illusion that overall standards are improving. Wick comments on the article by Popham et al;

'The article reports that "... improvement of fifth-graders between 1980 and 1984 on 28 of the 29 objectives ranged from 3% to 36%, with an average increase of 13%." At fifth grade, 29 objectives were assessed. None were assessed at grades 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, or 8. ...It is not so surprising that schools were able to show growth on this narrowly defined group of 28 objectives in a four year period. The schools simply reallocated instructional time so that these objectives were addressed and measurable growth occurred' (1987, p. 7).
In light of this the claims made by the authors of the article that 'measurement was perceived as a catalyst to improve instruction and that it positively influenced student learning' are questionable (Popham, et al 1985, p.628).

This leads to the third assertion that decisions drawn from test results will benefit students and teachers by improving teaching and learning. As a counterargument, Madaus (1985) and Meisels (1989) claim that some large scale tests have become so generic and curriculum insensitive that they are virtually useless for making decisions in a school setting.

'The result are a narrowing of the curriculum, a concentration on those skills most amenable to testing, a constraint on the creativity and flexibility of teachers, and a demeaning of teachers professional judgment' (Meisels 1989, p. 17).

In respect to young learners Barrs (1990) and Salinger (1990) consider two arguments against the use of test results for decisions-making about placement and instruction. 'Standardised tests may not capture all that needs to be known about young learners, .... they do not allow young learners to demonstrate the depth and breath of what they know, nor the ways in which they actually construct meaning' (Salinger 1990, p. 6). 'The kind of 'hard' evaluation represented by standardised assessment works by stripping performance down to what can be measured objectively. It assesses what is assessable. The argument against this 'blunt' instrument is that, in the course of this stripping-down, most of what is important and most of what is individual about performance, is lost, while the information produced, usually a bare score, is of little value, except in statistical exercises.' Barrs' conclusion is that standardised assessments offer little in the way of information which will help the teaching and learning process (1990, pp. 250-251).

Perhaps seen as the most damaging effect of standardised assessment measures on teaching and learning is the 'weaken authority of professional judgment' (Salganik 1985). Salganik stresses the fact that the use of tests as output controls as purported by an instrument agenda, treats the problem facing schools as though they were basically technical in nature. 'This increased reliance on technical rationality contains within it the assumption that decisions
based on personal judgment ... are less authoritative than decisions that are supported by technical evidence. If a teacher's judgment and a student's test scores lead to conflicting decisions about appropriate placement of the child in a class or program, for example, the teacher may find it difficult to justify his or her own judgment in the event of a challenge by a parent or principal" (1985, p. 609).

Pearson and Valencia identify this as the teacher being 'forced out of the assessment process.' They also conclude that 'when some assessment tools become officially sanctioned teachers tend not to rely on their own assessment skills to make important instructional decisions: ironically the data a teacher collects has the greatest potential for influencing day-to-day student learning' (1987, p. 9).

SUMMARY

"The purpose of educational evaluation is ultimately to contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning" (Johnston 1989)

This is perhaps the least complex yet most powerful purpose and outcome of student evaluation. Questions of 'how' to evaluate and to a lesser extent 'why' evaluate have been major issues, and some would say 'burning issues', in much of the literature related to literacy learning. But these questions have only served to obscure the real issue - the relationship between evaluation, teaching and learning. Questions of 'how' the teaching and learning might improve as a result of evaluation, or 'how' evaluative reforms might achieve high-quality education have not been addressed adequately. Within classroom environments where teaching and learning occurs the traditional evaluation methods in the main have served the purposes of ranking, allocating, accounting (i.e. being accountable to legislators) and maintaining of 'standards'. It is believed by many educators that these evaluative efforts may in fact 'reap the reverse' (Madaus 1985) in terms of improving teaching and learning.

If the question; 'Can assessment and evaluation improve teaching and learning?' yields an answer as a result of the discussion presented in this chapter, it would be a simplistic answer to a complex proposition. In reality the answer to the question is very much dependent on which definition of assessment is being adopted, which ideologies are held and which assessment agenda is employed. The prime purpose (i.e. stated purpose) of both the instrumental and
educative assessment agendas is to improve teaching and learning. However beyond this purpose there exists a clear dichotomy in the definitions adopted, the ideologies held and the means used to bring about the real and stated purposes of the agenda.

The question that remains to be answered is whether;

Those who devise an instrumental agenda can demonstrate that their versions of assessment and evaluation and the underlying assumptions inherent in them, actually improve teaching and learning?

The instrumentalists would answer 'yes' to this question. Madaus claims that despite the deep seated reservations about standardised testing as a means of improving instruction, 'policy makers are shrewd enough to know that they can do little to reform instruction directly. Testing seems to provide the solution to their problems. Readily available, well developed, relatively inexpensive, and administratively simple, the technology of standardised tests allows policy makers to sidestep the problem of dealing directly with the instructional process. Attaching important rewards and sanction to the results of tests transforms testing into a coercive device that can influence curriculum and instruction' (1985, p. 614).

The set of arguments that constructors and proponents of this agenda use against the challenges to their underlying assumptions are;

Firstly that new technology can constantly provide better or 'authentic' tests, (Wiggins 1989). These tests, it is claimed, will match more closely the learning that is taking place in subject matter areas (Masters 1990 and Martinez and Lipson 1989). The development of item-response theory in psychometrics enables descriptions of growth in expertise to be achieved more precisely than ever before. 'In short, converging forces portend a new generation of tests - tests that better serve the interests of teachers and students in promoting learning.' (Martinez and Lipson 1989, p.73)

Secondly they argue that standardised tests can be used in conjunction with other forms of assessment. 'They should serve as only part of a carefully considered assessment program' (Cooter and Curry 1989, p.257). They claim that used in this way tests afford the
teachers and the schools maximum effectiveness in terms of evaluation. Much is also made of the abuse and misuse of standardised tests, which proponents claim is not the fault of the tests but of the users.

Thirdly those who adhere to an instrumental agenda also believe that 'effective' schools are 'excellent' schools that are highly effective in achieving a number of stated objectives. They also believe that this effectiveness can be determined by state-legislated tests for students and teachers. Standardised tests offer the means for this 'accountability'. As large-scale assessment measures they are formal, objective, time-efficient, cost-efficient, widely applicable, and centrally processed. The results are in a useful form, where complexity is reduced to a single score (Shepard 1989). Accountability assessment offer comparisons of performances of students, teachers, schools and districts. From this information trends can be established, needs recognised and curriculum objectives checked for their achievement. In this way the instrumental agenda proponents achieve their goal of improving teaching and learning.

In contrast proponents of an educative agenda challenge these means by which teaching and learning improve via the processes of the instrumental agenda. One such challenge comes from Cuban (1983) who criticises the standardisation movement and refers to it as a 'narrowing agenda'. In a commentary on school effectiveness he writes:

'To judge schools by a percentile rank on an achievement test is little better than judging a car solely on miles per gallon or the quality of a hospital solely on the number of vacant beds. Of course these numbers tell us something, but they omit so much more that is essential. Those who believe that the only means available to improving schooling are tightly organised procedures .... measured by standardised tests, have a narrow view. ....those who believe their only tool is a hammer treat everything as a nail. .... such a view can only be of disservice to the children of the nation' (Cuban 1983, p.696).

Others argues that accountability measures such as standardised tests do not benefit classroom instruction (Suhor 1985). But Madaus warns that such challenges will remain hollow unless
alternative means of informing the public about learning outcomes are not realised;

'In reacting to the intrusion of tests into school policy making, educators (who support an educative agenda) must walk a tightrope without benefit of a net. Simply to attack the idea of testing is to appear self-serving, opposed both to accountability and to giving the public the information about the schools that it demands and deserves. On the other hand, simply to acquiesce in silence is to become an accessory both before and after the fact' (1985, p. 616).

Langer too, calls for those in the field of education to 'speak out against the growing reliance on standardised test data and to urge instead a widespread mandate to use data from multiple sources, ... in the evaluation of student and school performance' (1984, p ).

These calls ask for an answer to the question whether;

Those who advocate an educative agenda with its particular interpretation of the purposes and means of assessment can bring about improved teaching and learning?

In answer to this question the educative agenda would say 'yes' by claiming that an alternative definition for assessment than that of the instrumental agenda which places emphasis on assessment as being an on-going process is highly conducive to the improvement of teaching and learning.

According to Teale, Hiebert and Chittenden the process would involve gathering information to meet diverse needs. 'Assessment is a continuum, ... it goes hand in hand with teaching' (1987, p. 773). These theorists also support a different learning theory from that of the instrumentalist's behavioural model which has been identified as a fragmented, segmented concept which is found to be reflected in standardised test construction.

Educative opponents are ideologically at variance with the instrumentalists. The purposes of the educative agenda are the enhancement of learning for all through an emphasis on social interaction with the means of assessment and evaluation being distinctly different from those of the instrumentalists (Rowntree
The educative agenda advocates interactions between teacher and learner, the learning environment and the experience of the learner in the classroom as the prime means of enhancing learning via employment of alternative assessment practices (Broadfoot 1979).

Like Madaus, Carey too warns however that the purposes of the educative agenda cannot be realised until 'evaluation processes and tools can be offered as the intellectually superior or equivalent of standardised tests' (1988, p.10). He goes on to suggest along with Clay (1990) and Pearson and Valencia (1987) that teachers are the ones who engage in the process of evaluation and so they should be the ones to assign value to it. Langer and Pradl (1984), Johnston (1987), also advocate the use of teacher judgment as the key factor in assessing student performance. What Langer and Pradl suggest that is needed is;

'the codifying into a manageable framework the valuable observations, insights, and judgments teachers make on a daily basis as both they and their students engage in the real-life business of learning. Only in this way will educational "managers" as well as the general public come to appreciate the fact that even the most sophisticated tests fall short of capturing the complexities of the processes of comprehending and learning' (1984, p. 766).

Whilst accepting testing alternatives that provide 'rich vignettes' (Goodman, Goodman and Hood 1989) of individual learning outcomes, Clay cautions against the simple division of assessment for administration and assessment which improves teaching. 'There is work to be done in finding assessments which can be [both] part of teaching interactions [and] from which we can present visible evidence of progress to parents and administrators.' As well as identifying what many perceive as two types of assessment and claiming that they should be one and the same, Clay also implies that control of this assessment should remain in the hands of teachers. Shepard is not convinced that these aims are realistic.

'The difference between accountability and instructional assessment are so fundamental and necessary that it may not be desirable to merge the two purposes' (Shepard 1989, p. 7).
This suggests that there are two fronts upon which the alternative assessment battle is be contested. Classroom based research and subsequent knowledge expansion in respect to assessment practices in the classroom have been at the forefront of this battle. Carey (1989), Pearson and Valencia (1987), Yetta Goodman (1985) are just a few of the many advocators of alternative assessment practices that teachers could use for instructional decision-making were they to abandon their reliance upon formal tests. Clay (1990), Johnston (1987) and Pearson and Valencia (1987) stress that assessment and evaluation should be so closely related to teaching and learning that they are indistinguishable from each other.

Many of these same educators believe that assessment for administrative purposes can be drawn from the same data and findings of the assessment used for instructional decision-making in the classroom, but the product of this form of assessment will look distinctively different from that of the traditional single score.

The focus relevant to the inquiry reported here relates to assessment and evaluation at the classroom level. It is an inquiry that sets out to illuminate assessment and evaluation as being indistinguishable from teaching and learning thus providing an expanded knowledge base from which administrators can draw in their decision-making. These practices are congruent with a whole language approach that shares the ideological and theoretical stance taken by the educative agenda related to assessment and evaluation.

The means for carrying out assessment and evaluation advocated by whole language proponents has grown from specific theories of knowledge, teaching and learning. In the following chapter whole language theory, its history and research, and the relationship of these to assessment and evaluation will be discussed in order to demonstrate how they framed the construction of the research focus relevant to this inquiry.
CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RESEARCH FOCUS

"The particulars of a pattern or a tune must be apprehended jointly, for if you observe the particulars separately they form no pattern or tune"

(Polanyi 1958, p.57)

It is appropriate that this classic theme of gestalt psychology be used here to encapsulate a crucial aspect of the meaning of the term 'whole' as it currently applies to language teaching and learning. Gestalt psychology rejects in principle, the possibility of accounting for complex processes in terms of simple ones. Likewise the literal meaning of 'whole language' is a reaction against the traditional views of language teaching and learning once conceived of as a process of breaking down a complex task into parts in order to guarantee the mastery of the whole, i.e learning the whole by gaining separate control of the individual parts or segments. Segmentation in respect to learning language, as Polanyi's quote implies, is to lose the pattern (meaning) and the 'real' or 'natural' features of listening, speaking, reading or writing interaction. Language is the communication of meaning, fragmented language is devoid of meaning and devoid of communication.

Whilst whole language proponents hold this belief as the core of the term 'whole language', the pervasiveness of the term 'whole-language' is in real terms a reflection of the enormous growth and development in the research and practice of teaching and learning language that has occurred in the last twenty years. It is a label representing 'the beginnings of a paradigm shift ' (Rich 1985, p.717) in educational theory. It encompasses integrated and interrelated beliefs about the nature of thinking and learning and specifically the learning of language, and how knowledge should be structured in order that teaching enhances learning. According to Rich 'whole language in its essence goes beyond the delineation of teaching strategies to describe a shift in the way in which teachers think about and practice their art.' Altwerger, Edelsky and Flores claim 'whole language is not practice. It is a set of beliefs, a perspective.' (1987, p. 145) Newman also refers to whole language
as 'a set of beliefs about curriculum, not just language arts curriculum, but about everything that goes on in classrooms. Whole language is not an instructional approach, it is a philosophical stance.' (1985, p. 1)

However it must be remembered that it is just a label representative of a movement in thought. Yetta Goodman suggests that if 'the term whole language remains static and does not reflect the dynamic changes that are emerging from the continuous debate and exploration currently taking place, then the label may be supplanted by another' (1989, p. 125). Zola also warns against placing too great an emphasis on labels or metaphors;

'Educational metaphors can be the raft we travel on to get to the other shore but, sooner or later, we must abandon the raft or we will never truly arrive. Words, as Wittgenstein observed, are a ladder that must be abandoned once we have used it in order to ascend to metaphysical heights' (1989, p.9)

Just as 'whole language today will be foundational to educational practices of the future' (Y. Goodman, 1989, p. 125) whole language has a history that draws on past theories and research in 'linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, child development, curriculum, composition, literary theory, semiotics, and other fields of study.' (Newman 1985, p.1)

Throughout this chapter I aim to examine the background to the construction of the research focus that draws on the philosophical stance of whole language. To achieve this it is necessary to firstly examine the academic roots of the major ideas of whole language for the theoretical tenets that emerge. And secondly to, explore the practical ramifications of these theoretical tenets for the assessment of language learning in whole language classrooms. This discussion will thus provide the background to the construction of the research focus finding expression in this inquiry.

1. **ACADEMIC ROOTS OF WHOLE LANGUAGE**

'Contemporary thinking about education, learning and teaching is not 'brand new' or untouched by the work of previous generations of scholars and teachers. Their ideas and insights have been absorbed
and transformed over time and translated into modern terms, not eradicated.’ (Wood 1988, Introduction)

One of the first recognitions that the work of previous scholars was reflected in whole language philosophy was made by Goodman K., Smith E.B., Meredith R., and Goodman Y., (1987, first edition 197 ) in the text Language and Thinking in Schools - A Whole Language Curriculum. The books stated purpose was; 'to synthesize modern views of language and linguistics, literature and semiotics and of thinking and knowing pertinent to education.' (1987, p. )

The authors believed that the text would play a role in the growing recognition that as language is the medium of instruction for learning, a language-thought centred view of teaching and learning would therefore be indispensable in planning curricular strategies and instructional tactics for all subject areas. They also believed that by focusing on the nature of language and thinking they could bring new significance to some of the older ideas of the child-centred era and lend support to modern approaches to open inquiry education and whole language. This focus and investigation was deemed necessary in order to make possible and plausible new suggestions for the teaching of reading and writing which would be 'rooted in the best intuitions of the past and strongly based on modern scholarship and research.' (ibid, Preface v)

The contributions of the past to whole language thinking are reiterated by Yetta Goodman in the article Roots of the Whole Language Movement. She claims that 'to understanding the evolution of whole language and why it has emerged and flourished,' (we must consider) 'advocates of other educational movements.' She further explains that 'there are many traditions that have been influential and many pedagogical movements that have been influenced by these traditions and that have, in turn, influenced whole language.' (1989, p. 114) This explanation infers the nature of whole language to be a multi-faceted pedagogy towards the teaching and learning of language. The theoretical tenets influencing this pedagogy, are drawn from both science and humanism.

'What we take from humanism is respect for, and positive attitudes towards all learners regardless of their age, abilities, or backgrounds. What we take from science are the discoveries in
psychology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics that are part of the current knowledge explosion concerning how students learn, how they learn language, how they use language to learn, and the influences of the individual, peers, teachers, and various cultural institutions on language learning and on using language to learn.' (1989, p.125) (emphasis added)

By employing Yetta Goodman's related aspects (underlined above) as frames of reference for understanding earlier scholars and educational movements of learning and language it is possible to reveal the origins of the theoretical tenets of whole language. At the same time the developmental principles will be discussed, compared and contrasted with current statements on whole language.

Although preempting the discussion, the acknowledgement that in much of the literature related to learning, language learning, and the enhancement of that language learning there are at least three reoccurring developmental influences upon the learner sets the boundaries of the discussion related to the immense body of research by past theorist. These developmental influences are;

(i) the influence of the society and the culture in which the individual is immersed, these could be called the social experiences and encounters.

(ii) the influence of the interactions or dialogues that take place between the individual child and their peers and adult who provide models or examples of expertise to follow.

(iii) the influence of their own personal internalised construct, or interpretation on their process of learning resulting from the input of the previously mentioned influences.

For purposes of this discussion these influences will be viewed as developmental principles inherent in the processes of learning, learning language and the support and enhancement (the teaching) of language.
Psychologists such as Vygotsky, Piaget and Bruner have exerted the most influence in the area of learning theory now finding expression in whole language. Although each has made individual contributions, their theories have emerged from a common reaction to the stimulus-response learning theorists of the early 1900's. The degree to which their theories reflect the three developmental principles also varies according to their research focus and context.

Pavlov (1927) and Skinner (1938) in Wood (1988) believed that reinforcement played a major role in learning and instruction. These theorist adhered to a learning theory generally referred to as a 'Stimulus-Response' or behaviourist. The bases of this theory was that the stimuli, responses or the reinforcer used the relations between the conditions of the learning context and the learner to induce learning. In this way learning outcomes were believed to be predictable. Skinner applied his findings on animal learning to the teaching of children. He encouraged teachers to employ effective 'schedules of reinforcement' in classrooms. He argued that if teachers 'shaped' their children's behaviour effectively it would lead to appropriate learning or learned responses (Skinner in Wood 1988). The theory only dealt with directly observable and manipulable phenomena it took no account of the 'subjective' mental states such as 'interest' or 'curiosity'. The developmental influences of (i) social experience (ii) others as demonstrators and models and (iii) personal constructs, were not evident in this theory or similar early learning theories. The omission of these humanist variables in their research generated a search for new concepts and methods regarding learning theory (Wood 1988, p.3).

The scepticism provided a fertile ground for Piaget's theories. He studied children's interactions with the world of objects and their physical world, but not with persons. As a result of these observations he offered a detailed and specific account of the growth of mind believing children's own construction of reality to be the core of learning. He also recognised what he believed to be universal stages in human development providing a possible explanation as to when and how a child learns or develops specific forms of knowledge and understandings. He placed actions and self-directed problem solving at the heart of learning and development.
'Piaget believed that children actively 'construct' their knowledge of the world. He believed the child's intercourse with the physical world provides the main constraints on and contributions to intelligence. Children construct their own knowledge by acting upon objects in space and time. Social experience and inter-personal behaviour are an important part of development, but that they play a rather limited and secondary role in his theory. For Piaget social interactions may facilitate the course of development by exposing children to points of view and conflicting ideas which may encourage him to re-think or review his ideas, .... however for Piaget any social facilitation of development only works when the child's own understanding, based on his commerce with nature, is in an appropriate state of readiness for change' (Wood 1988, p. 16).

Of the three developmental principles previously stated as contributing to learning, Piaget only addressed that of 'personal constructs'.

Like Piaget, Vygotsky the Russian psychologist, was not a stimulus-response learning theorist. They both believed that learners transform and construct their own 'new' reality, not an imitation or a copy. However Piaget's position contrasted with Vygotsky's. Piaget espoused that development is always a prerequisite for learning and never the result of learning, and that if a child's mental functions have not matured to the extent that he is capable of learning then no instruction will prove useful.

Whilst Vygotsky believed that learning and development were interrelated from the child's very first day of life and that learning should be matched in some manner with the child's developmental level, he felt that we should not limit ourselves to merely determining levels if we wish to discover the actual relations of the developmental process to learning capabilities. Vygotsky defines functions that have already matured as the child's actual developmental level and functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation as the 'zone of proximal development'. It is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (ibid, p.85)
This belief of Vygotsky's in the characterisation of development prospectively; 'what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow.' (ibid, p.87) called for a re-evaluation of the role of imitation in learning. It was a classic tenet of psychology, (and in some quarters even to the present day) that only the independent activity of children not their imitative activity indicates their level of mental ability. However according to Vygotsky 'psychologists have shown that a person can imitate only that which is within her developmental level.' (ibid, p.88) In this belief Vygotsky acknowledges the developmental principle of 'others as demonstrators and models'. He argues that when adults help children accomplish things that they are unable to do alone they enhance the development of knowledge and ability in the learner.

Vygotsky's recognition of the developmental principle of demonstrations and models being an integral aspect of the learning process, was also tied to the notion that these demonstrations and models occurred in a context of social experiences. This view was held by other theorists. One such theorist was Jerome Bruner.

Bruner, an American cognitive psychologist, focused his research on children's interactions with the world of persons especially primary caretakers (Karmiloff-Smith 1979). In contrast to Piaget his concern was with the child's social world rather than their physical world. Both Vygotsky and Bruner viewed the evolution of mind as being intrinsically tied to a social-historical process. Vygotsky believed that through productive cultural activities people alter their thinking, and that thoughts and the products of thought are shaped by the uses of thought in society (Parker and Davis 1983, p.140). Bruner argued that, 'the growth of mind is always growth assisted from the outside... the limits of growth depend on how a culture assists the individual to use such intellectual potential as he may possess' (Bruner 1973, in Parker and Davis 1983 p. 52). In contrast to Piaget, Bruner believed the processes underlying intelligent and adaptive thinking were not exclusive inventions of the child, but were communicated in subtle ways from the more mature to the immature (Wood 1988, p.9). This confirms Bruner's recognition that the demonstrations and models of others is an important developmental principle in understanding of the learning process.
Vygotsky and Bruner were both convinced that the developmental influence of social experiences also plays a major part in learning.

'...I have come to recognise that most learning in most settings is a communal activity, a sharing of culture. It is not just that the child must make his knowledge his own, but that he must make it his own in a community of those who share his sense of belonging to a culture. It is this that leads me to emphasise not only discovery and invention but the importance of negotiating and sharing - in a word, of joint culture creating, as an object of schooling and as an appropriate step en route to becoming a member of the adult society in which one lives out one's life' (Bruner 1986, p. 127).

Yetta Goodman acknowledges these learning theorist's influences on whole language.

'The work of Piaget has influenced the whole language movement. He showed how children are actively involved in understanding their world and in trying to answer their questions and solve the problems that the world poses for them. Children construct their own categories of thought while organising their world. Children develop their own conceptualization's, which are often at odds with adult versions.'

She also claims that;

'Vygotsky too aids whole language in exploring the relation between the learning of the individual student and the influences of the social context. His zone of proximal development emphasises the important role teachers play in student's learning .... and the role of peers' (Goodman Y., 1989, pp.116-117).

What is drawn from the work of these theorist by the proponents of the whole language movement are beliefs about learning that are aptly summed up by Cambourne:

Learning is a process which involves making connections .. (with their world- social experiences)
The learner is the one who must make the connections ...... (own constructions)
Learning involves a high degree of social interaction ...... (models of others )' (Cambourne 1990, p. 6)
Language is assigned a prime role in the process of the 'growth of mind', 'As both a cultural product and an instrument of thought, language .... inexorably shapes the successive transformations of mental behaviour which constitutes the growth of mind' (Parker and Davis 1983 p. 142)

In this sense then language is humankind's prime technology of knowing. As such, in reaching out with this technology humans rely, as they do in all learning, on the language experiences their society and culture provide, the language models and demonstrations they receive from others and their own meaning constructs of the interactions with these experiences and models.

Vygotsky (1978) and Chomsky (1957) state that humans have a specific or innate capacity for language, however this predisposition, the capacity to think symbolically and to produce sound symbols, does not guarantee that language will be learned. It is only when these capacities are drawn on for the purposes of communicating that language is developed. Children who have grown up isolated from human society do not develop language.

In respect to the function of language in the early years Vygotsky believes that; 'Signs and words serve children first and foremost as a means of social contact..... The cognitive and communicative functions of language then become the basis of a new and superior form of activity in children' (1978, pp. 28-29).

The sociolinguist Halliday explains the same notion thus;

'Language is only one way of exchanging meaning with others even though it may in some sense be the most important. The whole of our culture is an edifice of meanings, we cannot help exchanging meanings with other people by the way we act and interact ....... I have sometimes referred to this mode of interpretation as 'sociosemiotic' to take account of the fact that learning to mean linguistically is just one aspect of learning to mean as a social process' (Halliday, 1976, pp. 12-13).

Halliday further stresses the social process when he adds;
'What the child does ... is to create a language and a reality in partnership with others; they are working at it together. And it is the child who is providing the driving force. The mother, and other important people, do the steering - though the child always struggles to get his hand on the wheel, too.' (Halliday 1976, in Parker and Davis 1983 p. 44)

Halliday believes that the child begins; 'by inventing a semantics of his own, a 'proto-language' ...... then he moves into the mother-tongue, and the system becomes a three-level one consisting of meaning, wording and sound' (ibid p. 44). From Piaget's perspective this process of the child learning how to mean, and of doing so increasingly through linguistic means would be characterised by the quality of constructions or inventions. With the added condition of expert models who support these constructs Bruner explains that;

'The child, exposed linguistically to an adult world, comes forth not with a discovery but an invention ... in a linguistic form that simply is not present in the adult repertoire.' (Bruner 1972, in Parker and Davis p. p.44)

By this Bruner implies that; in the process of language learning children gradually revise their constructions (linguistic forms) in order to make more sense of the adult utterances they encounter. Children invent the constructions that motivate the adult's linguistic behaviour. In so doing children move their utterances closer and closer to adult forms. In Piaget's terms, their symbols become progressively adequate in predicting what adults will say. Vygotsky contends that, 'Verbal intercourse with adults thus becomes a powerful factor in the development of the child's concepts of language.' (Vygotsky, 1954, p. 69)

Vygotsky also suggests however that we need to look at other uses of language beyond the processes of learning spoken language in order to understand fully the whole process of language development. Although not claiming that other forms of language are the same as spoken language Vygotsky suggests that 'the process of development of written language' is in reality part of 'a unified, historical line' which leads from speech, through make-believe play and drawing, to
writing, and therefore,' Writing should be taught naturally..... In the same way as children learn to speak, they should be able to learn to read and write' (Vygotsky 1978, p.118).

This notion of 'a unified single process' is evident in the research of Ken Goodman and Frank Smith of the 1960's which examined the interaction between the reader, the text and the language, and reported a belief in a single unified reading process, implying that whilst there was one single process there were many applications of this process as there were readers. They claimed that every reader employs the process, as they read any text, in accord with their experiences in both the background to the content and the linguistic concepts of the text. Some of the beginnings of whole language are traceable to the application of these research findings on the reading process, to reading instruction (Smith and Goodman 1971).

Holdaway (1979) a proponent of whole and natural language theory, also expresses a similar concept of the development of language to that of Vygotsky's 'unified historical line' by advocating that reading and writing is learned most effectively when it parallels and complements early oral language learning. Children acquire literacy through a series of successive approximations as is evident in early oral learning, from the whole to the part. What is meant by this is that the parent immerses the child in communicative activities that exemplify whole and meaningful speech. The child does not experience individual words absent of contextual meanings. In the child's environment the speech is in meaningful chunks (wholes) and it is from these 'wholes' that the child begins to recognise the 'parts' that they attempt to approximate in order to participate in the communicative activities. This process is what is meant by going from 'whole to part' '..whole language practices assert that ..... children extract from whole language used in the social context the information needed to facilitate language acquisition and use (Reutzel and Hollingsworth 1988, p.408).

What children are encouraged to do in whole language classrooms echoes Piaget's 'construct' and Halliday's and Bruner's 'inventions'. ' As a direct outgrowth of using language as an exploratory tool for learning, children often make mistakes in reading and writing. However, [they are encouraged to see that] to risk and make mistakes
[to approximate] is a natural consequence of learning and developing language facility (Reutzel and Hollingsworth 1988, p.412).

Clay, a developmental psychologists supports Vygotsky's observational claims that, 'when children first attempt to write they produce meaningless and undifferentiated squiggles and lines' similar to their babbling as an infant (Vygotsky 1978). Clay believes that,' gross approximations which later become refined suggest that the child is reaching out toward the principles of written language' (Clay 1979, Parker and Davis 1983 p. 46 ). In respect to writing, the concepts of risk taking have been fully incorporated in the work of Graves (1983) and others who spearheaded the process writing movement and which now finds itself encompassed within the whole language perspective. The process approach to writing holds that,' language users can learn as much from getting language wrong (producing a non standard form) as they can from getting it right ...' (Watson 1989, p. 137)

Research in the field of psycholinguistics by Yetta and Ken Goodman, and published as The Miscue Analysis Inventory by Yetta Goodman and Carolyn Burke (1972) parallels the belief in 'approximations' as 'windows' into the development of readers. The research showed that all readers make errors, and that their 'miscues' were not only rational and explicable, but that, in conjunction with self-correction, they also constituted a powerful strategy for learning. A key insight drawn from Goodman's work was that, 'readers predict as they read ' (they construct, they invent) and use cues from their reading to confirm or disconfirm their predictions.' (Goodman K. 1989, p. 212). A reader's ability to predict accurately was dependent on their schema or ' their world inside their heads' (Smith 1975 ) which reiterates the integration of society and the experiences of the individuals in a social context. The work of these psycholinguists concurs with theorists who viewed learning language as part of the unified-historical process such as Halliday (1975) who expressed the process as being that of 'learning how to mean' i.e. in the process of learning language people learn the social meanings language represents. Halliday (1984) describes three kinds of language learning that happen simultaneously; learning language, learning through language, and learning about language.
Another theorist, John Dewey a major twentieth century philosopher and educationalist believed that learners needed to be central to any process of learning and that language, as one of the tools of learning, needs to be integrated with all other studies.

Whole Language perspectives also reflect the influence of this belief. In essence it holds that society and social experiences are conditions necessary for learning in general and for learning language in particular. These claims are evident in the research of Vygotsky, Dewey, Bruner, and Halliday.

Whole language proponents articulate this view as follows:

'Language is part of the culture which is a human social invention ...... language becomes the social medium for the sharing of thoughts, it creates a social mind from individual minds and thus greatly magnifies the learning ability of any person. ... it also becomes the medium of individual thinking and learning.' (Goodman K., Smith E.B., Meredith and Goodman Y., 1978, p.32)

'Language allows us to give expression to our experience and thus to share it. That is what whole language advocates mean when they say that language is inherently social' (Harste 1989, p.245).

The whole language approach to language learning is succinctly summarised by Altwerger, Edelsky and Flores who identify the following key principles.

'Language is acquired through using it ....

'Language acquisition (oral and written) is natural ... it is an integral part of the functioning of a community ....... this environment engages the learner in interaction creating opportunity, purpose and feedback ....

'Language is a tool for making sense of something .....'  

'Language learning environments are emulative, rich with models and demonstrations that are real and authentic....' (1987, pp. 144-154).

HOW STUDENTS LANGUAGE LEARNING IS ENHANCED AND FOSTERED

'If schools, like other cultural institutions, play a part in the transmission and reproduction of culture then it seems important to examine what we know of their language practices and of the possible
effects of this aspect of enculturation on the growth of mind.
(Parker and Davis 1983 p. 144)

The enhancement and fostering of language learning within
school environments constitutes a theory of teaching or pedagogy.
Many language teaching theories have evolved directly from learning
theories, especially those theories that adopt behaviouristic or
mechanistic models. However the teaching theories that hold the
principles that;

- approximation is a process of learning,
- the social nature of the learning process within real,
  authentic and whole situations supports learners, and
- the role that others play in modelling learning within
  these situations, also enhances learning,
reject any pedagogy that adopts a belief in language
acquisition through isolated skills and techniques by

Dewey (1938) contrasted a system of ideas about effective
teaching with that of traditional behaviourist education. At the heart
of his theory was the notion that 'all genuine education comes about
through experience.' (1938, p. 13) and that this experience should
take place in 'democratic and humane arrangements ... [because
they] promote a better quality of human experience...' (ibid, p. 24-25).
From Dewey's perspective the role of teachers and schools
(Vygotsky calls these 'particular cultures') is to generate for
students those experiences that best support growth in learning.
Dewey concedes to educative and mis-educative experiences and that
the differences that distinguish one from the other lie in the ability of
the educative experiences to reflect 'continuity' with past
experiences, that is '.... the experience both takes up something
from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the
quality of those which come after ....' (ibid, p. 27), and 'interaction'
the interplay of external and internal conditions of an experience.
Here 'interaction' is taken to mean the giving of equal status to the
factors external to a learner, such as the text or materials, the
teaching methods and aims and objectives of the learning experience
and those factors internal to the learner, their needs, capacities and
past experiences. The interaction of these factors determines what
kind of experience is had by the learner in any situation. 'The
principle that development of experience comes about through
interaction means that education is essentially a social process... (ibid, p. 61)...

the teacher [needs] to be intelligently aware of the capabilities, needs, and past experiences of those under instruction' (ibid, p.85).

The educative experiences Dewey speaks of must place a challenge before the learner in order that growth occurs. "No experience is educative that does not tend both to knowledge of more facts and entertaining of more ideas, and to a better and more orderly arrangement of them' (1938, p.82). Pekarsky explains Dewey's position;

'The possibility of growth requires .... the confronting of a problem which our existing repertoire of understanding is incapable of handling, we are set to work thinking, searching for a grasp of the situation that will overcome what is now troubling us; if we succeed the repertoire of understandings will have grown in a way that enables us not only to meet the present problem but also to handle similar problems that may come our way in the future' (1990, p. 286)

Vygotsky (1962) placed great emphasis on instruction. He believed that co-operatively achieved success lay at the foundation of learning and development. Instruction, both formal and informal, in many social contexts, performed by more knowledgeable peers or siblings, parents, friends and teachers, is the main vehicle for cultural transmission of knowledge. Only through interaction with the living representatives of culture, Bruner calls these living representatives 'the vicars of culture', can a child come to acquire, embody and further develop that knowledge. (Wood 1988, p. 25)

In respect to learning language Vygotsky states that;

'The teaching of reading and writing should be organized in such a way that reading and writing are necessary for something. If reading and writing must be something the child needs ...... [then it] should be taught as a complex cultural activity - writing must be 'relevant to life', it should be meaningful and an intrinsic need should be aroused ... - writing should be incorporated into a task necessary and relevant for life. Writing should be taught naturally ... In the same way as children learn to speak, they should be able to learn to read and
write. Natural methods of teaching reading and writing involve appropriate operations on the child's environment.' (1978, p. 117-118)

According to Bruner the 'operations on the child's environment' are not always conducive to learning.

'The will to learn becomes a "problem" .... where a curriculum is set, students confined, and a path fixed. The problem exists not so much in learning itself, but in the fact that what the school imposes often fails to enlist the energies that sustain spontaneous learning - curiosity, a desire for competence, aspiration to emulate a model, and a deep-sensed commitment to the web of social reciprocity [the human need to respond to others and to operate jointly with them towards an objective].' (1966, p. 125-127)

It is in the arena of 'operating on the child's environment' that whole language pedagogy is grounded. From the discussion thus far it becomes apparent that whole language's theoretical roots in respect to language learning instruction are in concert with the literacy perspectives of Vygotsky, Piaget, Dewey, Bruner and Halliday and perhaps others not discussed here. It could be also argued that demonstrating the connections between whole language and these notable theorist is a way of averting the criticism that whole language lacks theoretical coherence. However, one of its strongest proponents has expressed the need for 'whole language to explicate its own theory rather than attempt to build whole language theory on the basis of old philosophers.' (emphasis added) (Harste 1989, p.247)

The depth of 'its own theory' lies in its comprehensive guidelines for literacy learning instruction - a pedagogy of whole language. It can be showed that unlike previous theories whole language tackles the 'whole' learning perspective and offers teachers 'a way' to take the best of the learning and language learning theories and render them operative inside the classroom.

In Language and Thinking in schools - A Whole-Language Curriculum the rationale was stated as 'an attempt to turn our holistic language and thought views (our theory and beliefs) into practice and reality.' (Goodman, Goodman and Hood 1978 Preface
vi) throughout the text the voices of the 'old philosophers' can be heard mingled with advocations of congruent teaching practices. As a result of this metamorphosis the pedagogy of whole language theory focuses on the learner not the content of the learning. Yetta Goodman explains that this in no way detracts from curriculum content; ' rather it represents the belief that content can only be understood and seriously studied when learners are actively involved and interested in learning, are participating in deciding what will be learned, and are relating what they are learning to what they already know. .... The teacher is viewed as a co-learner with the students, ...who is knowledgeable about students as well as content, ... with a major commitment to plan learning experiences that build on the background and the experience of the learners. (1989, p.114)

Focusing on the learner and the learner's capacity in 'constructing' knowledge in contrast to 'receiving' it, (Harste states that, 'According to whole language advocates, knowledge is created through social interaction; it is not something "out there' to be transmitted' and that ' teaching is not so much transmission as collaboration.' ) and giving equal emphasis to the processes and the products of learning, the pedagogy of whole language states that in respect to learning language;

'Children learn language best as they learn through language. This means that the bulk of the school language development program is not focused on language development at all but on the uses of language. ...... the learner is using language, not learning language. ' (K. Goodman,Smith E.B., Meredith, and Y. Goodman 1987)

The notion that language is learned whilst the learner is using it is further explained via the whole language concepts of integration and authenticity. Pearson states;

' Whole language curricular is integrated in the sense that ;
- it seeks to preserve the wholeness or integrity of literacy events; no literacy act is ...... decomposed into subskills. There is a necessary, natural, and desired wholeness to both reading and writing, especially when ... pursued for genuine communicative purposes.
- artificial boundaries are not set up between any of the four language functions - reading writing, speaking and listening. All are
regarded as supportive facets of the same underlying cognitive and linguistic phenomenon.

- the literacy curriculum is not viewed as separate from social studies, science, literature, art, music, or mathematics curricula. Whole language thrives on the principle that literacy tasks should never be ends unto themselves; instead, they should be means to other ends, such as learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and communication.' (1989, p. 233)

Related to this last sense of integration is the whole language curricular concept of 'authenticity'.

'...when students pursue language activities out of genuine communicative intent, those activities will be authentic ... a school task is regarded as authentic to the degree that it represents the kind of task literate individuals would exercise .... . The goal in whole language curricula is to eliminate the gap between school literacy tasks and real-world literacy tasks.' (ibid, p.234)

The role of the teacher in arranging conditions or 'operating on the child's environment' within this pedagogy has been frequently misunderstood. On the one hand the notion that the role of teacher facilitator as one who 'leads from behind' (Newman, 1986) is frequently misinterpreted as being equivalent to non-intervention. On the other hand the practice of 'arranging the conditions so learning can occur' is also misinterpreted as being akin to 'the teacher in the work sheet-orientated, skills-management programs ... i.e. the teacher-manager finds out what the students cannot do and then finds materials to allow them to practice non-mastered skills...' (Pearson 1989, p.237). Both notions are a misinterpretation of the collaborative, responsive nature of a whole language teacher's role.

To address these criticisms and at the same time elicit the real meaning conveyed by the expression 'arranging the conditions of learning' it is necessary to clarify what these learning conditions might be and how they function in a whole language classroom.

Ken Goodman states that the role of whole language teachers is to 'know children, and know learning and teaching.' He adds that on this basis of understanding how child learn, and how they acquire language 'teachers support learning but they do not see themselves
as *controlling learning*’ (1989, p. 209). Whole language rejects the definitions of teachers as technicians administering a fixed technology to learners (K. Goodman, Shannon, Freeman, & Murphy 1988) however whole language teachers ‘accept responsibility for facilitating growth in their pupils but they also expect power and authority to plan, organise, and choose resources’ (K. Goodman, 1989, p. 209).

Butler and Turbill, Australian advocates of the whole language perspective explain how teachers can *orchestrate* learning, as opposes to *controlling* student learning. They suggest that ‘*theory orchestrates practice. Teachers who have a theory clearly sorted out in their heads can orchestrate their own practice; can generate new ideas and strategies appropriate to the children’s needs; can assess other people’s ideas and adapt and create from them; can critically evaluate any materials or resources; can trust children to take responsibility for their own learning; can organise their classroom effectively*’ (1986, p.1). The theory teachers need to develop is one related to how children learn and why they learn language, and how they learn to read and write.

In an attempt to explain the teacher’s role in the orchestration of the environment for the support of learning Cambourne (1989) examined the language learning model expounded by Halliday (1973). It was a language ‘model’ that claimed the normal child internalised by the age of five, a highly complex and almost fully approximated the phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantic model of adult language. Cambourne concluded that although reading and writing are different forms of the one mode of expression, they involve the same processes as those of talking and listening. He also claims that while the conditions operative in the natural learning setting of learning to talk could not be faithfully replicated in the classroom, the principles of the conditions could. Cambourne proposed the successful natural learning processes could be harnessed for the further learning and development of talking and listening and the learning and development of reading and writing if the teacher orchestrated particular supportive conditions.

As outlined in the text *The Whole Story - Natural learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom* (1989) the particular
conditions that Cambourne believes are supportive of language learners are;

'(i) *Immersion*
Learners need to be immersed in text of all kinds.

(2) *Demonstration*
Learners need to receive many demonstrations of how texts are constructed and used.

(3) *Expectation*
Expectations of those to whom learners are bonded are powerful coercers of behaviour.

(4) *Responsibility*
Learners need to make their own decisions about when, how and what bits' to learn in any learning task.

(5) *Use*
Learners need time and opportunity to use, employ, and practise their developing control in functional, realistic, non-artificial ways.

(6) *Approximation*
Learners must be free to approximate the desired model - 'mistakes' are essential for learning to occur.

(7) *Response* Learners must receive 'feedback' from exchanges with more knowledgeable' others'. Response must be relevant, appropriate, timely, readily available, non-threatening, with no strings attached.

(8) *Engagement* will occur learners are confirmed as a 'doers' (believe in the expectation) of the tasks being demonstrated or the task they are immersed in, and that the demonstrations will further the purposes of their lives and within the conditions of responsibility, use and response there exists no fear of physical or psychological hurt if their approximations are not fully 'correct'. ' (1989, p. 33)

It can be observed that Cambourne encompasses the three developmental principles evident in much of the work of early theorist into eight natural learning conditions. He calls his conditions 'theoretical principles' for learning and points out that each class context will 'coerce different methodological interpretations of the theory .... there is no standard recipe for the implementation ...There are only fundamental, practical principles' (1989, p.81).
What emerges from the discussion of the academic roots of whole language, specifically related to how children can be supported in furthering their language learning, is an appeal by whole language advocates for teachers to be ever vigilant in respect to how children learn, rather than how teachers should teach. They urge teachers to support learning in contrast to controlling learning, by setting conducive learning conditions in their classrooms and continually monitoring their practices through reference to current research, dialogue with peers and their own experience. In this way the pedagogy of whole language avoids becoming static.

2. PRACTICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF THE THEORETICAL TENETS OF WHOLE LANGUAGE FOR ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE LEARNING.

As the 'grass-roots' whole language movement has grown, so too has the dilemma related to the question of assessment in whole language contexts. The most important characteristics of this dilemma being:

(a) the conflicting views underlying traditional assessment practices and procedures and the contemporary understanding of teaching and learning encompassed within a whole language perspective,

(b) the conflicting views about the role of the teacher and the student related to assessment, and

(c) the conflicting views about what and how learning outcomes are to be reported to student, teachers, parents, administrators and the public.

In respect to the first characteristic of the dilemma whole language advocates represent one of many educator groups who protest against the use of standardised tests to assess learning. In discussing reading assessment Harste suggests that we should use what we have learned about successful readers in real language situations so as to improve research and instructional assessment. What happens to readers in a standardised test is quite different from real reading situations, readers are 'isolated from peer support (for fear of cheating), given materials to read which have no situational
support by way of appropriate context ..... deal with topics for which they have little familiarity or interest' (Harste 1982, p.116). From the theoretical stance of whole language the assessment of readers needs to take place under real conditions not 'strange' conditions.

Pearson and Valencia (1987) report that research by Collins, Brown and Larkin (1980) and Pearson and Spiro (1981) to name such a few, has emphasised reading as a constructive process. 'This process de-emphasises the notion that progress towards expert reading is guided by the aggregation of component reading skills' which is the rationale behind most test constructions. Pearson and Valencia also suggest that in the process of disseminating this research, tensions have been created relating to traditional assessment practices and those that they now consider more relevant to the reading process.

'This tension could easily transform itself into a kind of schizophrenia among reading program directors and reading teachers. While anxious to implement instructional practices based upon the latest research, they are plagued by threat of low scores. As a result they are forced to integrate two diametrically opposed curricula - one based upon what is measured by the tests for which they are accountable and one based upon what they have learned from recent research.' (Pearson and Valencia 1987, pp.6-7)

Harste proposes that the abandonment of all evaluation instruments that violate what we know about language and language learning and that do not lend themselves to improved theory or instruction. In their place should be put more theoretically valid measures. He goes on to suggest 'we must use whole natural instances of language settings within which to collect evaluative data' (Harste 1982, p. 116). Whole language classrooms represent examples of such language settings.

The second characteristic of the dilemma relates to the claims of the objectivity of traditional assessment (discussed in the previous chapter) and the notion that assessment controlled from the outside the classroom casts teachers in a role of managers rather than educational professional (Apple suggests that it leads to the deskilling of teachers (Apple and Jungck, 1990,p. 230)). One outcome of accepting external forms of assessment is that 'teachers become less
reliant on their own assessment skills of daily data collection which potentially has the most influence in refining specific instructional strategies' (Pearson and Valencia, 1987 p.9) Likewise students who are locked out of the assessment processes are denied the opportunity to reflect upon their learning in ways that render them more cognisant of how they learn and how they might enhance their learning.

The third characteristic of the dilemma poses the greatest challenge to opponents of traditional assessments. Report formats that utilise a single number, grade or rank are simple to read and efficient to process. However Watson explains that when the prime aim of assessment is to inform the public, both students and teachers in a whole language context are lost in the attempt to boil a learner's efforts down to a single number or grade. She believes that 'As scores become important, students become invisible' (1989, p. 138). This view is held by most advocates of alternatives to traditional assessment. The questions of how effective communication of the actual learning that has taken place or that needs to take place is lost within the rhetoric of 'objective tests' and 'true scores'. 'For true dialogue about teaching and learning to occur among the stakeholders ... rejection of psychometrics is required' (Johnston 1989, p. 526).

The response to this dilemma and its characteristics is an issue that whole language advocates have been addressing in recent years.

'Whole language teachers reject traditional evaluating techniques such as standardised or multiple choice tests .... because the content, nature, and uses of such devices are in direct conflict with the whole language teacher's view of teaching, learning, and curriculum.' (Goodman, Goodman and Hood 1989, Preface xiii)

Throughout the discussion of the emerging theory of whole language it is apparent that the immediate environment (and the interactions therein) that any learner experiences is the most influential factor in bringing about successful learning. Within the context of the school, the decisions about what should be taught, how it should be taught and how what is taught should be assessed, have major influences on the environment and experiences within a
classroom and subsequently the student learning outcomes. Therefore whoever shapes these decisions shapes learning.

Whole language proponents advocate a major role for teachers and learners in curriculum decision making and in the decisions related to the assessment of learning within this curriculum. Pearson explains their position:

'If curriculum is returned to teachers and students, so too must assessment be. Were this to occur, then only "situated" (i.e., arising from the situation) assessment, the kind that teachers and students would develop to suit their own curriculum, would count. Standardised tests and basal reading tests would serve no purpose in the curriculum, for neither would provide any information about real reading. Furthermore, the goal of every teacher assessment, even when it is situated, would be to promote student self-assessment. This focus on sharing authority with students and promoting student independence underscores an attitude of whole language commonly cited by its advocates; they like to call it child centred.' (1989, p. 235)

All suggestions for assessment in whole language contexts is predicated in the belief that teachers themselves are the best instruments for determining student learning outcomes. Read, in promoting 'descriptive assessment' voices the same respect for teacher prerogative. He claims '... that teacher's subjectivity is a more subtle instrument for perceiving and evaluating student's work than any grade or symbol. ..... 'subjectivity' should be called 'professional knowledge' ... 'personal opinion' should be termed 'judgment' - together these constitute our (teachers) expertise, our stock-in-trade' (1984, p. 9). Cambourne claims humans can be sensitive, reliable, trustworthy, credible instruments of data collection. He suggests that we;

'... consider what it is a human-as-instrument can do that the test cannot do. First the human is a responsive instrument. It can respond to all the personal and environmental cues which exist in the assessment context. Secondly it is adaptable. It can collect information about multiple factors at multiple levels, simultaneously. Thirdly it is "smart" . Like a "smart bomb" it can hone in on information, change direction, run down leads, follow a trail, and
ultimately hit the target. It can clarify, process, explore, summarise, triangulate on the spot and do a host of other things that standardised instruments could never do. In short it can cope with complexities much more effectively and quickly than any standardised test.’ (1988, p.7)

The human-as-instrument assessment tool for language learning is further validated by the claim that teachers committed to whole language are well equip 'assessment instruments' because they hold certain beliefs about learning; about how knowledge should be structured and presented so that optimal learning will occur; about the role process plays in the acquisition and development of language and beliefs about the relationship between language, thought and learning (Cambourne 1990) all of which have be discussed above. These beliefs provide the feedback that is required to reflect upon the basic purposes and values they hold as teachers, so that when they ponder over how a student is learning, or how well the learning conditions are supporting student learning they have a constant source of information from which to draw in order to make decisions.

The quality of a teacher's decisions is dependent on the clarity of the beliefs that are held. This can be best explained in terms of having:

(i) an understanding of growth in language development or a sense of direction students need to go in,

(ii) an understanding of the purposes for learning what is being presented,

(iii) an understanding of the values and criteria used to evaluate student growth and development.

These beliefs and the constant fine tuning of them through experience (actual or acquired through texts) provides a constant stream of information feedback for teachers enabling them to determine firstly what is going on in their teaching and learning contexts and secondly whether what is occurring is or is not in fact 'working' i.e. meeting the student's learning needs.
An inference can be drawn that these understandings enhance a teacher's ability to be 'in tune' with the not only the teaching and learning experiences offered to students, but also the responses made by students to these experiences. This then explains why observation appears to be so crucial to any assessment approach in a whole language context.

Yetta Goodman first coined the phrase 'kid watching' in 1978 to convey the importance of observation to the whole language assessment approach. The term proposed an alternative to testing that relied on compiled data of systematic observations of students' literacy behaviours. This process and the data it produced would allow teachers to monitor student growth and also allow teachers to see themselves reflected in their classrooms and in the responses of their students. Via 'kid-watching' the teacher becomes aware of the influence she/he has on student learning, hence further developing his/her understandings of the relationship between teaching and learning (K. Goodman, Y. Goodman and Hood 1989).

In a subsequent Kid-Watching Guide compiled by a group of American language teachers from Tucson, Arizona, it was revealed that opportunities for assessment in a whole language classroom occurred whenever teachers were observing, interacting with, and analysing students. Thus the process of assessment for these whole language teachers centred on the following essential focuses of kid-watching: ' 1. Observation of the students; 2. Interaction with students engaged in using language; and 3. Analysis of the product of students' language use' (Marek, Howard, et al., 1984). Each focus was considered to occur in relationship to each other. The following explanations of these essentials are drawn from the work of Marek, Howard, et al., and supplemented by comments from other whole language proponents.

1. Observation can range from the most incidental, informal general impressions of student's behaviours to the most formal systematised recording of information. They can be mentally noted for future reference, recorded in anecdotal records, placed on a specific observational form, taped, or handled in a variety of other ways. Teachers can develop an anecdotal collection system that will fit their unique needs. Carey supports the notion of observations, but suggests that 'we must build upon the notion of kidwatching and be
sure that we do not trivialize it.' (1988, p.12) He recommends the presentation of observations as the products of rigorous and systematic attempts to discern how well students are learning and developing.

Formal observations that employ a specific focus, that are dated and keep as a profile of student growth are one example of a rigorous and systematic assessment. The Kid-Watching Guide (Marek, Howard et al., 1984) suggests that the specific focus could relate to the setting, the participants involved, the incident or the task and the attitudes which may be revealed. Suggested uses for the anecdotal records are:

(i) Cumulative developmental files on individual students.
(ii) A guide for teachers in the adjustment of their instruction.
(iii) Sharing of jottings with the students, parents and administrators to allow reflection on change, growth and development.
(iv) In the reporting to parents and the administration.

2. Interactions with students can confirm initial judgments based on observations. Yetta Goodman considers interaction to be 'the most important aspect of the process of evaluation in whole language classrooms because of its immediate relationship to instruction. As teachers interact with students, they are not just discovering what students know about any particular learning but also using the moments of interaction to question the student, to encourage, to stimulate and to challenge' (Goodman K, Goodman Y., and Hood 1989, p.11). Altwerger, Edelsky and Flores view interaction as the opportunity for teachers to intervene and fine tune their teaching to keep it 'theoretically 'honest' and congruent with (whole language) beliefs about language acquisition.' They also report that a whole language teacher's interactions are like those of a coach who demonstrates, explains and cheers their student's own efforts. And above all they stress that more than simply facilitating learning, teachers actively participate as co-learners 'to construct meaning together.' (1987, p.152)

Interactions provide the opportunities that Vygotsky (1987) spoke of in relation to the 'zone of proximal development', when he spoke of that development which is achievable with the help of
others in a particular learning domain. Yetta Goodman explains that this help can come from teachers via 'carefully considered and appropriate questions that gently push kids to consider greater, conflicting, or different information .... moving them towards disequilibrium so they have to reorganise their concepts and rethink their ideas.' (Goodman K., Goodman Y., and Hood 1989, p. 11)

Interactions can be systematised and formally planned to be part of the teaching program. The use of the formalised interaction of Miscue Analysis and Retelling (Goodman Y., Watson and Burke 1987) provides the teacher with an opportunity to ascertain the student's maintenance of the integrity of the integrated graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic language cueing systems as they read. It can also aid in examining the relative complexity and predictability of reading material. (Goodman and Burke 1980)

Another formal interaction is Carolyn Burke's Reading Interview which can be used to gain insight into a reader's beliefs about the reading process. Responses to the series of open-ended questions can reveal: how the student copes with difficult material; what qualities the student considers typifies a "good" reader; what reading strategies the student would recommend to other readers and personal strengths and weakness as reported by the student.

Brown and Cambourne's Read and Retell procedures (Cambourne and Brown 1987) and reading interest inventories and reading records are just a few of the many formalised interactions specifically related to reading.

For writing there are equally as many formalised strategies. The Writing Interview first compiled by Margaret Atwell and revised by Jerome Harste and Carolyn Burke is similar to the Burke reading interview. The open-ended questions are designed to reveal what a student understands about the writing process and what strategies the student uses when writing. The 'Proofreading' strategy (Curtis 1989) can be added here as a formal interactive strategy. Initially employed as an alternative to testing spelling and dictation, in reality it reveals what the student already knows about how the written form of language works, why the student decides to use particular language knowledge for a particular language task and how successful they are in this and finally what the student needs to know in order to
progress as a language user. '... it is impossible to use a test to find out something about each of these points.' (ibid, 1989, p. 37)

Curtis explains that;

'Children, when they take part in any language activity, make reasoned rather than random decisions. They use what they know of language to serve their own purposes. When given a piece of text to work with (alongside the teacher), in the context of 'Proofreading', children call on the language knowledge THEY believe to be appropriate for the task of 'fixing up' the piece of writing. This provides a clear picture of their decision-making, as well as indicating the language knowledge on which they are drawing.' (ibid, p.37)

The written aspect of Brown and Cambourne's Read and Retell (1987) is another formal written interaction. The retelling procedures can be apply equally to reading, writing, talking and listening. In respect to reading the first phase involves participates in some intensive reading, followed by a written retelling of that reading. The reader can re-read the piece as often as they like in order to prepare themselves for the second phase where they are asked to produce a written retelling of their reading. 'During the actual written retelling phase, the reteller is engaged in a whole range of significant language processes, including literal recall of events, characters, main points, rhetorical features, stylistic devices and text structure. While reading the original text, creating a written retelling and reading a peer's text (in the third phase of the procedure) the participant is continually engaging and re-engaging with spelling and punctuation conventions.' (Brown and Cambourne 1987, p.9) In the following phase of sharing and discussing their retelling with peers the participants 'give and receive responses that coerce reflection upon, and discussion of, a wide range of text-related concepts.' (ibid p. 9)

Brown and Cambourne suggest that the retelling procedure provides a number of different opportunities for teachers to form 'evaluative opinions' about what they consider to be important indicators of literacy development as are dialogue journals, learning logs and profiles of written pieces.
3. **Analysis** of language use provides a visible record of development. Growth and flexibility in the use of functions, conventions, strategies, cueing systems, and attitudes can be documented through periodic language samples. These samples and the analysis of them for growth signals by both or either teacher or student provide students, the teacher, other teachers, parents, administrators and the general public with concrete evidence of progress.

The previously mentioned strategies, the reading and writing interview, the use of the miscue inventory, the proofreading and retelling procedures and the informal record keeping procedures all require analysis either by teacher and/or the student. For all of these formats comprehensive analysing procedures accompany the explanation of the procedures. Having taken observations and arranging procedures for interaction the teacher needs to pull all their sources of assessment data into a cohesive evaluation of the student's learning. Some of this analysis occurs instantaneously whilst the observations or interactions are taking place. Some require time for reflection through collation of data and reference to criteria either stated (in the teacher's, school's or district's program or within the procedures themselves as is the case of miscue analysis) or criteria drawn from the teacher's theoretical stance.

Many formats have been developed for the analysis of written text. In the main all formats or procedures seek to identify those aspects of growth evident in the sample itself or in comparison to the student's previous samples. As the teacher and the student examine the product the focus remains on content and process. Questions related to the student's strengths in understanding and using, (i) the purpose of the particular written piece, and an appropriate form, i.e. narrative or expository (structure), (ii) the meaning conveyed in response to the purpose and form, and the audience to whom the piece is being communicated which is part of the meaning context (meaning), and (iv) the use of written conventions in aiding the conveyance of the meaning (conventions).

These are only some of the many variations employed by teachers who adopt a whole language perspective in an attempt to maintain congruency with underlying whole language theory. All the assessment and evaluative procedures mentioned thus far all concur
with the purposes of the educative agenda mentioned previously in Chapter 2. These procedures and practices adopt the belief that assessment is a process of 'sitting beside' students in an interactive and collaborative relationship in order to 'come to know' them so as to foster and enhance student language learning and teachers language teaching. In other words to improve teaching and learning.

In summarising the whole language position on assessment of student learning, Carey states that it is:

'... a shift in the model of evaluation from a purely quantitative one to a more ethnographic or naturalistic one. ... (it) accepts as data things that do not look like data at first glance ...they rely on what anthropologists in the field call, "thick descriptions" of situations and events, ..."triangulate" of the data, .. and they insist on multiple sources for the data ... gradually a portrait of the learning experiences emerge, and it's not necessarily reducible to a numerical representation ..... a score is not the final goal of either education or evaluation.' (Carey 1988, p.12)
Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY OF THE INQUIRY

INTRODUCTION

Research questions are generated from a particular educational paradigm. 'Paradigm' implies a "disciplinary matrix" a shared commitment of beliefs, values, and methods (Kuhn, 1970, p. 182-183). In any comparison of educational paradigms 'different views of education, language, and learning; use of different discourse; maintenance of different values' all emanating 'from different educational communities, are revealed. These different value systems become apparent in educational research and for this reason it is not possible to ... lay out the lines of inquiry of one paradigm with research appropriate to another.' (Edelsky, 1990, p.7&9).

In educational research the methodology used is representative of the educational paradigm that aligns most closely to the researcher's beliefs and values. The paradigm is ultimately reflected in the questions asked in the inquiry. Schwandt suggests that 'once a problem is viewed and stated within a particular paradigm...... then the paradigm dictates the approach for solving the problem' (1989, p. 396). This statement provides the conceptual framework for discussion regarding decisions influencing the methodology adopted in this inquiry.

In section one of this chapter in the role of researcher, I set out to explain the research activities on two levels. The first level of inquiry is discussed in relation to the theoretical rationale of the chosen inquiry method. At another level of inquiry I examine the multifaceted patterns of my own thinking-in-action as a reflective practitioner. At this latter level and in the role of practitioner in the inquiry, via particular research methods. I engaged in a process of developing, implementing and justifying specific assessing procedures in joint negotiations with other participants. The processes of discussion and examination proceed via the use of a methodological framework.
In section two a model of the retrospective design that emerged from the inquiry is presented. This model reiterates the two levels at which this inquiry evolves and outlines the data that constituted the reality of these two levels.

In section three I address the issue of 'credibility' and 'trustworthiness' in terms of the 'methodological rigor' of the two levels of the inquiry. Due to the nature of this inquiry and my role as inquirer the methodological standards adhered to relate more to the purpose and context of the inquiry than to any set of conventions for a methodology. Thus in respect to this inquiry, methodological rigor will be shown to be 'grounded' in the data and its analysis.

SECTION 1

In this section the methodological framework of the inquiry is clarified and justified via the following three processes:

(i) Determining from which educational paradigm the inquiry focus is generated. To facilitate this the issues of assessment and evaluation and the understandings of whole language will be examined for their implicit educational paradigm. Stating the position I take as the inquirer in respect to these issues and understandings reveals the beliefs and values that shape the inquiry question, and the educational paradigm that inevitably dictates the paradigm of this inquiry.

(ii) Determining which methodological approaches to be adopted in the inquiry. Although it is be accepted that methodology is only a construct and allegiance to any one methodological principle should be secondary to a full understanding of the inquiry question, it can be shown that the methodology of this inquiry played a contributing role in the emergence of an inquiry design. The methodology that best addressed the inquiry question was one that achieved a 'value-fit' (Guba and Lincoln, 1982) with the inquirer's own educational paradigm.

(iii) Determining the procedures and techniques and the logic of the research design that are commensurate with the identified inquiry paradigm and methodological approach. The explanation of these research methods completes the description of the
methodological framework in which a 'reciprocal relationship' of congruency between paradigm and methods is clearly established (Schwandt 1989).

The two conceptual levels operating in this inquiry are made explicit through the explanation of these three processes. One level of the inquiry is made manifest in the first and second processes which represent the theories driving the researcher. At another inquiry level the third process is represented via the meanings of the research experiences of the researcher and participants of the research. Bawden identifies these two levels as 'sets of experiences and theories';

"As we go about the business of using our methods of enquiry into issues pertinent to our professional expertise, so we must also go about the business of our enquiry into our enquiry (Churchman, 1971). All learning in this context, involves two sets of experiences and theories: There is the "first order" issue relating to the situation we are exploring, and there is the "second order" issue relating to the way we are enquiring into the "first order" issue. ....... We use both sets of theories to inform our practice as praxis.' (Bawden, 1990, p. 34)

The reporting of the two levels of the process is the attempt to substantiate my 'praxis' and in doing so depict the realism of the classroom community and the day-to-day teaching and learning experiences hence conveying 'the whole story'.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE METHODOLOGY

There are many ways of conceptualising a methodological framework. The manner chosen to visually depict the framework of this inquiry rests on a personal set of assumptions related to the inquiry itself. Any inquiry conducted in a classroom as part of the regular process of teaching and learning would be by its very nature naturalistic. To facilitate meaning making from the experiences of this particular classroom based inquiry a number of separate but related methodologies including naturalistic inquiry, action-research and grounded-theory have been employed. These represent related expressions of a non-positivistic inquiry paradigm. For purposes of
The overarching paradigm is non-positivistic encompassing naturalistic inquiry which provides the means to appreciate 'the subtlety and complexity of the natural world we are trying to explain through educational inquiry' (Shrock, S. in Carey, R. 1980 p.413). Embedded within this inquiry approach are the action-research/grounded theory approaches to inquiry which in turn draw on the inquiry 'practices' or inquiry 'tools' of educational ethnography and responsive evaluation. Such a rationale gives rise to a conceptual framework for an inquiry, with a paradigm base and contributing methodologies, as outlined in Figure 2. The visual depiction of the framework does not imply that each methodological approach grows out of that which precedes it. What is intended to be conveyed is the interrelatedness of the approaches and the contribution that each makes to the understanding of this inquiry.
PROCESS 1. ESTABLISHING AN EDUCATIONAL AND INQUIRY PARADIGM

The literature review on assessment and evaluation in chapter two established the issues that a teacher must address in choosing to improve teaching and learning via the educative means of monitoring, assessing, evaluating and reporting student learning outcomes. These were seen as an alternative to the instrumental means of determining learning outcomes. The discussion related to the purposes of the assessment agendas. It highlighted the dichotomous nature of the issues, a dichotomy that finds its fullest expression in the assumptions underlying the means adopted by each agenda. The exploration of the origins of these assumptions reveals the divergent 'world views' represented by the educative and instrumental agendas.

Crowell gives an explanation of the notion of 'a world view' when he reports that in 1957 a conceptual revolution was changing the scientist's conception of space, matter, force and the structure of the universe. It was believed that;

"The conceptual models of the world that our culture uses are no longer consistent with scientific knowledge. ... The Cartesian-Newtonian world of order, linear sequence, and mechanistic prediction ... is only valid in limited contexts." (Kuhn, in Crowell, p.60).

Cziko's (1989) claims accord with just such a view when he states that the physical sciences have discarded the Newtonian view of the physical universe as a giant predetermined clock and given way this century to a much more complex and puzzling view of nature. He points out that the two major events responsible for this shift in perspective have been the development of the field of quantum mechanics and the discovery of the chaos theory. Crowell and Cziko stress however, that whilst the physical sciences now view the world from a perspective that assumes phenomena under study to be unpredictable, chaotic, random and indeterminate, evidence supports the view that '... the old perspective with its emphasis on quantification, objectivity, experimentation, and inferential statistical techniques still dominates mainstream "scientific" educational research.' (Cziko, 1989, p.18)
This dominance is regularly challenged by educational researchers who argue that; 'The experimental method is necessarily artificial. Because a child can be shown to learn by trial and error in a laboratory does not mean that this is the way he learns in everyday life. ....... ' (Epstein, 1962)

THE INSTRUMENTAL AGENDA

The assumptions underlying the instrumental means of assessment agenda; quantification and measurability of human learning (fragmentation of reality with accents on parts and elements); the use of objective experimental tests to achieve this measurability, and results or outcomes being the basis for determining and predicting the capacity of human learning can be seen to flow from a 'world view' representative of the Cartesian-Newtonian perspective. This perspective holds that; theory is universal and that law-like generalisations are not bound to specific contexts or circumstances; that 'scientific truth' can be pursued; that events can be determined and variables can be identified and defined, and knowledge formalised; that relationships between and among variables can be expressed in mathematically precise ways in the development and testing of theoretical propositions (Candy 1989).

These concepts 'stress the power of 'positive' knowledge to solve practical problems.' (Candy 1989, p.2) and an ' outdated positivistic, ethic [the researcher's point of view] approach to the behavioural sciences.' (Cziko 1989, p.18). The perspective therefore is identified as falling within a 'positivistic' paradigm.

Research compatible with the instrumental agenda embraces this positivistic paradigm and its endorsement of a 'scientific' method or empirical-analytical research. The inquiry paradigm born of the positivistic educational paradigm (sometimes referred to as a quantitative paradigm encompassing more than just methods) includes the specification of hypotheses at the start of an inquiry, the attempt to remain objective and detached from the participants in the inquiry, the search for relationships, and the attempt to reduce findings to quantified forms. This match between the instrumental agenda and the 'world view' of the positivistic paradigm leads to the conclusion that proponents of the instrumental agenda for
assessment have a theoretical base in the positivistic educational paradigm and would carry out inquiry of a positivistic nature.

THE EDUCATIVE AGENDA

'Changes in scientific thought affect all of society, [and therefore] they have implications for education as well' (Crowell 1989, p.60). The implications of the 'new world' view on education have resulted in a rejection of the positivistic educational paradigm by many in the field of educational research. Due to an acknowledgment that behavioural sciences including human behaviour are unpredictable and indeterminable, these researchers adopt non-positivistic inquiry approaches. Acceptance of the non-positivistic paradigm does not mean however, that educational researchers view all human activity as being random, without patterns or cohesion. As Cziko explains 'the findings that all physical events are at their finest level unpredictable seems hardly consistent with the great scientific advances of this century that enabled us to better predict and control our physical environment.' (1989, p.22).

While it is not possible to predict accurately nor predetermine behaviour patterns it is possible to recognize in human behaviour purposefulness and unity (ibid, p. 61). In light of this Cziko urges educational researchers to 'describe, appreciate, interpret, and explain...' this 'purposefulness and unity' (Cziko 1989).

A descriptive and interpretive inquiry approach to the study of educational contexts and individuals diverges from the prescriptive role of positivistic inquiry where something must be proved. What can be obtained via descriptive and interpretative inquiries are educational findings about how things could be otherwise. They can provide 'vicarious experiences outside one's limited personal experience to serve as sources of variation and conjecture to fuel the evolution of educational practice and policy.' They can also illuminate the student's perspectives 'as he or she faces the various cognitive and social tasks presented in educational contexts ..' (Cziko, 1989. pp.23-24).
The assumptions underlying a descriptive and interpretative approach include the following; any event or action can be explained in terms of multiple factors, so events and processes, causes and effects are considered mutually interdependent; attaining complete objectivity is irrelevant when observing humans who make sense of events based on their beliefs and values, and create individual systems of meaning; inquiry is always value-laden, and this influences the framing, the bounding and focusing of research problems; inquiry is about developing an understanding of individual cases, rather than generalisations; tangible and intangible multifaceted realities represent the nature of world and these are best studied as a unified whole, rather than being fragmented into dependent and independent variables, (in other words context makes a difference); (Candy 1989). These assumptions are compatible with methodological practices that include ethnography, case-studies and participant observation.

Crowell warns however that the researcher role of describer and interpreter should not be just 'independent observers standing beside a rushing stream, noting its twists and turns, studying it objectively. Nor should we conceptualise the stream as merely something to be navigated from point A to point B. We must add a new relationship to the stream - we are the stream.' (Jantsch 1975 in Crowell 1989, p.61).

In this statement Crowell reflects a concern held by some researchers who see that the descriptive and interpretive approach can also encompass a broader 'critical' approach to inquiry. A critical aspect to the descriptive and interpretive approach would extend to an understanding of the relations among value, interest, and action for change (Popkewitz, 1984). A critical perspective would bring addition assumptions to the descriptive and interpretive approach, such as; human action being embedded in social conditions beyond the consciousness of the participants; social conditions being constraints on participants' ability to change. The goal of critical perspectives is to uncover and report through research the constraints of social conditions and in so doing enable human liberation and emancipation (Giroux 1983). Candy explains the critical position in this way, 'research [within the critical approach] involves not only the recording of participants interpretations and understandings but involves the reformulating or 'resymbolising' of
events or expressions - an act of construction rather than discovery; and a focus on self-reflection, coupled with action for change’ (Candy 1989, p. 7)

Shannon points out that ‘... because the critical approach values an advocate’s role for the researcher who is expected to work toward identifying and overcoming constraints on negotiators’ freedom, critical researchers can treat research methods as merely means to this moral goal, rather than as ends in themselves as the other research traditions must.’ (Shannon, 1989, Introduction xx).

These descriptive, interpretive and critical approaches to inquiry emerge from a non-positivistic paradigm and are generally termed 'naturalistic'. They are compatible with the assumptions underlying the educative agenda’s means of assessment. These assumptions are: that human learning cannot be quantified or measured as human behaviour is indeterminate and unpredictable; that attempts to understand how human learning can be supported and fostered can best be achieved via descriptive and interpretive methods; and that this understanding is best gained in real contexts where the learning occurs naturally.

Therefore in setting out to conduct inquiry the educative agenda draws on methodologies compatible with its assumptions. These methodologies are commonly drawn from a non-positivistic paradigm.

ESTABLISHING THE EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM OF WHOLE LANGUAGE

The theoretical base of the phenomena of whole language, outlined in chapter three, with clearly stated assumptions about learning, language learning and the support and enhancement of learning rejects the positivistic educational paradigm on the basis that the paradigm’s underlying assumptions contradict those of whole-language.

Explaining how questions from a whole language perspective differ from traditional 'scientific' research Edelsky states; 'The question, Which works better? is a question emanating from the instrumental rationality of the dominant paradigm. It foregrounds

Edelsky suggests that a research methodology from a whole language perspective would involve the researcher in;

(i) ... an examination of their conceptions of language and literacy.'
(ii) ... understand[ing] the participants' perspectives.
(iii) ... abstain[ing] from trivializing context.
(iv) ... recurring question[ing] of What is happening here? and How does X happen? Increasingly, as it [inquiry] becomes more genuinely collaborative, [the whole language researcher] asks How can we work together to make something else happen and what would that look like? ' (Edelsky, 1990, p. 10)

Goodman believes that;

'Whatever methodology is used, researchers must be able to study what happens in whole-language classrooms without restricting it, changing its nature, or isolating features from their natural context' (K.Goodman 1989, p. 211)

Therefore the research methodologies best suited to whole language inquiry, like that of the educative assessment agenda, would be of a descriptive, interpretive and critical nature.

ESTABLISHING THE EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM OF THE RESEARCHER

The educative assessment agenda and a whole language perspective both align most closely with my personal beliefs, values, discourse and practices related to learning, learning language and teaching to enhance learning. These beliefs and values have been evolving during my years as a teacher and a student in the field of literacy (Appendix A). The form that they took at the
commencement of the inquiry are represented here in the form of diarised statements

In the early stages of the inquiry I was wisely encouraged to 'get out of my head' those taken-for-granted assumptions that I currently held, in other words my presuppositions in respect to teaching and assessing literacy. The first attempt was most disappointing for I recognised the generic nature of my presuppositions and the appearance of what is commonly labelled 'motherhood' statements. In order to bring to the surface beliefs and values from which practices could be clearly aligned I needed to attempt a second cut, in other words to 'peeling off the belief layers'.

The way to achieve this was not to tell but to show what I believed. I achieved this initially by attempting to confirm and articulate my personal theory of development by examining my classroom practices. I reflected upon and documented these classroom practices at the commencement of the study. (APPENDIX 2). An examination of the 'episodes' or 'participant structures' (Erickson and Schultz 1981) occurring in terms of why and how they operated enabled me to articulate my 'real' beliefs. It also revealed purposes and explanations for the decisions behind the organisation of the learning, the teaching and the structuring of the class environment. The resultant overall 'participant structures' encompassed my personal interpretation of whole-language at the commencement of the inquiry.

BELIEFS AND VALUES OF THE INQUIRER AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE INQUIRY

The following two avenues of reflection, the articulation of a personal theory and responses to socio-political pressures, 'lay bare' the set of beliefs out of which I worked. As Browne (1985) eloquently explains 'beliefs shape practice' and 'like a liquid, practice takes the shape of whatever belief-container it is in.' Therefore making explicit these beliefs uncovered the personal educational paradigm which framed and directed the inquiry.
PERSONAL JOTTINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH SUPERVISOR:

I have a personal theory about how language develops in children. Some writers have likened it to a spiral path, '...the quality of control the child gains is dependent on the quality of experiences which the child encounters.' Ann Revie (1989, p 148). However I think of development more in terms of a human body developmental model. This model is driven by a D.N.A.-type language blueprint brought to realisation in and through life experiences. The D.N.A. analogy provides me with a conceptual framework which holds that there is language/literacy potentiality in every child and that development of this comes about or is drawn out gradually in response to experiences offered by the environment in which the child is immersed, thus revealing itself as an emerging 'ableness' (a parallel is found in the development of physical abilities such as crawling and walking; this ableness emerges at different times).

As a teacher I don't think in terms of strict markers ('they should be able to do this by now' mentality) of this 'ableness' when I intuitively make evaluative decisions. I tend to think of what 'ableness' I have observed to date, and how I might foster experiences that could engender further 'ableness'. It always gives me a sense of wonder when children reveal more 'ableness' than I saw before. When I see little if any increase in 'ableness' than before, I ask myself 'Why?' Many things are considered such as the child's emotional and physical well being, or my inability to have established an appropriate and supportive learning environment. It all seems so complex, but like each crystal pattern, or weather pattern with all the myriad of influences possible, there is nonetheless a discernible pattern. As Lucy McCormick Calkins (1986) says '... by understanding the pathways one child has taken in learning... we may be able to discern and trust the pathways other children will take.' It's in gaining an understanding of these patterns that I believe enables me to be more attuned to the support that each learner needs.

Prior to the research focus taking shape, these beliefs were being challenged by the socio-political events surrounding accountability demands on schools. Up until the time of this inquiry Australian primary education had no history of standardised testing for literacy development. In response many educators such as primary teachers, myself included, voiced concern over the introduction of such testing in New South Wales Schools. The introduction of Basic Skills Testing
confirmed my resolve to inquiry into ways of realising (i.e. in the sense of realising assets) the qualitative evaluative processes that occurred as an integral part of the literacy learning in classrooms adopting whole language perspectives. These processes were alternatives to the quantitative measures evident in the standardised Basic Skills Test. The decision to embark on this journey of inquiry generated discussions with peers and my supervisor and led to the recording of reflections and the writing of letters to the media. These responses like the rationale for my instructional practice reflect my beliefs and values.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT ISSUES

EXTRACTS FROM COMMUNICATIONS WITH SUPERVISOR

I believe the accountability demands being presently placed on N.S.W. teachers will threaten the metamorphosis that teachers concerned with literacy development have been experiencing since their involvement in the Early Literacy Inservice Course. The theory supporting E.L.I.C. is still filtering through teaching practices. In this 'half baked' state some teachers have not yet been able to clearly articulate and implement practices of evaluation that are truly cognisant with the theory. The new evaluation demands of the Basic Skills Test may so occupy teachers that I fear the ground gained for a better deal for children's literacy learning will be lost. I agree with Max Kemp (1989) when he speaks of the need for teachers to demonstrate what we know about children's development. He suggests that evaluation techniques of 'kid watching', miscue analysis, product analysis and reading records be adopted and from the understands gained we must devise report methods that satisfy the criteria of progress i.e. that growth and development is occurring. Whether the prose style assessment will be really seen as a valid measure is questionable in the climate of 'scientific and objective is the most valid' argument put forward by rationalistic proponents.

First I believe we have to argue against this evaluation stance with solid evidence proving that we cannot measure literacy development in this manner. Not only because it contradicts the methodology of our (especially whole language teachers) literacy instruction, but because it can never really give us a complete picture of an individual's development, nor inform us as to how we could best enhance the development. This argument has been going on for quite some time in response to standardised testing conducted over zealously in North America and to a less extent here in Australia.

What concerns me is the belief held by testing proponents that better tests tailored to suit the curriculum may approach a 'truer' message of literacy development. I disagree with this, and I hear in the conversations (by this I mean the literature I've been reading) arguments that support my belief. The bottom line of my objection is firstly, that 'tests' (in the traditional sense) are not natural, they are not part of the communicative demands of the real world. Secondly
test situations are foreign to my whole language/naturalistic classroom environment. To introduce them would break the trust that I have established with my students based on the belief that we engage in language to further our understandings about the world and ourselves and in this sense language is real and meaningful. As a facilitator and a co-learner I am not out to 'trick', 'catch out' or 'error hunt' anything my students engage in. What I am interested in, is how they are growing in their communicative ability and how my monitoring, interaction and analysis can provide feedback that informs their learning processes.

LETTER TO THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD (EXTRACT) 14th August 1989

Sir,

The Minister and the Basic Skills Test designers seem all too oblivious to research in the field which has provided the basis for a redefinition of our understanding of the reading process. Reading is no longer viewed as a receptive, passive process in which readers merely "take in" the information printed on the pages before them. Instead it is viewed as an active process, one in which readers use cues to 'construct' the meaning of the text. Due to the adoption of these 'new understandings' by many educators a dilemma is created. On the one hand these educators act out of the model which underlies recent reading research, theory and practice, and is evident in the state's language curriculum. On the other hand and in conflict with it, there is a model of reading which governs reading assessment practices, policies and decision-making procedures. The result is that teachers find themselves on 'the horns of this dilemma'.

Teachers are asked to believe that educational accountability can be truly fixed on the basis of test results. But such a belief will not contribute to teacher's sense of professional competence. In fact we could go so far as to say that it will erode significantly their perceptions of themselves as professional educators and their ability to make or influence important decisions about educating our state's children. That's the injustice inflicted on our teachers.

As for the children, you will now label them according to a set of numbers derived from tests that have little relevance to their literacy development or its real world purposes. By emphasizing only test scores, those literacy proficiencies that could be crucial to lifelong literacy habits are dismissed (and begin not to be reflected in the real curriculum of classroom instruction). This is the injustice perpetrated on our children.

How then do we resolve this dilemma and stop these injustices?

I propose, as do many teachers, that we work towards means other than standardised testing to conceptualising the relationship between assessment and teaching and learning. When assessment, teaching and learning complement each other, then I believe we will have preserved the dignity and rights of both teacher and learner.

J.H.

What becomes evident in the implicit beliefs and values of the statements is their close alignment with the educational paradigm of non-positivistism. The allegiance to non-positivistic inquiry was
established by the inquiry’s aim. The aim of the inquiry was not to set out ‘to mitigate nor resolve the (assessment) controversy’ (McKenna, Robinson and Miller 1990) an aim that would attempt to answer such questions as ‘Which assessment technique works better?.

Such questions lead to frequent and popular methodological discussions regarding the functions of control groups, the use of before-and-after designs and control of variables and laboratory studies to name just a few issues that Goodman refers to when he speaks of ‘restricting, changing and isolating from natural context’ methods of inquiry which ‘emanate from the instrumental rationality of the positivist research paradigm.’ (Edelsky 1990, p.9). To ask such questions would not be commensurate with my beliefs and values. In contrast to a positivistic approach the aim of this inquiry is to describe a process. It is a process that relates to the experiences of a teacher who attempts to develop, implement and justify assessment procedures for language development in a whole-language context.

In adopting such an approach a reciprocity between values and assumptions embodied in one’s world view, in this instance my own world view, is achieved.

Schwandt explains this concept;

Our world view is composed of our assumptions about the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge, and our value perspectives. Each of us adopts a framework of inquiry consonant with our beliefs. In other words, our constructions of the world, or values, and our ideas about how to inquire into those constructions, are mutually self-reinforcing. We conduct inquiry via a particular paradigm because it embodies assumptions about the world that we believe and values that we hold, and because we hold those assumptions and values we conduct inquiry according to the precepts of that paradigm’ (Schwandt, 1989, p.273).
PROCESS 2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES ADOPTED IN THIS INQUIRY

A non-positivistic paradigm endorses a form of inquiry known as naturalistic inquiry. This form of inquiry has been defined as; '.... a method of research that considers how the experience of an individual, group, or society is influenced by and, in turn, influences its surrounding context. It is field based rather than laboratory based: that is, it requires that behaviour be examined in natural settings.' (Kamil, Langer J. and Shannahan, 1985, p. 71)

The characteristics evident in naturalistic inquiry are that social behavioural contexts are impossible to fragment and 'measure', and that prediction, control and precise 'answers' to preconceived questions or hypothesis are not likely outcomes. It also acknowledges the influence that an inquirer has on any object of inquiry. It fosters the notion of 'human-as-instrument', qualitative data collection, and the fact that a naturalist inquirer does not specify a design in advance, but anticipates that a design will emerge as the inquiry proceeds (Guba and Lincoln, 1982).

Naturalistic inquiry that is educationally orientated to the investigation of educational problems proposes that the only genuine source for the discovery of educational theories and knowledge expansion, is the practical experiences out of which these problems are generated. The proper concern of educational research then, is with formulating theories that are grounded in the realities of educational practice (Carr and Kemmis 1983). This concept of method set in a context of problem solving has come to be known as 'grounded theory'. Glaser and Strauss (1967) proponents of this research methodology state that the educational problems research seeks to confront, only arise for, and can only be resolved by, educational practitioners.

'Practice' is usually understood to refer to habitual or customary action. But it also means the exercise of an art, referring back to its origins in the Greek word 'praxis', meaning informed, committed action.' (Carr and Kemmis, 1983).

Carr and Kemmis also claim that when a practitioner undertakes to research their practice in a self-reflective manner with the aim of
improving the understanding of the situation, and the rationality and justice of that practice, then they become action-researchers. This form of naturalistic research has been documented as proceeding through a spiral of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, with each of these activities being systematically and self-critically implemented and interrelated. It also involves all those effect ed by the practice and aims for collaborative control of the process (ibid p. 155).

The 'problem' that I set out to confront was framed in terms of an inquiry question. The question of how assessment and evaluation is practiced in a whole language context however, was two sided, analogous to the two sides of one coin. One side of the question represented a personal 'teacher' perspective that sought to better understand practice, the other was the socio-political context out of which the understanding was being generated. From the 'teacher' perspective, my focus was expressed as follows:

'As a teacher who adopts a whole language approach to learning I believed that the practices I had established in my classroom provided many opportunities for the evaluation of my students. Because of these practices I carried around 'in my head' notions about my student's development based on responses that I received from them and ways that I could further assist their development by responding in return to the needs I perceived. I had already established some monitoring processes that together with my 'intuitive' knowledge assisted me in compiling formal written evaluations when required, but there was so much more that I knew could be captured. Thus I set out on a journey of discovery and a course of action which I hoped would help translate this tacit knowledge into propositional form.'

The other side of the double-sided question was a view from a much broader research perspective that acknowledged the socio-political pressures that a teacher faces when choosing to; (i) consider student assessment practices that embrace the understanding that assessment is for the improvement of teaching and learning and (ii) defend the ability of whole language to present 'acceptable' means of assessment of literacy learning that express growth and development in ways commensurate with whole language theory. This side of the question was expressed thus;
'What processes are operating when a teacher attempts to articulate 'indicators' of growth and development in literacy, and how are these 'indicators' manifested in a whole language context. How do these manifestations provide feedback to the teacher and the student, and how can they be reported to parents, educational administrators and the public?'

To address the teacher side of the question I needed to act on my understandings and constantly refine them by seeking ways to understand what occurred, why it occurred, how what occurred was monitored and evaluated and what constituted growth and development within the class community.

To address the researcher side of the question I needed to; understand how to administer the 'acting-on-my-understandings' teacher role i.e. the cyclic process of documenting, recording, analyzing and re-acting; understand how the broader socio-political and educational issues related to assessment and evaluation within a class context; understand whole language theory and check whether the theory proposed by its proponents matched the set of beliefs and practices evident in my classroom, and what assessment practices were congruent with this theory. Expressed in such a way the roles whilst complex, appear clearly delineated. In reality however I was never quite sure when I was teacher and when I was researcher.

In embarking upon the journey of inquiry to make tangible my tacit 'ways of knowing' the question of greatest concern was not which research methodology to employ, but what strategies of research were appropriate, adequate and suitable in terms of addressing both the researcher and teacher sides of the inquiry question (the perspectives of the watcher and the watched). It has been suggested that to approach research methodology in this manner, that is, in the quest for 'what works' is 'glossing over deeper epistemological issues' (Smith and Heshusius, 1986). However when the question of 'what works' is generated from a clearly stated educational inquiry paradigm, as I have done, then I believe that it does not 'gloss over epistemological issues'.

Therefore through my practical experience as a teacher and my role as researcher, I set out to address the issue of assessment and
evaluation in a whole language context via **naturalistic inquiry**. The inquiry was of a descriptive and interpretive nature that also reflected an awareness of broader critical influences such as socio-political constraints, and secondly, via the processes of **action research** and **grounded theory**. The desire to discover an answer to my double-sided question drove the rationale of the inquiry which was to trace the processes a teacher experiences in developing, implementing and justifying assessment and evaluation practices in the context of a whole language classroom.

**PROCESS 3. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES**

The criteria used for the determining which inquiry procedures and techniques to employ were:

(i) that the data gathering process not be artificial or contrived,

(ii) that the data gathering complement daily processes of classroom language learning,

(iii) that the data represent all participants perspectives and demonstrate their growing development and understandings,

(iv) that the data provide a continuous stream of information that informs the participants, stimulates action and facilitates decision-making,

(v) that the data gathering and analysis be both a collaborative and democratic process.

The methods that filled these criteria were those of ethnographic data gathering and the modes of assessment compatible with the concepts of responsive evaluation. The inherent nature of both these methods were considered to be conducive to answering my inquiry question - How is assessment and evaluation practiced in a whole language context?

Educational ethnography procedures and techniques were employed to gain an understanding of the culture of the learning context, in other words to establish, what was occurring, how it was occurring and how the participants perceived the events on a day-to-day basis. (Kamil, Langer and Shannahan 1985). The ethnographic methods best suited to these goals were;
**Participant observations**
- teacher's reflective journal,
- audio and video recording of sessions,
- external peer teacher observations,

**Field Notes**
- teacher's diary

**Informant interviews**
- student interviews by peer.

Responsive evaluation procedures and techniques were employed so that the learning and learning outcomes could be tracked. Responsive evaluation as devised for large-scale evaluation projects (usually related to curriculum) needed to be adapted to fit the specific requirements of student evaluation. What follows is an explanation of how this approach was redefined (for purposes of this study), with care to maintain the core concepts.

Robert Stake's explanation of 'responsive evaluation' states that;

> 'An educational evaluation is **responsive evaluation** if it orients more directly to program activities than to the program intents; responds to audience requirements for information; and if the different value-perspectives present are referred to in reporting the success and failure of the program.' (1975, p. 14)

Translated into evaluation of student learning in the context of the classroom it might read;

'orients more to **program activities** than to the program intents'. **Program activities** could be interpret as the things the students do and how they do them. **Program intents** could be interpret as the stated objectives (prescribed curriculum by state or school) of the activities they engage in.

An example of when focus of evaluation is the the objectives of the official curriculum can be found in the following extract from the Australia state of New South Wales' English K-6 Draft Curriculum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>OBJECTIVE</strong></th>
<th>-Students will develop...;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEARNING OUTCOME</strong></td>
<td>-The student will demonstrate.........</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focusing on previously stated objectives is like entering a context (the classroom) with a set pair of sunglasses that blinds us as evaluators to those things that are not stated as objectives. When such statements are taken as only guidelines and what the student actually demonstrates during the activities (given responses, reactions, interactions; demonstrate competencies, and understandings i.e. learning patterns) observed in the daily context of the classroom, are sought and accepted as the real outcomes then it is possible to faithfully represent the reality of student growth and development.

'Responds to audience requirements for information: Can translate for class based purposes, to mean responding to the audience, that is the participants in the evaluation, the teacher, students, parents, and in a different way the school administration, region and state department of school education. The evaluators' task (the teacher and the student who collaborates as self-evaluators) is to convert observations, interactions and analysis of products into interpretations and understandings, thus providing information for the audiences. The information may take a different form for each audience.

In accepting these translations of Stake's original definition of responsive evaluation for large scale evaluations student-centred evaluation is redefined. Both original and redefined versions are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAKE 'S DEFINITION</th>
<th>INQUIRY DEFINITION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'An educational evaluation is <strong>responsive evaluation</strong> if it orients more directly</td>
<td>A responsive form of <strong>student-centred</strong> evaluation using <strong>observable patterns</strong> to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to program activities than to the program intents; responds to audience</td>
<td>orient the evaluation study and make it 'responsive' is a way of giving a more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requirements for information; and if the different value-perspectives present are</td>
<td>holistic account of a student's growth and development and the curriculum's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>referred to in reporting the success and failure of the program. ( Stake 1975, p.</td>
<td>suitability to cater for this growth and development and addresses the variety of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14)</td>
<td>concerns people have about student learning outcomes and the teaching/learning used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to bring about these outcomes. ( Hancock 1991)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This inquiry aimed to incorporate into daily teaching/learning practices evaluative procedures that would give students realistic feedback. This redefined version of responsive evaluation was seen to fulfil this aim. It also provided the data needed to assist me in fine tuning my teaching practices and programs to meet my students' needs. Responsive evaluation was an integral part of the teaching-learning process not a cleansing or ablution to that process but a vital aspect on the daily learning 'menu'. In this sense then responsive evaluation was a conscious process providing new information and deeper understandings for both myself and my students.

This form of evaluation, where response to the needs of students was achieved by gathering data in the context of the classroom learning environment, was considered to be more accurate, valid and reliable due to its collection occurring over time, thus allowing for the monitoring of growth and development under normal learning conditions of the classroom. Informing myself and my students of these changes would also enable effective communicate of growth and development to other audiences such as parents and the principal.

The procedures and techniques used in this study as a form of responsive evaluation were;

**Evaluative Processes of Observation and Interaction**
- teacher survey (writing and reading)
- student survey (writing and reading)
- student review of Written Product
- student retellings
- student interviews
- student Miscue Analysis (informal)

**Evaluative Products** (Tch/Stud.Collaboration)
- reading/writing Evaluation Sheet (based on survey)
- reading response products & reading logs
- writing portfolio
- word study record
- teacher reflections & student reflections
- parent questionnaire and responses

An explanation of inquiry design of the data collection will be given in the following section.
SECTION 2

THE MODEL OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Interaction between the previously discussed methodologies guided the logic of the research design. This design evolved during the inquiry. At the beginning of the inquiry I operated on knowledge which I will call 'tacit knowledge', this was gained in non-rational ways via intuitions, beliefs and traditions, and from practical learning and also from that which I had constructed from facts, theories, principles and laws. The understandings gained throughout the inquiry added another dimension to this knowledge, one which resulted in tacit knowledge emerging as propositional knowledge.

At the conclusion of the school year the teacher role of the inquiry, i.e. one who enhances, monitors, intervenes and reports on student language growth and development reached its temporal conclusion ('The train has pulled into the station" was the expression I used in discussion with my supervisor). What I had gained from the journey was substantiation of my intuitive or personal knowledge. However the formal recording of the inquiry experiences required that I reconstruct the journey that I had taken at another level of reality a level that Stake claims 'is devised of our most complex interpretations, our rational reality.' (ibid, p 287). The roles of both teacher and researcher i.e. action-researcher, enabled this reality to emerge

A visual representation of this rational reality is presented as a model in Figure 3. It demonstrates inquiry segments although in reality these segments were intrinsically entwined. Guba and Lincoln explain that naturalistic inquiry is not a linear process of clearly defined steps. It is instead a "flow" with a successive iteration of data collection, data analysis, development of grounded theory and emergent design to test the theory (1985, p. 188). The model in Figure 3 represents a 'whole' process of action-research, even though I applied the 'scissors' and created useful distinctions they have no objective existence (Bateson, 1972, in Reason, 1988).

'Action research does not follow a straight line from problem to solution. Through the process of reflection upon both theory and practice, reciprocal links are created whereby each informs and influences the other.' (Carr and Kemmis, 1983, p 172)
LEVEL 1.

Ethnographic Data

Reflective Journal

Audio/Video Recordings
Peer Observations
Informant Interviews
Field Notes

BELIEFS
Do the implied beliefs drawn from the data, match Whole-Language beliefs?

EPISODES
What are the teaching practices?
Why are they employed?
Are reported practices confirmed by different sources?

Analysis

Responsive Evaluation

MODES OF ASSESSMENT
How do responsive evaluations work in each episode?

ENGAGEMENT CUES
What do they demonstrate about growth and development?
What cues determine the need for intervention?

LEVEL 2.

Student

Teacher & Student

Reading Survey
Writing Survey
Evaluations

Reflections

Writing Portfolio
Reading Logs
Interviews
Field Notes
Parent Input

Responsive Evaluation Data

Articulated Tacit
Knowledge Becomes Propositional
Knowledge
NOW
I KNOW,
Howl know,
What I know.
The model of the inquiry process provides:

(i) a visual manifestation of how the data was drawn from the classroom and how its analysis brought about the articulation of tacit knowledge into propositional knowledge.

(ii) a retrospective conceptualisation for the communication of the meanings at both levels of the inquiry and at the same time provide a holistic understanding of the inquiry.

Reason (1988) explains that meaning is part and parcel of all experience, although it may be so interwoven with that experience that it is hidden, it needs to be discovered, created, or made manifest, and then communicated. The model of the inquiry process represents an attempt to manifest and communicate visually the meaning of the inquiry experiences gained from both ethnographic and responsive evaluation data and their analysis. In setting out to communicate this meaning I have represented the process at two levels.

Level 1 was the search for understandings of the classroom milieu or the day-to-day reality of the setting. I attempted to reclaim this meaning via my own interpretations and the interpretations of others (students and peers) who observed and participated in this reality. The interpretations of others was sought in order to avoid problems of solitary self-reflection that can arise with an action-researcher who carries out discourse of 'the soul with itself' (Plato's phrase taken from Carr and Kemmis 1983, p. 171).

Habermas eludes to this problem when he states 'The self-reflection of a lone subject .... requires a paradoxical achievement: one part of the self must be split off from the other part in such a manner that the subject can be in a position to render aid to itself ....... (Furthermore) in the act of self-reflection the subject can deceive itself.' (1974, p 29)

The method that assisted at this level of meaning was that of educational ethnographic inquiry. The ethnographic data provided the means to construct meaning out of my most complex interpretations. Without these means of 'looking again' I was not able
to determine conclusively how I conceived of these beliefs or bring them into realisation, until I had Researched their meaning. As Berthoff explains; '....... to REsearch meaning [involves] looking and looking again .... interpreting what goes on, not to go out after 'new' data but rather REconsider what is at hand, ... to interpret interpretations.' (1987, p. 30).

Level 2 attempted to discover the meaning of the experiences that resulted when using particular procedures for the assessment and evaluation of learning. Reflection on the responsive evaluation data as it emerged brought about the realisation that what had previously informed my intuitive reasoning was the data gathered from my students in day-to-day interactions. The data would come from my students as feedback and response to whatever was occurring in the class, and I would intuitively size up how things were going and decide what to do as 'the next step'. What I didn't explicitly realise was, that the response or feedback and 'feedforward' that I gave my students was constantly drawn from my beliefs and best summed up as my personal theory. In this way theory was controlling 'the next step'. As a result I began to see the need to articulate this theory in order to discover the meanings behind the implemented assessment procedures.

The link between the two levels lay in the fact that responsive evaluation procedures emanated from my belief structures (my personal theory of teaching and learning) which were made manifest in the interpretations of the ethnographic data. Throughout the inquiry there was always a dialectic process occurring between the two levels of data which enabled the shaded underpinning of beliefs to be articulated and revealed the role that beliefs played in the learning episodes and the responsive evaluation practices. The ongoing analysis of the ethnographic data, was the catalyst for articulation of these beliefs and a confirmation of the practices underpinning the rationale of the modes of responsive evaluation.

In order to replicate this logical flow of the research design the presentation and analysis of the ethnographic data in the following chapter will precede the presentation and analysis of the responsive evaluation data.
SECTION 3

METHODOLOGICAL RIGOR

It has been suggested (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1990) that teacher research as a grass-roots phenomena may have its own internal standards of logic, consistency, and clarity.

An inquirer who elects to carry out research in a natural setting or context of the entity for which the study is proposed; who elects to use him- or herself as well as other humans as primary data-gathering instruments; who argues for the legitimation of intuitive knowledge and who allows the research design to emerge rather than construct it preordinately, 'is likely to define new criteria for trustworthiness and devise operational procedures for applying it.' (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

The standards that traditionally apply to naturalistic research have in the main been parallel criteria to that of positivist assumptions. Guba and Lincoln explain that the naturalistic analogy for the term internal validity is credibility, for external validity it is transferability and for reliability, dependability. These criteria speak to the methods that can ensure that the process has been carried out correctly. Guba and Lincoln go on to explain that '...while adjustments have been made for the different assumptions of the naturalist paradigm, there remains a feeling of constraint, a feeling of continuing to play "in the friendly confines" of the opposition's home court' when these criteria are used to justify methodological rigor (1989, p. 245).

Whilst there were other standards that I was conscious of during the inquiry, it needs to be stated that the credibility criteria of prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing and member checking were in evidence in this inquiry and the criteria of transferability was fulfilled by thick description and use of overlapping methods, all of which were 'naturally' grounded in the inquiry design. By this I mean that they were natural consequences of the researcher's thinking in the naturalistic paradigm. Thus the checks for trustworthiness that I employed were part of the emergent design and although Guba and Lincoln infer that these standards are an apology for naturalistic research I was not
consciously paralleling positivitist assumptions when carrying out this action-research based inquiry.

There were other standards that I adhered to for trustworthiness as well as those mentioned above. The one which I was most conscious of related to the inquiry's plausibility. As Connelly and Clandinin explain, 'A plausible account is one that tends to ring true. It is an account of which one might say "I can see that happening."' (1990, p.8). Plausibility of this inquiry will be best judged by other teachers who are as 'alert to the stories not told as to those that are' (ibid, p.10) some of these checks will be evident in the processes of data gathering and data analysis. Connelly and Clandinin suggest that a sense of plausibility can also be gained when 'the narrativist helps his or her reader by self-consciously discussing the selections made, the possible alternative stories, and other limitations seen from the vantage point of "I the critic".' (Reference being made here to Peshkin's (1985) discussion of the Multiple "I's" in narrative inquiry). They also suggest that the role of "I the critic" can go some way in overcoming narrative smoothing or "the Hollywood plot" where everything works out well in the end (ibid, p.10).

Another criteria used was that advocated by Guba and Lincoln (1989) in their description of new standards of rigor known as 'authentic criteria'. This criteria demands the provision of vicarious experience to enhance the opportunity for others to 'apprehend their own "worlds" ' in more informed ways and for 'the action of the inquiry to stimulate and facilitate further action on the part of the participants.' (ibid, pp 248-249)

'... to demonstrating that the criterion of ontological authenticity has been achieved ....... the testimony of selected respondents' (is needed). 'When individual stakeholders can attest to the fact that they now understand a broader range of issues, or that they can appreciate (understand, comprehend) issues that they previously failed to understand - (then) that is evidence of ontological authenticity.' (ibid, 248)

In respect to this inquiry the authenticity criteria are evident in the data gathered from informant interviews and in student reflections. In this data student participants expressed their understandings about their own growth and development.
Understandings of the teacher-researcher were also tracked in the data and its analysis. The result of both these experiences was the 'improvement in the individual's (or groups) conscious experiencing of the world.' The authentic criteria is also evident in the action and decision making that occurred throughout the inquiry itself as action-research and also in the communicating of the meanings of the inquiry experience, witnessed in this thesis.
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

INTRODUCTION

The model of the research design in the previous chapter revealed two conceptual levels at which the inquiry progressed. These two levels were viewed as learning cycles that operated simultaneously thus constituting a holistic entity. It was determined that the meaning of the entity would be best conveyed by first describing and subsequently analysing one level of data followed by the description and analysis of the other. This is a departure from the traditional practice of presenting and analysing data separately. It could be inferred that this methodological practice 'objectivises' the analysis process. However, in respect to this inquiry where subjectivity is one of the phenomena under analysis, to have compartmentalized the data into description without immediate analysis would have resulted in the logic of the naturalistic research design being broken.

Although description and analysis are presented consecutively for each level of data, the levels themselves are reported separately. The description and analysis of the ethnographic/level one data is presented prior to the description and analysis of the responsive evaluation/level two data. The ethnographic data is presented first as it was an initial means of examining the culture of the classroom, later this role convert to one of a partnership with the responsive evaluation data.

As the inquiry progressed the nature of this partnership became one in which a dialectic process took place. The process can be explained by stating that the ethnographic/level one data brought about a dialogue of a metaphysical nature with the responsive evaluation/level two data.

This dialogue unfolded understandings about the theory driving the practice of responsive evaluation. Responsive evaluation data was 'informed' or 'instructed' by the ethnographic data. This dialogue also provided a means of explaining how individual children's
language development was evaluated as a consequence of the responsive evaluative practices.

In summary the dialectic process informed the decisions regarding data collection and determined the type of data conducive to answering the inquiry question. Thus the research design was of a truly emerging nature. It is however possible, in retrospect, to present the data description and analysis procedures sequentially as follows in this chapter and the subsequent chapter.

LEVEL 1: EDUCATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA

The school year in Australia commences at the beginning of February. It consists of 40 weeks and is divided into 4 terms of approximately 10 week blocks each followed by a 1-2 week recess concluding in December with a summer recess of six weeks. This inquiry began in February of the first term and continued until December of the fourth term.

Comprehensive field notes were taken on a daily basis from February through to November and a reflective journal was maintained on a regular basis throughout the year. Audio/Video sessions were conducted for two hourly periods midway through the year in May and June and audio sessions of pairs and groups of students occurred intermittently during each term. Peer observations of language sessions by two colleagues took place on two occasions during the first half of the year and peer observation of the video sessions by another colleague, took place in July. Informant interviews of all students were conducted in August by another peer.

As each piece of data was collected I interacted with it immediately. This represented the first level of analysis and took the form of reflections, debriefing with peers, responding in writing to supervisor and peers, and member checking with the student participants. These forms of interaction assisted in the progressive decision-making process which continually shaped the inquiry design. Techniques were chosen on the basis of their ability to enlighten myself, the researcher, in ways of coming to understand and interpret the class culture.
What follows is a description of the ethnographic data with extracts presented via narrative account as they '...enable readers to participate in events that can only be know vicariously.' (Eisner 1988). '...Narrative inquiry is driven by a sense of the whole and it is this sense which needs to drive the writing. When done properly, one does not feel lost in minutia but always has a sense of the whole.' (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p.7). Therefore the extracts of data are long and have a sense of 'time exposure' as opposed to 'snapshots' of the experiences.

Reflective Journal

The purpose of the reflective journal was to provide a medium for 'meta' evaluation of the whole inquiry. In this journal I recounted events, asked myself questions, conversed with colleagues via letters which were, responses to visits, to video reactions and to the conducting of interviews, communiques with my supervisor in the form of monthly reports which were then shared with our thesis writing group. I also recorded responses to the reading of related literature about how children learn and how best to assess this learning. These reflective journal entries contributed to the articulation of; (i) an emerging personal theory of language development; (ii) an understanding of how this development could be assessed; and to (iii) the evolving process of the inquiry i.e. the action-research cycle of observation, reflection and planning for the next step of the inquiry.

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

February;

I found myself repeating many of procedural instructions over the first three days, but overall I was surprised at how quickly the children settled into the
routine. This was due no doubt in part to the fact that I have perfected the procedures over the last three years and also that this particular class is a fairly cohesive group who seem to co-operate well with me and each other.

Day Two saw the commencement of the serial reading. I again discussed with the children the book sharing time and my reasons for choosing the book 'Midnite'.

I noticed a restlessness amongst some of the children during this time. I put it down to two possible reasons;

(1) the fact that at the beginning of a book it isn't always so interesting, and
(2) the children were not used to sitting for that length of time and concentrating, i.e. 20 minutes.

I will note the change in this behaviour as the weeks go by, although it is not possible to make really close observations as I am doing the reading. (Perhaps an external observer could provide some valuable data here).

As I look back over the first two weeks a few thoughts come to mind. The children really enjoyed the shared reading. Their enthusiasm grew with the unfolding plot, character development and the humour of the author. They reacted more and some children were very insightful with predictions regarding future developments in the story. The discussions following the reading were brief, relaxed with any questioning always being open ended,

   e.g. 'The next chapter is entitled ......... what do you think might develop in it? 'Which characters do you like, and why do you like them?'

Silent reading sessions are not as settled as I would like. About 1/3 of the class have reading patterns of incompletion or choices which only require short periods of reading for completion. Gentle persuasion to 'sustain themselves in a text, tackle a more involved but not necessarily difficult text, or a text that really captures their interest, may alter these patterns. On the other hand week 3-4 may see them settle down without this intervention. For the first three days in writing time the children were guided by my directed topic - 'About Me' as I requested that they tell me more about themselves. The sharing of these pieces was an enjoyable time. The children and I reacted only to the content. When they were asked to write on their own subject choice however I found a 1/3 of them reflecting on the task for longer than normal. A sense of frustration and boredom was evident.

These were not necessarily the same 1/3 of the class with whom I was concerned regarding their silent reading patterns.

Reflective Journal

They were some of the identifiable confident language users. I felt the platitudes of 'how about writing on a topic in which you're really interested' or 'what event in your life has had a big impression on you that might make a good story', to be stale and inadequate. In some cases I allowed these children to ponder the task for quite some time. What they eventually produced I've yet to discover.

March

I believe my intuitive judgments are often based on my experiences of past students' developmental patterns. I'm beginning to think that in order to describe students' learning we rely on having a good understanding of a standard developmental pattern and how students' gradually conform to this, or an understanding of the tributaries they take to this standard path. I also think that the unit by which I judge growth and development is change.

In the students' silent reading choices I observe changes in patterns of choice of text, duration and understanding of text via retellings that I believe indicates development. I know how to bring about these changes i.e. by responding and setting conditions that foster them, but I'm not so sure how to monitor these change so as to reveal the criteria by which I ascertain the present stage of development. I guess what I'm admitting is that I don't know how to report the developmental process even though I recognize the patterns of maturing literacy which emerge throughout the process and not necessarily in the products themselves. This is in contrast to traditional views where it was believed that what could be done/what was understood would be revealed/demonstrated in a one off 'test' situation - namely an assessing product from which a true assessment of 'ablleness' could be determined.
The purpose of the field notes was made known to the students from the commencement of the school year. The reason given was that the notes were going to help me understand how I could further enhance and foster their learning and development in reading and writing, listening and speaking.

The field notes were often shared with the students especially when I had written something about them personally (for I frequently involved them in member-checking e.g. What was that you shared in reading today Jane? What was the reply that you gave Marie?). In essence there was nothing secretive about 'Mrs Hancock's note book' which regularly lay around on students' desks.

'Dallas: Miss has like a diary, she writes down all the things and what we say to each other.
Interviewer: She must be really interested in what you do?
Dallas: Miss is doing her thesis and it's all about what we do in language.'

The notes were taken in an abbreviated form during class time. For purposes of this research I re-read the notes onto a tape two weeks at a time putting them into a narrative form as presented here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Notes - Term One Week 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MONDAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found I needed to assist Dallas with his selection of a book for silent reading. I suggested he read &quot;Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing&quot;. Adam also asked for help in selecting his book. I suggested &quot;Unreal&quot;. Ben G. took Roald Dahl's &quot;Boy&quot; home and is almost finished. I recall helping him make this selection last week. I'm surprised that he settled to it considering his pattern of reading behaviour before. Peter took home and completed &quot;Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing&quot;, or so he told me. Matthew R.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
finished "Thing". When I listened to him read last Friday I realized that he hadn't been pronouncing Emily's name correctly. He thought she was a boy. He is on to "Thingnapped", its sequel now. I don't consider that he is coping very well with it although his interest level is high and he seems to be engaged in it. Ben C. has me worried; I'll listen to him read in silent reading. He had great difficulty with "One Night At Lottie's House" when I heard him read an extract to me. I suggested he go on to the headphones to listen to a book I'd recorded called "Casey, the Absolutely Impossible Horse". He went on the headphones with eagerness the very next day.

TUESDAY

On Tuesday this week everyone was well engaged in their reading. Dallas is a third of the way through "Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing" but he came up to me and said: "Miss I won't get through this. It's too long." "Yes you will Dallas" I answered. I'll see the outcome of that tomorrow.

Ben G. is reading "Grandma Cadbury's Trucking Tales". He told me he had read it before but he doesn't seem very settled so I suggested Dahl's sequel to "Boy" which he has just completed. The sequel was called "Solo". He'll begin this tomorrow or even tonight, I hope.

We had some book sharing on the carpet with a small group of children. Scott surprised me with his articulation in relating the story "Storm Boy" to the rest of the class. Matthew F. gave a good resume of his book too. I was surprised with his knowledge of the text.

In writing all children are engaged in a crossword. Each child's crossword is being done on a book of their own choosing that they have read in silent reading. I thought it best to allow them to perhaps do it in groups if a couple of children had read the same book. I find that the interest level is high if there are two children working on an activity such as this.

A thing I observed the children doing whilst compiling their crossword that was very pleasing was that they went back to the text to clarify the questions and to seek more clues for their crossword. This of course involved them in making hypotheses about certain facts and then confirming them.

These interviews were conducted in September, the eighth month of the school year. I felt that this was an appropriate time to seek responses from my students as they were by this time well versed in the routines of the language sessions. Extracts from reports to my supervisor provide a clear rationale for the technique
and the procedures I decided were appropriate for the avoidance of artificiality.

MONTHLY REPORTS

AUGUST

The next piece of data that I feel is needed are interviews of my students. I don't want to do the interviews myself. [I felt it would make little sense to the students if I asked what happened in language sessions and how they were going with their reading and writing. They know that I know this already, so why would I ask them. It would seem pointless and irrelevant to the students] I would like to have someone interview them who understands the purpose for the interview and who can relate well to the students. I've begun to formulate the open-ended questions.

Informant Interviews

SEPTEMBER

The interviewing of my students has gone ahead. In order to authenticate the interviews I asked my post-graduate colleague from Canada to conduct the interviews. The reason given to the students for the interviews was that Judy, who they knew from previous visits to our class, wanted to know more about how Australian children in Year 5 experienced language learning. Small groups (3 or 4) were chosen for each interview, so that interaction could occur. The groups were drawn from their cluster table groups because I felt that they would be familiar with each other's 'modus operandi', i.e. know what books each other had read and the pieces they were writing etc, and in this way they would bounce ideas off each other during the interview. The groups were all asked the same questions and each student given an opportunity to reply. These questions were:

(i) Can you tell me what happens in language time in 5H?
(ii) Do you feel you know more about reading and writing than you did at the beginning of this year? What kinds of things have you learned? If you think you've improved in your reading or your writing what do you think has helped you?
(iii) How do you learn to spell in 5H? How do you know you're a better speller than you were at the beginning of this year?
(iv) What does Mrs Hancock think of your reading, writing, reading response, word study and handwriting? How do you know this?
(v) What was your favourite book out of those read to you this year and why did you enjoy it?

In conducting the interviews Judy seemed to know exactly how to probe without leading. In fact as I listened later to the audio recording of the students' replies I said to myself "Oh I hope Judy asks them to clarify that", and sure enough she did. The result is some rich data indeed.

STUDENT INTERVIEWS - Extracts

ANTONY: Well in the morning Miss reads us a chapter out of a book, and then we go back to our desk and do silent reading for about 20 minutes and then we have writing so some of us get out our research and some of us get out our writing folders for personal stories. When we finish that we go down for sharing writing we make comments to see if they can fix the story up, make it longer or make it a bit better.

BRAD: In the morning we don't exactly read one chapter. If it's a real long chapter we only read half or if there's a real short one we read two chapters. Just say we want to get to the end of the book we just read to the end of it. That's what we did today. After that we make predictions of what's going to happen later on in the story.

GLEN: When we go back for silent reading Miss Hancock comes around with a sheet of paper and she puts down what we are reading on that day and we have our own reading cards for the
I transcribed these interviews with help from a peer. There is some significance to this mode of transcribing. Firstly, I became very familiar with the data, as I had not conducted the interviews myself. Secondly I had constant input from my peer teacher who also taught at the school and who knew the students. A great deal of incidental analysis (which I recorded in the margins of the transcripts) occurred in the discussion that arose during this time of collaborative transcribing.

With this data technique I also aimed to maintain realism. I discussed the purpose of these visits with the class and Fay was welcomed as one of my teaching peers who wanted to use our language learning ideas in her own classroom. As well as being an observer Fay participated in our language sessions. Another colleague brought student-teachers from the university during her peer observation visit. I explained to the class that the teachers-to-be wanted to see what happened in our language learning sessions. The student-teachers also collaborated with the students by being an audience and providing feedback on group drama presentations the class were rehearsing. I felt reassured that these ways of tapping into what was going on were not only unobtrusive but also rich learning experiences for both myself and the students.
Fay’s Observation Term 1, Week 4  

S.S.R Episode

Jan proceeded to a group and made her daily survey on a prepared sheet - books being read etc. Two boys have difficulty choosing a book, Jan came to the rescue. The children checked their cards which were filed in a box for easy access. Do children evaluate these books? How do you know they read the whole story?

Sue’s Observation Term 1, Week 8  

Sharing Writing Episode

The students bring to the carpet their Character Wheel and the reading response to the book being read by the teacher in shared reading. Teacher suggests that Matt and Ben who haven't begun yet might get some ideas from this sharing.

A child takes the author’s chair and reads from her character wheel. Teacher asks the child to substantiate certain judgments and expand on what the child has noted as character traits in the relationships between the main character and other characters.

The whole class is very quiet and are listening until another child sharing mentions the name of a character they don’t remember. Queries and questions abound amongst the class as they discuss who the character was.

Teacher makes a comment about one child’s use of a variety of terms instead of ‘Erica likes Miss Belmont’ and ‘Erica hates Alison Ashley’. Responses from the children included 'I'm changing mine'.

During a subsequent sharing a child uses the term 'stylish'. Teacher comments ‘That’s a good word, where did you get that?’ 'Do other people know what that means? Children offer hypotheses. Teacher adds that she is proud of the child for the use of that word because "it wasn't used in the text to describe the character, but you have decided for yourself that it suits the character".

Peer Observation by Cath of Video session 1.  

S.S.R. Episode

The children on the whole very quickly settled down to their own silent reading. Your roving method was very effective. This gave you the opportunity to do a variety of things which included listening to the children read, checking how much of the book they have read since last time, even help certain children choose easier books. The children were engrossed in their reading and whilst you sat beside one child and listened to him read the other children were not distracted from their own reading.

The 'sharing-what-you-have-read-to-a-friend' and children sharing aloud to the class was excellent. Other class members were attentive to the speaker and the children speaking during this segment spoke well, which I felt would in the end probably give other class members some ideas of books they might read next.
Audio/Video Recordings

This technique also appears contradictory to the notion of avoiding artificiality, however I attempted to overcome this by explaining to the students that watching and listening to ourselves in language sessions could help us understand whether what was happening (what they were doing and what I was doing) was proving to be helpful to our learning or not. This was achieved by reviewing the video and writing reflective responses the day after the recording. This became both an evaluative procedure and a writing experience. We shared and discussed these responses in Sharing Writing Episodes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT VIDEO REFLECTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KELLY JOURNAL ENTRY 12th MAY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that most people settled down to silent reading fairly well, but some people [were] a bit talkative. I think that Mathew F. explained his book well. I think that in sharing time some people were fidgeting a lot when other people were sharing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| **TOMI JOURNAL ENTRY 12 MAY (UNEDITED)** |
| (1) I SUPPOSE I could be more behaved in the movie |
| (2) We where all in a daydream |
| (3) We all was looking into the camera |
| (4) We could of speaked lawder |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER'S VIDEO I REFLECTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I personally felt that the children were too noisy in the writing session and this did not contribute to a good working environment. I was jumping from one writing group to another in an effort to cater for their needs. On many occasions I felt that some children were too dependent on me and did not use their initiative. I did wonder after viewing this video if their noisy interactions were reflecting true engagement in their writing or not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a consequence and due to the children's request, we all viewed the video and wrote responses and discussed our responses. I felt as a result, that subsequent sessions were more productive.

I also reflected on the fact that the variety of activities were too diverse i.e. some group work, some research, some personal writing, may have been a combination that was not mutually supportive. For example if they had all been writing on their research in their groups there would have been four group clusters that I could have visited without having children walking back and forth as they sought references. If it was personal writing which demands a much quieter environment then children like Anthony who was exploring the genre of poetry many have been more productive.

On the other hand perhaps greater responsibility and clearer guidelines may have brought about a better working environment in which all varieties of writing could have taken place successfully.

These two hourly sessions were transcribed as were the paired audio sessions to provide data for further analysis.

ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA ANALYSIS

During the analysis of the ethnographic data, patterns emerged that began to address the side of the teacher/researcher question which asked for 'an understanding of what occurred, and why it occurred'. Although this question was not the focus of the study it was a question that began to refine the purpose of the study which was to describe the process a teacher experiences in developing, implementing and justifying whole language assessment procedures. Goetz and Le Compte (1984) make a distinction between the purpose of an inquiry and the question or questions investigated by the inquirer. They explain that the former is the reason for the study and relates to the eventual outcome of the inquiry. The latter, the questions, define the more specific areas of focus during the study and are expected to be generated, refined, verified and I would add, answered over the time of the inquiry. The answer to my question about the nature of the language learning context of this classroom began to emerge during the on-going analysis of the ethnographic data in the following ways.

Firstly, by analysing the data according to the theoretical tenets of whole language, that is, the constructs drawn from the literature on
learning, learning language and its expression in the beliefs of whole-
language proponents, it could be determined whether or not the
classroom practices evident in the inquiry demonstrated a whole-
language perspective. The coding of the data in this manner would
substantiate the claim that the version of whole language practiced in
this inquiry was congruent with the theory of whole language
depicted in the literature on whole language.

Secondly, the data was analysed to confirm whether what was
recorded by the researcher was also verified by others in the inquiry
such as the students and participant observers.

Thirdly, by combining the explanations and interpretations of the
first two modes of analysis a profile of the beliefs and values
underpinning the practices of responsive evaluation was drawn up.
The three analytic processes are outlined in the following diagram.
FIGURE 4: ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURPOSES</th>
<th>TECHNIQUES TO ACHIEVE ANALYTIC PURPOSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. TO DETERMINE IF A WHOLE-LANGUAGE PERSPECTIVES IS EVIDENT IN THIS CLASSROOM</td>
<td>Check congruency of practice, as evident in the data with Whole Language Theory by .......... Firstly use a coding process on the ethnographic data that classifies it under the categories (i) How Students Learn, (ii) How Students Learn Language and use language to learn, and (iii) How a Teacher Fosters and enhances this learning. Secondly further coding the data pertinent to the headings into sub-categories of developmental influences such as: a) social experiences b) models and demonstration of experts c) construction of a personal interpretation that are in evidence in Whole Language Theory. This is presented in a format that interperses whole-language proponent's statements with extracts from the data that fit into each category and sub-category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. TO DETERMINE (i) THE WHAT AND WHY OF THE TEACHING PRACTICES EVIDENT IN THE CLASSROOM AND (ii) THE LEVEL OF CONSISTENCY THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE TEACHER'S, STUDENT'S AND OBSERVER'S PERCEPTIONS OF THESE PRACTICES.</td>
<td>Describe, explain and confirm practices via different data sources and data methods, by........ Using a format that juxtaposes the data of multiple sources and observation methods so as to describe, explain and confirm whether the inquirer's perceptions of the episodes and the procedures and actions/behaviours inherent in them, coincide with the descriptions and interpretations of other participants and participant observers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. TO DETERMINE THE RATIONALE UNDERPINNING THE PRACTICES OF RESPONSIVE EVALUATION EVIDENT IN THE DATA</td>
<td>Classify the beliefs and values evident in the above modes of analysis in order to determine the criteria and purposes of each adopted means of responsive evaluation.</td>
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ANALYTIC PROCESS 1.

IS A WHOLE-LANGUAGE PERSPECTIVE EVIDENT IN THIS CLASSROOM?

Yetta Goodman stated the roots of whole language were to be found in scientific and humanist discourse that focus on the issues of 'how students learn, how they learn language, how they use language to learn, and the influences of the individual, peers, teachers, and various cultural institutions on language learning and on using language to learn.' (1989, p.125). These issues constituted categories for the exploration of the literature on literacy learning in general and the belief held by proponents of a whole language perspective on literacy learning as presented in chapter 3. These categories were; (1) How students learn, (2) How students learn language and use language to learn, and (3) How student language learning is enhanced and fostered by others, including teachers and
peers. Additionally three developmental influences were found to be strongly evident within each of these categories. They were social experiences, demonstrations, models and expertise of others, and the use of personal constructions or approximations. Each of these categorises and sub-categories will be overlaid on the ethnographic data to check for congruency between theoretical perspectives on language learning evident in the data and to check for the presence of the theory whole-language proponents advocate.

1. **HOW STUDENTS LEARN**

   (i) **THROUGH MODELS AND DEMONSTRATIONS OF EXPERTS, PEERS AND ADULTS**

   ‘..learning is collaborative as well as personal, students in whole-language classrooms socialize with each other .... learners talk with each other about their writing, the books they are reading, the problems they are solving or not solving ...’ (Watson, 1989, p.135)

   "I always have children seated in clusters to promote interactions" 
   REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

   "After reading in the morning we tell each other what the books about. And some people, if you give them a good idea what the book is about, sometimes they read the book". INTERVIEW RESPONSE - MATTHEW

   "After the conclusion of the chapter children were encouraged to respond about different characters. Children started to talk at once and I observed some chatting to each other about the characters". PEER OBSERVATION FAY February '89

   "When I used to sit next to Mark I improved a lot, 'cause Mark helped me in choosing a book". INTERVIEW RESPONSE - DALLAS

   "After we are finished our writing, we get someone to edit it. Someone that sits near you." INTERVIEW RESPONSE - MATHEW

   "When we have finished our writing we sit on the carpet and share. After some people have shared we make comments to see if we can help them with their story and the things we liked and didn’t like about it." INTERVIEW RESPONSE - JAMIE

   "Perhaps discussion on the carpet today would activate different feelings, .. after this brief sharing and discussion, some children indicated they’d change their first drafts before publishing." RESPONSE TO PEER OBSERVATION - SUE

   (ii) **THROUGH SOCIAL EXPERIENCES**

   ‘The integration of reading, writing, spelling, and handwriting instruction in whole-language classrooms is often achieved by focusing instruction on a single topic or thematic unit.’ (Reutzel and Hollingsworth, 1988, p.410)
"I chose the yearly theme, 'Me, my World and our Future', as a result of the increased interest in the world's environment ......and the effect this might have on the quality of our future lives. I emphasised the fact that they had probably heard about these issues in the media but perhaps didn't quite understand their meaning. I suggested that after this year they'd have a better idea of what was meant when they heard the issues discussed on T.V., on the radio or in the papers. JOURNAL NOTES

"The reason why I've chosen this book ... I believe it's about children your age and some of you have already read books by this author. AUDIO SESSION - TEACHER

" The whole-language curriculum involves learners in expanding cycles of thinking processes .... these processes are expressed through intensive functional and relevant use of talking, listening, reading and writing that emerges from real or simulated life situations motivated, planned and monitored by the teachers and the learners." (Goodman K, Smith E.B, Meredith and Goodman Y, 1978, p.7)

' Whole language is a point of view that holds that all systems of language ..... are maintained and supported by pragmatics (language in use ) .... Pragmatics includes the situational context in which language is used as well as the learner's prior knowledge activated in that situational contexts. (Watson, 1989, p.133)

"Relating to the events in the book I asked 'Have you ever been fishing?', the children talked amongst themselves animated by their experiences which I realised they wanted to share'. VIDEO RESPONSE

"Ben G. was really engaged in listening to the story. There were so many things that he could relate to, such as the honeysuckle which he knew and the bantam hens which he had at home" JOURNAL REFLECTIONS

" I explored their feelings about sibling quarrels at home and tried to help them identify with the characters in the book. I then asked them to make some predictions about the next few chapters."JOURNAL REFLECTIONS

"Miss said ...you should try writing something that you know a lot about. I started a story about boats. Miss can't stop me now. BRAD INTERVIEW

(III) THROUGH CONSTRUCTION OF PERSONAL INTERPRETATION

Whole language holds the belief that 'Language learning necessarily involves risks of trying new strategies; error is inherent in the process' (Newman 1985, p.5)

"Expectation is clear that children will 'have a go' at predicting and hypothesizing, also respect for children's opinions and an expectation that children will be able to justify their opinions" PEER OBSERVATION - SUE
T: But you've got to condense ...do you understand, by condense (it) means make short everything that you're telling.
J: Oh ...do you mean....like before I tell the story, explain it...so they do understand it and put (it) into short ways....... oh I understand!" VIDEO SESSION

'When teachers read as a natural part of the whole-language curriculum, there is no pressure; students are in safe harbours in which they can draw on their backgrounds in order to create meaning.' (Watson, 1989, p. 135)

In shared reading today Ben exclaimed, "Oh, I thought the mother would be fat, big and wear an apron and be very strong". ....I felt the voicing of his initial image being dispelled would help other children experience the fact that as you read you build up mental images. These are sustained or altered by further revelations that the author may make." REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

"This book is like when you're in a maze" FIELD NOTES DALLAS

"In writing time we sometimes are asked to write down our own thoughts about a movie (like 'Gallipoli' when we learning about the ANZACs) or books or even our own progress in reading and writing". STUDENT INTERVIEW - EXTRACTS

"As this is the first book that we have read that isn't set in Australia. Is there anything in that first chapter that if you were reading it you'd say "Oh, this must be an American book?"
MARK: Oh, it said 'the sidewalk'.
BRAD: He didn't go to a flat.
PETER: He went to 'an apartment' AUDIO SESSION

2. HOW STUDENTS LEARN LANGUAGE AND USE LANGUAGE TO LEARN

(I) THROUGH MODELS AND DEMONSTRATIONS OF EXPERTS, PEERS AND ADULTS

'...listening to stories indicates something very basic in a whole-language classroom. It says that ... if students are to become authors and readers, story must be bone and marrow to their existence as literate persons.' (Watson, 1989, p.135)

Glen shared his story today, the descriptions of the fighting scene were excellent. It was obvious that he has been influenced by the language of similar situations in the books we had recently read 'The Eighteenth Emergency' and 'Answers to Brute'.
"Mouse raised his fists. Then he saw Hammerman's fist coming towards him.... at the same time Mouse saw Hammerman's eyes. Then Hammerman's fist slammed into his stomach." THE EIGHTEENTH EMERGENCY Betsy Byars p.91
"We started for him. He just stood there, we came closer and closer. We pushed him to the end of the street. We got our fists ready and pow! We socked him in the stomach." Glen J. "Adventures with Me and My Skateboard" 5H 1989 FIELD NOTES

Aaron was lingering at the book shelves, Glen went up to him and made some suggestions about a book to read. FIELD NOTES

"I use to read really easy books and all that and Mrs Hancock encouraged me to read harder books." ALISON INTERVIEW

"When we share on the carpet the class gives suggestions after we have finished and most people put the suggestions into their second draft" KELLIE INTERVIEW

(ii). THROUGH SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

' Whole language proponents believe that language develops within a culture, because of this the student's culture must be a consideration in the understanding of the language itself.' (Watson, 1989, p. 133)

'I started out with a hard story in writing that I didn't understand but now I'm on to an easier story which I can put together very easily, because I live on a farm and I can easily put it all together the way I want it. But with the the story about 5H's Play I had to really think hard about what I was going to say next' BEN C. INTERVIEW

"..... I relate to some of the things Erica thinks in 'Hating Alison Ashley' ... I know how she feels about Alison.."
KELLIE INTERVIEW

"I know why it's called the Greenhouse Effect, it is like a greenhouse in the garden, that's why it's given that name. My pop's got a greenhouse"
ANTHONY FIELD NOTES

' Classroom peers are used as mentors, sounding boards, sources of knowledge, and supporters in the enterprise of learning rather than as someone to compete with for grades.' (Reutzel and Hollingsworth, 1988, p.412)

I noticed how the social nature of learning can play such an important role in learning when the boys around Ben C. congratulated him on giving an accurate definition of 'decomposition'. TEACHER VIDEO RESPONSE 2.

Kellie disagreed with Anna's prediction, she said "...the boy Danny wouldn't betray his father and use the fire-balloon when his father wasn't there" Why do you think that Kellie? "..'cause I think he respects his Dad" FIELD NOTES

"Jane gets better as she writes it, ... when you read the writing and stuff it gets a bit better you know. But at first it's bad. Like when you're walking you know; starting out bad and getting better. I can also see that she's got
not only just one or two sentences then the date stamp (to indicate she began again the next day). They're not like my stories. See my stories, I have to think it up as I go for some things and I have date stamps really close together.”

Teacher: Are you saying Joseph that seeing Jane's writing helps you to notice how little writing you get done in one session?

Joseph: Yes, she doesn't think it up as she goes, she gets a good flow of ideas. JOESP H GROUP EDITING AUDIO

3. HOW A TEACHER FOSTERS AND ENHANCES THE LEARNING OF LANGUAGE

(i) THROUGH MODELS AND DEMONSTRATIONS OF EXPERTS, PEERS, AND ADULTS.

‘Our role as teachers is best seen as “leading from behind” by supporting the language learning capabilities of students indirectly through the activities we offer.’ (Newman, 1985, p.5)

In shared writing time I read out to the class the letters children felt were ready to send to Stacey (hospitalised with leukaemia). I read the words as spelt in a jovial manner and asked the writer who their editor was. In this way the embarrassment of unconventional spelling was 'filtered'. At the end of the session children asked for the letters so as to correct mistakes before the letters were posted. FIELD NOTES

In the chapter read today the author reverted from past to present tense as a father related a story from his childhood. We talked about this, it built on a discussion we had only days earlier in regard to Reno who had switched tenses in his writing piece. We discussed why one was appropriate and another wasn't. FIELD NOTES

“Miss always reads books to us, and .... she tells us how the author does things in her book that you could do in your story writing.” ANA INTERVIEW

“I never use to like reading and now I really like it, instead of going out and playing with my friends sometimes I just read for half an hour before I go out. Sometimes I read on the bus. What has helped was that Miss got me to listen to books on the headphones and I followed with a book. Now I read longer books and all that. Another thing was that at the beginning of the year I just grabbed any book and not read about it and then half way through the book I didn't like it and now I know that you pick a book and read the blurb and see if it's good to read.” GLEN INTERVIEW

“I think my handwriting is alright but sometimes I'm a bit shaky so Miss writes a comment and I try to get it a bit neater.” ANTONY INTERVIEW

“When I have read a book and I have finished it I like to write a story like the book.” MARIE INTERVIEW
If a spirit of collaboration has been fostered in the classroom, students can help each other when it is impossible for a teacher to do so. Whole-language communities maximize the possibility of learners helping each other through partner and small group work and through students taking on the role of teacher and resource person. (Watson, 1989, p.136)

"Miss asks me to edit people’s writing because I can help them with their spelling and ideas for their stories." JAMIE

Jamie and Adam editing their pieces:
Adam: Do mine first.
Jamie: Okay, okay. And then you read mine.
Adam: Yeah
Jamie: "One day there was a boy called Matt and it was his first..." Don’t put a capital there, just put.... what’s this ‘I’ or ‘he’?
Adam: Yeah ‘he’. He’s me.
Jamie: ‘He went maths....’why not make it ‘He went into maths class’ How does that sound?
Adam: Yeah AUDIO SESSION

Collaboration was evident during my discussion with Renelle about her reading response activity. I asked her to clarify one of the points she had listed, there was silence and then Jane looked up and confirmed the point and cleared up my uncertainty. I realised that it had been a collaborative effort with most input coming from Jane, but I see this as a legitimate learning strategy especially for Renelle to be supported in this way. VIDEO SESSION RESPONSE

(ii). THROUGH SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

Whole-language teachers value the creative and generative powers of students and help them make good choices by offering them good and appropriate invitations.’ (Watson, 1989, p.136)

"Miss Hancock sometimes helps you to choose a book if you’re stuck when you don’t know what to read." ALISON

"Now I’m starting to read like harder books. Miss sometimes comes down while you’re at the front she might give you some advice on what books to take. And she’ll suggest like a book, and she comes and sits down with you and listen to you. It gives me more of an understanding when I’m reading a book. Sometimes I mightn’t want to read it and she might tell me to keep on going and then after awhile it gets really good. BEN G. INTERVIEW

I like how you come around to us and see and hear what we are reading, and how you help us choose and tell us something about the book. VIDEO RESPONSE LYN

Miss knows when I’m having trouble, something happens and I get really worried and my work goes strange and I don’t write properly. She spoke to me on Thursday she knew something was worrying me and I wasn’t working properly. MATTHEW F.
'The focus of the whole-language curriculum is not on the content of what is being studied but on the learner.' (Goodman, Y. 1989, p.114)

"I've got better in my writing. Miss gets us to do a session of writing every day which, every day I start to improve more. ANTONY INTERVIEW

"A thing that has helped me in writing is having sharing writing time and listening to other people's stories and talking about them. They use different language to what I do and I can write like the same as they do. I understand more about it now. MARK INTERVIEW

"I know she thinks my writing is really good 'cause she wants to put it up on the notice board" ALISON INTERVIEW

"All the mistakes, you know, the things that aren't any good in the story I can get rid of because I shared a bit of it with other people on the carpet. That was good because some people gave me some really good advise" JOSEPH INTERVIEW

I think that sharing reading time is noisy but it is fun and I like hearing about other people's books. VIDEO RESPONSE MARK

(iii). THROUGH CONSTRUCTION OF PERSONAL INTERPRETATION

'The personal logic of children as well as their rough drafts in both reading and writing are valued in whole-language classrooms. In a healthy learning environment students grow from their mistakes, that is, they grow through the process, through the pursuit of language.' (Watson, 1989, p.137)

BEN C. was doing his 2nd draft and he came to ask how do you spell 'cubby'. I said "What do you think?" He went ahead and spelt it correctly. He then asked me was cubby-house one or two words? I explained that it had a dash between the two words. Then he asked me about talking marks "When do you put the ones at the end - when it's a full stop? TEACHER: "No not necessarily Ben - if you're still talking in the next sentence you don't end them. Later still he came to share his writing - I looked at it generally then I said where are the talking marks?

BEN C. : I'm telling all about the farm - so I've got the talking marks right at the beginning and they'll be at the end of the story when I finish telling it.

TEACHER: Oh I see - but if you are the author and you are telling the story (like Colin Thiele does in the one we are reading now) - you don't put talking marks. You only use them if some character in your story speaks aloud. Does anyone speak in your story Ben?
BEN C. : No
TEACHER: Then you don't need them at all - cross them out.

BEN C. : Can I leave them there and when I go on the computer I'll remember not to put them in?
TEACHER: O.K. if you want to. FIELD NOTES
When the analogy 'someone had finally thrown a rock into the still waters of her pool' came up in the text, Jan asked "What do you think that means?" MATT: "Someone had finally got her mad" PEER OBSERVER - SUE

'Whole-language educators ... believe that learners ultimately are in control of what they learn regardless of what is taught.' (Goodman, Y. 1989, p.114)

TEACHER: There are some things that you work out for yourself as a reader. When you start reading the very first page, the meaning is created by you. When the book is sitting on the table, the book is not telling the story is it? It only starts to tell the story when your eyes hit the words, you put the words in your head and you start building up this, what do you start building up?

PETER: A picture.

TEACHER: Yes a picture in your head I found today while I was talking to some children about their reading responses activities in writing time that we weren't really getting to the nitty gritty of the meanings of those stories. And do you know I think sometimes you mightn't ask yourselves enough questions as you read. "Why is this happening or why is this person doing this?" for example. Because if you ask yourself questions as you read along you won't have too much trouble when you have finished in writing down the main ideas for an excitement graphs 'cause you'll say 'Well I know this happened and then this happened' etc VIDEO SESSION

'Choice is an essential element for learning; there must be opportunities for students to choose what to read and write about.' (Newman, 1985, p.5)

"You can choose any topic you want and then write the story or Mrs Hancock chooses a topic " ALISON INTERVIEW

Well sometimes I get really easy books sometimes really hard books and I don't have to get help from Miss. I choose my own books and that's all.' ANA INTERVIEW

"I've been reading more than I use to and I pick books now that I don't come across a lot of words that I think 'what the heck does that mean?' " BEN C. INTERVIEWS

**EXPLANATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA**

The emphasis on the class as a community was reinforced through the practice of sharing and discussing, books the teacher read, the books students read and the students' writing outcomes. Through these daily opportunities students came to appreciate each other's ideas and see themselves in the dual role of teacher and learner.
Interactions took place in varied situations, one-to-one, table clusters, or as a class group seated close together on carpet space allocated for such sharing. These kinds of interactions provided students with opportunities to clarify meanings, they influenced each others thinking, which sometimes resulted in adjustments to initial written or oral responses. In other words they learned from each other.

The focus of their learning was always relevant to prior knowledge, personal experiences or experiences that were organised for them to engage in, within their immediate environment. During the year of the study environmental issues were prominent in the media. In choosing these issues as a thematic focus I felt that the students' learning would be supported and stimulated by the media input. I also believed that being able to transfer what was experienced in one situation and applying it to a new but related situation would deepen and enhance their understanding of the new experience. If the experiences of characters in books were similar to theirs or they shared the same problems or interests then they would be able to interact with the text and the style of the author. Similarly if the ideas used for their writing were familiar or they had endeavoured to become familiar with a topic then writing about that topic would be easier for them.

In respect to how students learn, how they learn language and how language learning is fostered and enhanced in the data demonstrates that the presence of whole language beliefs was clearly evident:

'Learning is a process which involves learners making connections with their world .... The learner is the one who must make the connections, construct their own representation ... and that learning involves a high degree of interaction with others and with the models and demonstrations of others,' (Cambourne 1990, p. 6)

The conclusion can be drawn that what occurred in this classroom was congruent with the theory and practices of whole-language.
ANALYTIC PROCESS 2.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN TEACHING PRACTICES AND WHY ARE THEY EMPLOYED?
IS CONSISTENCY EVIDENT BETWEEN TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THESE PRACTICES AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF OTHERS?

The period set aside for a concentrated focus on language learning occurred each day between 9am and 11am. The orchestration of the sequence of language 'episodes' temporarily placed emphasis on each of the language expressions, speaking, listening, reading and writing. Accepting these as alternate forms of a single language process and therefore interrelated and interdependent, it was believed that what was learned through one expression was used to support expressions in the other modes. By organising for a context (in this case the 'episodes') through which language learners could share meanings in a particular mode and across modes, I believed students' language development would be fostered naturally and holistically.

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

The episodes were:

1. **READING LITERATURE** - fiction and non-fiction to the whole class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT PERCEPTIONS</th>
<th>TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview Extracts</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response to Peer Observer Sue</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Miss reads us a book the books Miss reads are usually very different (from each other). Like The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is a fantasy book and Hating Alison Ashley is fiction but not that far (removed) from real life (Jamie). We don't exactly read one chapter. If it's a real long chapter we only read half or if there's a real short one we read two chapters. Just say we want to get to the end of the book we just read to the end (Brad). After the chapter, we have a discussion and predict what's going to happen in the book and then we see whether our predictions (from previous chapters) are right (Dallas). We make comments about the story and what we think about the characters (Jamie).</td>
<td>Each book is an 'experience'. In reflecting on previous books it was possible to draw out similar character development thus deepening their understanding of this facet of what I like to call 'deep' reading. There are many other facets that I intend to reveal to the children in future readings, such as, distinguishing between fantasy and contemporary texts. Discussion on the carpet relates to the book and is intended to foster the understanding of character development and the author's intentions. I encourage the children to see that the author is outside the text, that we can make meanings outside the actual words used and that fiction follows patterns. The better we are at reading those patterns the deeper is our understanding. The term 'prediction' is one I use frequently in conjunction with the shared reading text. I feel that the children have a working hypothesis regarding it. In the early stages perhaps it is simply 'having a guess', but I extend it to incorporate the following understandings; that it involves confirmation, and that it is based on informed opinions, thus it is no longer a 'guess'.</td>
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EXPLANATION

While this episode on SHARED READING focused on the 'reading aloud of a selected text' thus involving the listening expression of language, response to the reading via talking was also considered equally important. Students played the dual role of listener and speaker by constructing meanings anticipated by the author's intent and then articulating this intent in the discussion that followed. It was through the reading of varieties of literature (i.e. the different forms of texts encompassed within fiction and non-fiction) to the class that I aimed to foster better readers. Responding and interpreting was encouraged by requests for students to generate predictions and formulate and solve puzzles which I considered to be important features of active 'deep' reading. Generating discussion by asking the students to make connections, draw inferences and form and constantly modify expectations as the text unfolded would provide a demonstration that students could internalise as they read silently themselves. It was also a demonstration that they could be sensitive to, in terms of their writing, resulting in the modeling of the modes of expression, the characters, topics or writing techniques of the author of the text. This is how I believe reading and talking about literature expanded their use of language.
2. **SUSTAINED SILENT READING** - within a supportive framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Extracts - Students</th>
<th>Reflective Journal - Teacher</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Then she gets us quiet so we won't be restless when we do silent reading (Lyn). Miss makes the point that we read every day (Jamie). Then we go up and we read and get anything we've got a big shelf on our wall and we pick our books to read. In silent reading time Miss comes around and she asks us what we are reading and how much we've read she keeps a record (Dallas). We have our own reading cards for the date we start and the date we finish it (Glen). She comes around and she lets you read to her. She helps you pick a book (Matthew). We have silent reading for about 20 minutes (Kellie). Then sometimes we have sharing and tell the other people on our table what your books about (Kellie). We share the good bits, 'cause usually in reading time we want to share these bits, but Miss tells us to wait and we get to share in this period of time (Joseph).</td>
<td>I believe that I will have more success in developing children’s literacy if I have close at hand those texts that I constantly speak of, read from and use as a reference. Therefore I establish a class library containing many books both fiction and non-fiction that I feel suit the experience of my readers. At any one time I would have no less than 200 books within the children’s easy reach, i.e. at eye level. I have shelves of 8cm depth with thin rods to hold the books as they lay face outwards instead of spines showing. These shelves stretch across one wall 8m long x 1.5m wide. I consider this manner of display to be an important atmospheric item conducive to fostering reading.</td>
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**EXPLANATION**

This episode involved reading and sharing of what was read and constituted the core of my reading program. I believed that providing a regular opportunity for reading was essential. It was also important that it be seen by the students to be credible in my eyes. I was genuinely interested in all that the students read and even more interested in the patterns that their choices and actions in this session revealed to me about their attitudes, their tastes in reading, their degree of experience (the ability to understand what they read), confidence and their need for assistance to increase their experience and confidence in reading. I also enjoyed being a participant in the retelling and sharing that occurred after the sustained period of silent reading. The interaction with the students during this episode was essential in seeking to be informed about how they constructed meaning from the text and the patterns of this meaning making over time. From both the responses I received and those that I gave I was able to intervene, foster and enhance their development in reading.
3. Writing Episode

Student Interviews
After that we write in our writing folders (Scott). In writing some people write their research, and non-fiction stories that happen at their house, or fiction stories (Glen). You can write a poem, a story or a play or anything, you can choose any topic you want or Miss chooses a topic about what we're studying (Alison). Sometimes we have little editing sessions with each other. We get somebody and they go through your writing and see if there's words wrong and if there is you put them in your word study book (Sarah). When someone edits it (writing) they put a line underneath the wrong words and then you look in the dictionary and when you find the word you put it in your word study book (Aaron). We give them ideas for their stories if we know about the thing they are writing about (Jamie).

Teacher's Reflective Journal
Through regular writing I believe children will come to know that writing is a process that we get better at the more we use it, and the more we use it to make meaning. By giving the children real purposes for writing I believe they will gain the knowledge that writing is a tool for the expression of their ideas, their knowledge, their enquiries and the expression of their feelings.

I believe in establishing the conditions for a balanced 'diet' of writing. Along with the flexibility of writing on their own topics I believe in writing for purposes generally related to a learning focus such as endangered species. Writing for all curriculum areas occurs in the writing episode allowing for drafting and editing on all pieces. I also maintain a very high profile for spelling, ('Word Study'). Children record their personally mis-spelt words from their writing in a Word Study book.

EXPLANATION

This time was set aside each day as a session in which the writing for all subjects took place within a context in which the following understandings and conditions for writing existed. These were that writing involves; (i) the recursive processes of drafting, editing, rehearsing, redrafting and publishing, the support of interactive 'conferencing' with peers and teacher, (ii) the writing for purposes that are relevant to what it is we wish to do or wish to learn within our focus or theme. There was always in progress 'compulsory' type writing commitments that spanned a variety of writing forms in progress. Time frames were flexible for completion of these compulsory pieces, and although not all personally chosen pieces were published the 'compulsory' formats that generally grew out of the thematic focus were taken to a published form. In this way the class was exposed to what has become know recently as 'genres' of writing.
Models and demonstrations of these forms were regular whole class activities that occurred at the point of need relevant to the theme or focus operating at the time, e.g. when posters were needed to advertise the 'Green Day' or the writing of an invitation, when a menu was needed for the class restaurant, or the writing of a letter to a teacher which recorded our responses to the conditions depicted in the photos of India she had shown us. Whether the students worked alone, in pairs and or in groups was dependent upon the activity. My interaction with the students in this session was on a systematic roving basis as it was in the reading session.

During the session of time given over to compiling word study lists I encouraged students to look for patterns of sound, i.e. a type of phonic system e.g. what sounds the same as it, the look of the word, i.e. graphic patterns etc. These hints were not given as formal lessons, but rather as incidental comments as I noticed students needing the assistance or if they requested it. I strongly believed that the learning of word spelling patterns happened as a consequence of the time invested in the process of using various strategies to discover the conventional spelling.

The spelling strategies used involved the identification by the students of unconventional attempts whilst editing their own or their peers pieces and also through sharing, discussion, searching, and finally through re-recording the vocabulary conventionally and taking the edited drafts of the writing through to published form. Peers challenged each other to recall the convention spelling of the personal list of 'miscued' words at the end of each fortnight. They recorded these attempts in a Word Study book.
4. SHARING WRITING

Student Interviews
Miss picks people to share on the carpet and they sit on the chair and they take control of the class and they read their piece (Rebecca). When a person has finished reading we make comments to see if they can fix the story up, make it longer or make it a bit better (Anthony).

Teacher’s Reflective Journal
Sharing their writing is, I believe, a form of editing and refining of writing in preparation for ‘going public’. Therefore to know that written pieces must conform to acceptable standards before publication, is another vital ‘known’ that I believe I should demonstrate.

EXPLANATIONS

This session provided an opportunity to ‘go public’ with the writing that had been done in the daily writing session. Sometimes it involved the presentation of plays, reporting on research activities or the sharing of personal pieces, such as poems, narratives and thus informing or entertaining the listening audience. It also involved the important component of receiving feedback from myself and peers. This last aspect was vital for stimulating improvements in writing, students were encouraged via my demonstrations that there were subtle differences between constructive and destructive criticism. So as to achieve a desired balance these demonstrations modelled ways of interacting with the writer and their text that the students could employ. The students were not always successful in achieving this balance and on numerous occasions I asked for written clarification of their perceptions of sharing sessions to determine the purposes of sharing. In response I proceeded to convey to the whole class the difficulties that some children were experiencing in sharing their writing and the purposes they had identified for sharing. Whilst these matched my own purposes, I explained that at times we were not achieving our purposes.

PERCEPTIONS OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVERS
WRITING SESSION CONTRASTED

Teacher's Field Notes; (extract)

During writing time joint discussions and script writing particular segments occurred around the following scenes:
- A family watching t.v. and discussing a conflict situation.
- Children in the family recall story conflicts - these are role played with new conflict resolving endings - e.g. the story of the three pigs and selections from the Twits.
family situation where they are having their own conflict over choice of T.V. programs. Stageparents suggest ways of resolving the conflict. I outlined the ground rules of resolving group conflict. The children then broke into their groups. Much loud talk and arguments, especially about roles and who would play them. I encouraged them constantly not to keep coming to me for confirmation, that their efforts from here on in were to be theirs and theirs alone. I did however have to be arbitrator in one role play argument. Sharing was excellent after this group work. Some groups have made more progress than others. Some recognized the conflicts they experienced in their group and shared how they resolved them.

Peer Observer Sue; (extract)

Group writing of negotiated texts for a series of performances around the theme of 'Conflict in the World'. Children have collected and/or negotiated the situations for the dialogue. Models such as Roald Dahl's, 'The Twits', a tape recording of a news broadcast, and the newspaper reports, were drawn on. The language used and the form of the dialogue reflects the different purposes served by these text types and the Reading/writing connection. Children work in groups writing the dialogue. teacher's role to refocus attention, to help resolve problems and to reiterate purposes and appropriate language, or sources of models when these are needed. Groups of children perform their dramatic or comedy sections to the rest of the class. The actors receive feedback and response from their peers as the audience. Teacher and children highlight where the group have been successful, where they need further work. Children take responsibility for their own segments and the writing and production of same. Groups asked to clarify what they need to do next time they work on their writing and how they need to improve their performance to communicate their meaning. Focus was on audience and purpose.

EXPLANATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The analysis procedure set out to determine what and why particular episodes of language learning were established, and to determine whether my perceptions of what occurred in these episodes matched those of the student participants and the participant observers. What began to emerge via reflection upon the different data sources and different data methods was confirmation of the fact that what I had established was a routine within which a progressive flow of events with temporal flexibility occurred each day, and that there existed a high level of consistency in description and explanation of these episodes from all sources and via all methods.

These events I called episodes with the understanding that an episode is part of an on-going process, that is the four episodes tell the 'whole story' of the language experience. Whilst each episode focuses on one of the four language modes, the learning of language was not seen to be fragmented. Each event was supportive of each other in successive order. Continuity, coherency, inter-relatedness and interdependence were maintained between each of the modes operating much like the components of a menu: entree (or starter), main course, and dessert. Within each core episode I aimed to establish conditions supporting my whole-language beliefs about
literacy learning. I provided conditions of **immersion**, and **demonstration** and time was available to **use** every language mode daily. I held high **expectations** that my students would grow in their language development and I allowed them the **responsibility** to be in control of much of these learning processes by accepting their representations or **approximations**.

Clarification of how these episodes relate to the responsive evaluation procedures, the second level of data, is depicted in Figure 4 in the following chapter. This model began to emerge as an explanation of the episodes and their relationship to the responsive evaluative procedures.

**ANALYTIC PROCESS 3.**

By drawing on the interpretations of analysis technique 1 - determining whole-language beliefs and technique 2 - confirming the consistency of practices, it is possible to draw out the beliefs and subsequent values that I hold in relation to each episode. I understand beliefs to be statements that I hold as personal axioms, and values to be firstly the degree of importance that I place on certain practices devised to correspond to beliefs and secondly the importance I place on the responses i.e. behaviours, attitudes and understanding that I witness in the students in relation to these beliefs. In order to articulate beliefs and values they were classified under the episode categories shown in the following matrix;
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: ARTICULATED BELIEFS AND VALUES</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SHARED READING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Personal Reading processes are enhanced by responding to texts jointly shared.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I VALUE......</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Giving time for response and interaction related to the meanings constructed with texts.</td>
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<td>ii. Participation through contributions that draw out inferred meanings, cues and predictions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. Recognition of relationships, similarities and differences between texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>iv. Relating text meanings and interpretations to one's own experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SILENT READING</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Reading is fostered by the selection of an appropriate text matching reading experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>vi.</strong> Being able to personally choose texts that sustain interest (to completion if fiction).</td>
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<tr>
<td>vii. Having opportunities to discuss the text read.</td>
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<tr>
<td>viii. Being able to answer and ask question about the meanings of texts, about characters, plots and settings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRITING</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHARING WRITING</td>
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This process of articulation brought about an awareness of the beliefs and values drawn from the analysis of the ethnographic data. These beliefs and values represented the theory underpinning the assumptions of the responsive evaluation procedures.
It is important to reiterate that the responsive evaluation practices were in operation from the beginning of the inquiry however the decisions made in terms of implementation and justification were intuitive and therefore not explicitly stated. Reporting the process of the inquiry in terms of the development, implementation and justification of the responsive evaluation procedures relied on the articulation of these beliefs and values, as it was not until they were recorded in the process of analysis did it become obvious what assumptions underpinned the practices of responsive evaluation. These assumptions were in fact values restated as expectations. These expectations operated as the criteria for determining student engagement in each episode. They also guided the implementation of each procedure used to track student growth and development within this whole-language classroom.
CHAPTER 6
THE PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In this chapter the responsive evaluation procedures will be presented and analysed. This presentation and analysis will draw on the data of two students in order to demonstrate the ability of the procedures to inform myself, the students and their parents of the student's growth and development throughout the year.

LEVEL 2. RESPONSIVE EVALUATION DATA

Development of responsive evaluation techniques as whole language assessment procedures had been evolving in my classroom over the three years prior to the commencement of the inquiry. However they had not been fully implemented, evaluated, nor had they involved the students to the extent that was envisaged during the inquiry. The procedures were intricately woven into the pattern of learning that occurred in the two hour language session, the students made no distinction between the teaching/learning nor the evaluative procedures within the episodes.

The episodes encapsulated the whole-language conditions of immersion, demonstration, expectation, practice, approximation and responsibility. The two remaining conditions of engagement and response, generally termed feedback (Cambourne, 1988) became the focal points for assessing student learning via the daily practices of responsive evaluation in the whole-language context.

As is evident from the analysis of the ethnographic data, the forms of participation within the episode that reflected my articulated beliefs had value placed on them. The beliefs drove the practices within the episode. Therefore it was determined that, various means of evaluating student engagement in the practices of each episode, would provide means by which I could consistently monitor student development. Inherent in the nature of the responsive evaluation procedures used to monitor this engagement were opportunities for 'kid-watching' (Goodman 1985), i.e. observation, interaction and analysis. In addition the procedures provided what I consider to be the fulcrum of responsive evaluation i.e. the ability to reveal 'cues' that alerted teacher to the need for intervention (the means of directly supporting learning), and therefore promote improved engagement and subsequent development from which learning would grow.
The conclusion can be drawn that particular cues of engagement reflect degrees of learning. Cues were drawn from the diversity of observations, interactions with students, responsive evaluation products and written and oral responses to interventions that I instigated. Therefore the responsive evaluation practices were in part driven by expectations and in part orientated by the observable patterns of response received from the students. The combination of teacher expectations and student response as a means of determining the cues of engagement reflect the belief that the cues of engagement indicate the potentiality of learning. In this chapter parallel teacher and student responsive evaluation procedures will be described and explained in terms of their use inside each specific episode. Interpretation of these procedures will follow each description. The manner in which these procedures interacted with the learning episodes of the classroom is illustrated in figure 5.
In the presentation of the responsive evaluation data, the examples of responses taken from observations, interactions, analysis and interventions between myself and two students, Joseph and Dallas, will be used. This data was analysed in order to determine; the student's individual engagement with the processes of each episode; the need for fostering and enhancement of learning within each episode; and the unfolding path taken by each student in their growth and development in the learning of language.

Drawing on teacher field notes, student reflections, log books, interviews, surveys, records and student/teacher evaluation sheets it was possible to track student engagement. In the dated field notes it was achieved by locating references (underlined names) made to the individual student. Tracing these comments over periods of weeks and months formed an accumulated 'picture' of responses. This one source which when combined with that of data from the other procedures mentioned above, contributed to the emergence of a 'holistic' profile of each student's learning path.

The purposes for the analysis of responsive evaluation were:

1. To reveal the students' understandings, gained via responsive evaluation procedures, and the interaction of these with my expectations as the teacher. Expectations were drawn from my beliefs and values. The interaction of the two provided the means to construct an evaluation of each student's language growth and development. These understandings become evident as the data is described and analysed. The paths or 'stories' of the students' development unfolds with the interpretations that are made via this process.

2. To categorize the patterns of responses from both teacher and students into a set of commonly occurring 'cues' of engagement or non-engagement within each episodes. This categorization is presented after the explanation and interpretation of the data from each procedure.

3. To member-check these cues by determining the match between the teacher's perception and student perception of the student's responses to learning episodes in this whole-language classroom.
STUDENT 1.

Joseph

"Hi my name is Joseph and I am 10 years old. I like making and experimenting with physics. I've only done two attempts that work, a spectrum and an animation slide. I also have a collection of "legs". My favourite subject is writing. I'm a little short but I say I've got a good imagination. I've got two good friends Mathew and Aaron."

(extract from a letter to a pen pal)

Joseph had some hearing difficulties and he spoke quite softly. He had learned English as his second language, Spanish was his first as his family were originally from Chile. He was born in Australia and had an older brother in high school. His father spoke confidently in English. I did not meet Joseph’s mother. During the year that I taught Joseph, his father came to the school on numerous occasions, attended the grade meeting and the two interview sessions and visited other times when he wished to communicate information about Joseph. Each interaction provided valuable input that increased my understanding of the individual student and put his literacy learning into perspective with other development and growth patterns exhibited outside school.

Joseph's father returned a questionnaire which was given to all parents at the beginning of the year. It had asked parents to give their opinions of their child's development to date and also asked if there was anything of concerning in relation to their child's development.

'I think Joseph has achieved a normal development for his age, and I hope he keeps improving it. I know this by the way he reads and his feeling of confident about it, he even tries to read in Spanish. I think reading, writing, listening and speaking are extremely important as it is the basis of further development in coming years.'

Joseph was confident and at times very competent in his use of English, although understandably there were times when he did not understand particular expressions. The following extract from the data illustrates this:

I recall Joseph being puzzled by 'ahead of schedule' which was used in a math question. Knowing that he was quite competent in math I said, "Joseph, you understand that question, it is asking you what time the train arrived if it was due at 10 a.m., but it was an hour ahead of schedule?" I waited. He waited. A puzzled look was on his face. Then it clicked. Why had it taken me so long to realise the difficulty he was facing, I scolded myself for being so insensitive. "Joseph," I asked "have you heard that expression 'ahead of schedule', before?"
"No, Miss" he answered.
"Well it means the same as ‘arriving early, before the time that it was due to arrive’."
"Oh, is that it, I understand now".

Field Note Extract

STUDENT 2.

Dallas

"My name is Dallas and my hobbies are Rugby League and playing the guitar. I am 10 years old and I am turning 11 on the 27th of December. I’ve got ginger hair, brown eyes my dad’s name is Les and my mum’s name is Sue I’ve got three brothers."

(extract from a letter to a pen pal)

Dallas’ parents were both Australian born and spoke English. He was the oldest of two boys in his father’s second marriage. The family also consisted of two older stepbrothers, who were working. Dallas’ mother was a night duty nurse and would come to school on her way home from work when anything concerned her.

Dallas’ mother attended the two teacher/parent interview sessions during the year. The questionnaire given out at the grade meeting was not returned although I gathered from speaking to Dallas’ mum that her greatest concern was her son’s disregard for discipline and his attitude to school, which she felt prevented him from making the best of his learning experiences and achieving an acceptable educational standard. The following transcribed dialogue taken from a video session early in the year demonstrates Dallas’ attitude:

DALLAS: (he is writing) This is boring, I want to do research.
JAN: (Explains that his research partner is absent until the afternoon, also that the resources suitable are in the library which the class will visit in the afternoon, he has been asked to continue with other writing tasks.)

DALLAS: I don’t want to do this, this is boring!
JAN: [sitting beside him] I want to ask you something about these pieces of writing here in your folder. What’s this story called?
DALLAS: ‘At Lake Conjola’
JAN: Did you finish it? (It was four sentences long)
DALLAS: Yes.
JAN: It’s a very short story for a great holiday you had down there, come on, what’s on the next page, what’s this story, what was it going to be?
DALLAS: I didn’t want to do it.
JAN: Okay so what’s this next one, (this kind of discussion continues as we progress through Dallas’ writing folder. After reviewing an unfinished letter, an interview not redrafted, an incomplete script of a group play, we come to a piece on Dallas’ football hero). You know a lot about Wayne Pearce, don’t you? You have a football card on him too. I think you ought to finish this one.
DALLAS: But I want to do research but,
JAN: You can do research when the person comes back that you do research with and we go to the library this afternoon. Now you make a choice about what you are going to finish here in these pieces, and don't be so selfish, wanting to do what YOU want to do all the time! It's obvious to me that you never finish anything that you start. Is that right?

DALLAS: Yes. .... No that's wrong.

April Video Extract

Throughout the daily learning episodes the responsive evaluation data in respect to these two students will be presented, explained and interpreted.

1. SHARED READING
   Monitoring engagement by:

   **TEACHER**
   **STUDENT**

   1. Field Notes
   2. Reflections

   In contrast to the keeping of anecdotal records for each child in a particular section or page of a book, the field note journal took on a responsive 'student record' keeping role. I began to record observable responses demonstrated by individual students that I thought highlighted engagement and non-engagement within the episodes. This form of observation and monitoring over time alerting me to the need for intervention in ways that I hoped would ensure better engagement. This became the rationale for the observation field notes which meant that the focus was frequently on those students whose engagement levels concerned me.

   1. **Teacher field notes** in shared reading took the form of recorded incidents regarding individual's contributions and responses during the reading of the shared text and the discussions that followed.
Field Notes

Joseph's Sharing Reading Response

T.1 Wk 6  Monday  Has begun to make predictions. Today he said that he felt the main character really liked Barry Hollis - this was an inference he had drawn as the author did not explicitly state this. He went on to say that Barry the 'toughie' of the class was really 'a softie' and when they went to camp he would become homesick - (this prediction was later proved correct).

Dallas' Shared Reading Responses

T.1. Wk. 7 Tuesday  In a discussion about 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe' Dallas, along with others, showed their distrust of the character Edmund. "He thinks he's good, but he isn't".

Thursday  Well into the story, Dallas offers the comment "It's like they're in a maze - I saw a film like that, a girl was looking for her brother it was called 'The Labyrinth'". We then discussed the author's role in comparison to the book we had read previously. Most decided that the author was telling the story through the eyes of one of the characters in the previous book, but in this book there was disagreement about this. Dallas and others thought that this author was telling the story himself because he spoke directly to the reader when he said "and I don't blame them".

2. Student reflections  These were overall comments on language activities recorded by every class member as part of the writing episode twice a term. There were two reasons for the use of student reflections as a responsive evaluation procedure.

The first was related to the fact that not every student was monitored regularly in the field notes. Generally those students who I determined were genuinely engaged in particular episodes were not mentioned unless a significant incident occurred in relation to their development. Therefore it was important that regular opportunities were provided for all students to record their responses to the language sessions. Gaining responses in relation to learning in language provided a means of monitoring both student development and the learning program's ability to cater for students' developmental needs.

The second reason for the use of Student Reflections was that the process of reflecting on language activities in the episodes was a learning opportunity for the students. In these reflections they ask themselves, 'What is it that I like or don't like about what we do?'. 'What do I find easy or difficult in language time - hence how am I
going?’. ‘Can I suggest ways that Miss could help me in my language time?’. The first draft of the mid-yearly reflection was edited by peers, redrafted and published for parents as the student’s own ‘report’ on perceptions of their language learning.

**JOSEPH’S REFLECTIONS**

*Complete and unedited*

In these past two weeks a lot of things have happened. Our teacher has finished reading “Midnite” and started a new book called “Hating Alison Ashley” by Robin Klein and it is about a girl who starts school and she is very elegant and her name is “Alison Ashley” and her school is not so elegant as she is. I like it and we’re our class is doing a crossword in our writing folder and where typing it in our apple computer we got not so long ago and I was reading a book called Every child’s answer book but I got bored of it because it was only (answers) answers to questions that I could figure out myself.

*Students edited their writing by underlining words they had spelt unconventionally. Words that were bracketed indicated the student was self correcting in the process of writing.*

**DALLAS REFLECTIONS**

*Complete and unedited*

In Langrech we do (ru) write and draw and we do word study and we do research and (wesn) I drew a picture.

3rd March

I like the books that the teacher is reads to us. I thing that I am getting better at writing an spelling and I like word study and I like in every morning the excitement of the eggs style to hatch and I like research, and the character wheel ant the book Hating Alison Ashley and I liked the future story I like reading I am not a fast reader I take my time I like both kinds.

**EXPLANATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SHARING READING EPISODE**

The field notes alerted me to Joseph’s response in shared reading. These included both verbalized responses and physical responses, such as where he chose to sit, the frequency of his contributions and what form these contributions took etc. I noticed that he regularly positioned himself towards the back of the group during shared reading and due to his loss of hearing in one ear I wondered whether he could always hear the reading. Field notes in May reveal however that he appeared to really enjoy quietly interacting with his neighbour during the reading (later confirmed through his own reflections). With my beliefs taking the form of expectations that I held as a standard by which I determined engagement, I initially interpreted this as a distraction for Joseph and the other students and thus a non-engaging responses. When class discussion began after the reading Joseph would listen for some of the time but when he wanted to offer predictions or discuss characters or incidents or relate things to his own experience he would again interact with those immediately around him. I gradually
came to realise, by reading his reflections and discussing aspects of the shared text with him on other occasions, that these were in fact responses of engagement for Joseph (and for many other listeners too). This was his way of learning and the belief and the expectation that I held i.e. that all interactions and discussion should take place under the rules of 'one person speaks at a time and all responses be directed through the teacher' - generated a practice which restricted learning opportunities that students would have by interacting immediately with a close neighbour during this episode. As a result I began to allow for different interactive structures during shared reading.

In respect to Dallas I was frequently surprised at the insight that he demonstrated when discussing books read in shared reading. In May I recorded a prediction he made in which he said that the characters (children) in the book would 'take the law into their own hands' (his words), this prediction came about in subsequent chapters. He demonstrated insightful ways of 'reading the world of books' but in his own silent reading this did not appear to be a support to him, for he struggled with choosing and engaging with appropriate texts. I reflected that his shared reading contributions might be suggestive of a latent potentiality - knowing that reading requires the reader to draw from their background knowledge in order to make connections. Whilst he was able to do this in a whole class discussion related to a text read by the teacher, he was not able to draw from this store of knowledge in his own reading. The question that these responses engendered was confirmed by Dallas' responses in silent reading when it became evident that he was inexperienced in other facets of the reading process such as the use of the cueing systems.

The student reflections in some cases confirmed my tentatively formed opinions on student attitudes to the language episodes. Dallas showed awareness of his own reading difficulties. He also showed a growth in engagement with the activities of the episodes evidenced in the comparison of his attitude witnessed in the first reflections with those of the second recorded some weeks later. Other insights gained from student responses and my own reflections on my responses to each student's engagement resulted in adjustments to the way in which I orchestrated the learning environment.
Joseph's reflections of the 24th of March stated 'The one thing that bothers me is the shelf. There's not many good novels on the shelf like "Charlottes's Web". ' This response was similarly expressed by other students in different ways, such as 'I never know what to choose,' or 'I haven't found anything yet that I really like'. I reflected upon these comments and concluded that on the one hand I needed to provide more books that were diverse in interest and in text and concept complexity, and that I should further promote the books that were presently on the shelves, for amongst them were titles that previous classes had thoroughly enjoyed. The promotion needed to relate equally to the content of the books, and the processes of choosing books. An extract from a student interview explains what is meant by the process of choosing a book;

**REBECCA:** Last year I didn't really like reading because I couldn't find any interesting books and this year I've found a lot of interesting books ..... You shouldn't just judge by the cover because the cover might be boring but the book might be interesting. I use to always read the first page and if I didn't like it I just put it back. Miss H said not to do that because you've got to give a book a chance and now I've been doing that I've been liking a lot more books.

The classroom was stocked with 'trade books', or real books. In other words there were no 'basals' or 'reading schemes' as they are termed in Australia. The supply of books changed with new titles being introduced approximately every five weeks (both the students and I would select titles from the school library). Previous experience at this grade level gave me knowledge about the type of texts that suited the children's interest and reading experience. As the year progressed the span of new titles ranging from reader-friendly to reader-challenging grew wider to cater for all rates of developmental growth.
2. SILENT READING
Monitoring engagement by:

**TEACHER**
- 1. Field Notes
- 2. Reading Survey
- 3. Evaluation Sheet

**STUDENT**
- 2. Reading Records
- 3. Evaluation Sheet
- 4. Reading Logs
- 5. Interviews

The daily silent reading episode of 20 to 25 minutes was crucial to the whole language program operating in the class. I considered the decisions the students made during the SSR period to be reflective of their reading proficiency. Therefore monitoring the types of text they chose to read, the period of time engaged with these text, and the demonstrated interactions with the text, would, I hypothesized, provide an evaluative tool for both myself and the students. The information gained would also assist in decisions related to the support to be offered in their development in reading. Through reflections on the data accumulated in the survey, and via my interpretations of their patterns of reading responses (what they do, what they say, how they react etc) I believed an awareness of engagement or non-engagement would be created in both the students and myself. This awareness would foster interventions aimed at enhancing engagement and therefore furthering growth and development of language.
1. **Field Notes**  The following are field note extracts that trace Joseph’s and Dallas’ responses in respect to silent reading.

**JOSEPH**

**NON-ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES**

**T.1 Wk. 4 Tuesday**  In S.S.R. very dependent on short reading texts such as poetry books that don’t require a sustained period of engagement or demand his concentration.

**T.2 Wk. 9 Monday**  Reads non-fiction text most of the time he has been reading a rather complex book on the world’s inventions. I know he is interested in this topic, but whilst taking the survey today he said to me, “Miss I don’t want to finish this”. I felt that he may have thought all non-fiction books should be read from cover-to-cover. I took the opportunity later to speak to the whole class and explained that most readers tend to read selections from non-fiction depending on what they were interested in. As they usually have no story or “plot” there wasn’t any need to read all of it.

**ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES**

**T.1 Wk. 5 Monday**  He selected a fiction book for the first time this year. He needed reassurance that it was a good book when before he began.

**Tuesday**  still settled with the text ‘Charlotte’s Web’.

**T.2 Wk. 9 Tuesday**  Maybe he got the message for he is now considering whether he should keep reading it. He decided not to and I said “That’s okay Joseph.”
DALLAS' NON-ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES
DALLAS
T1-Wk7  Monday
Chopping and changing - said he finished 'Thing' but I'll have to check his comprehension by listening to him read monitoring miscues and have him orally retell some of the story tomorrow. Chosen a Joke book.

Thursday
Not settled with text 'Trailbikes' - distracting Matt and Aaron at the same table.

Wednesday
Still changing everyday - reading poetry and non-fiction. Changes text a few times during one session.

DALLAS' ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES
Thursday
Chose a Picture Book - I decided to hear him read it aloud. We read it together in that I read the refrain - I told him it was one of my favourites - 'Tailypo' this allowed me to hear his miscues. Discovered that in the main he reads for meaning and employs some good strategies. However allows incomprehensible phrases to go by in order 'to get on with it'. We both enjoyed reading together and I realised some of his strengths. He just needs to read more texts that match his experience in reading.

T2 Wk 8  Tuesday
Enjoying the short stories from Unbelievable fiction, it is not uncommon for him to stop and share bits of them with his neighbour Mark, who always reads well in S.R. and who has just completed 'Closer to the Stars' and is now reading Aidan Chambers 'Shades of Dark'. Mark is very interested in Dallas' opinions of the stories as it was Mark who initially encouraged Dallas to read the book.

T2 Wk 8  Wednesday
Finished 'Cow Dung Custard' and shared it with the class although the retelling was somewhat confused towards the end. Mark his neighbour is reading 'The Killer Tadpole'. Dallas asked him 'What's it like?' - he seemed to ask in a manner that meant "I might read that next". I sense his growing interest in reading, I feel the hooks are taking hold - a breakthrough - but I realise from past experience that this pattern of reading will revert to his old pattern but the chances of change are more likely now.

These patterns of engagement and non-engagement will be explained and interpreted together with other data following the presentation of the silent reading data.
2. Teacher Survey/Reading Records To carry out the survey each day at the commencement of the SSR period, I would quietly and systematically proceed around the classroom asking the children what text they had chosen to read. As part of their responsibility the students were asked to record each new title on a library card indicating the date they commenced and the date they completed the text. If they chose not to complete a book a dash was put to indicate this. One of the purposes for these records lay in the mid-year compiling of an Evaluation Sheet which was then taken home for their parents (to be discussed below).

The teacher survey sheet was a two page A4 sheet and covered a two week period (See Appendix B). If students were reading the same text as the previous day they were not disturbed and an 'S' recorded to indicate this. The title and the type of text (F - fiction, NF - non fiction, P - poetry, PB - picture book, SSF - short story fiction, CYO - choose your own adventure) would also be recorded in the space set aside for that day. When the reader had chosen a new text, I would ask if the previously recorded text had been completed, and mark this with a small blackened square. This decision to record a text as 'completed' was not based solely on the student's admission but on other observations and interactions (discussed below), that assured me that meaning had been substantially gained from the text read. I the text was not recorded as complete if these same observations and interactions alerted me to the fact that the student had not truly engaged with the text.

The main means of tapping into the gaining of meaning was done on a daily basis. I would ask different children on separate days questions about their text. In this way I was able to briefly ascertain their comprehension. This occurred especially when the time taken to read a text seemed relatively short (judged on the basis of my knowledge of the text and the student's reading patterns to date). There were also other means of achieving this such as reading logs and reading response activities, which will be referred to throughout the presentation, explanation and interpretation of responsive evaluation data.
The taking of the daily survey provided an opportunity to interact with each student. This might take the form of listening to them quietly read small segments from their chosen books, during which I would carry out mental miscue analysis. I was very familiar with the procedures of Miscue Analysis (Goodman, Watson and Burke 1987) and felt confident of 'mentally' as opposed to 'manually' processing the information I received when listening to a student read. Whilst I sat or knelt beside students at their tables, I did not follow the print as the student read. As students read I demonstrated that they were reading to me not for me. I indicated that I wanted to hear the meaning (I would say things such as 'I didn't catch that, what did you say? or 'I'm lost there could you read that again please?'). I wanted them to feel that they were solely responsible for their own meaning making. This form of interaction took place when I observed non-engaging responses during Silent Reading (students picked up on these cues too, for Dallas remarked in a reflection later in the year 'If Miss H. comes over and asks you to read to her I think she doesn't think you're going good'.)

Other interactions involved listening to retellings and giving retellings with others during sharing reading time following Silent Reading. Sometimes I requested a brief retelling from individual students incidentally as I took down the survey details. As the students grew accustomed to retellings they began to occur naturally.

Teacher's Video Reaction Session 1.

Observing this on video left me with the impression that the children genuinely enjoy sharing with their neighbours. This doesn't occur at the conclusion of every silent reading session, as I feel they would be hearing similar things each day. The purpose for this strategy is three fold;

1. The children give an oral retelling and if I'm in earshot I can informally assess their comprehension of the text they are reading. Sometimes I actually take part as a recipient to the retelling. With the children seated as they are in clusters they overhear conversations, so on occasions when I am party to a sharing I naturally model some questioning techniques that they might use. These questions would go something like this; "How do you know she is jealous?" or "But don't you think the author wants you to think that?" or some statement to the effect, "I was frightened for her in that part were you?" I guess it comes down to having a good knowledge of the books the children are reading, but there are occasions when I haven't read the text and so I ask the questions from a point of view of wanting to know more about it. I enjoy the books so I feel my probing is genuine.

2. The sharer gives their neighbour some insights into another book which the neighbour may choose to read later.

3. It provides an opportunity for the children to articulate their thoughts and responses to the texts.
Through these interactions I was also able to enhance the student’s engagement in reading by directing them to texts more suited to their experience if the request was made, or if I noted from the survey an unsettled or rigid pattern such as same text type being read continually e.g. Children’s Magazines, Choose Your Own Adventure Series, or The Babysitters Club Series.

3. Collaborative Evaluation Sheet

During language time today the children completed an evaluation sheet. I began by outlining the procedure to them by asking why it would be good to have the teacher's comments on your evaluation?

**ADAM:** You might think you're O.K. but the teacher might tell you're not.

**DALLAS:** We could follow your comments.

**TEACHER:** Do you mean that if I make suggestions, you could follow them?

**DALLAS:** Yeah.

(Joseph has asked Matt what he should put in the ‘Own Comment’ section of the sheet)

**MATT:** Do you think you’re going good in reading?

**JOSEPH:** Oh yeah.

**MATT:** Well write that.

FIELD NOTE EXTRACTS
**SILENT READING EVALUATION JOSEPH**

1. NUMBER OF BOOKS READ COMPLETELY: 14

2. TYPES:
   - FICTION: 2
   - NON-FICTION: 5
   - PICTURE BOOKS: 3
   - POETRY: 4

3. NO OF BOOKS INCOMPLETED: 2

4. MOST FAVOURITE BOOK READ:
   - *Sister Madge's Book of Nuns* (Poetry)

   AUTHOR: Doug Macleod

   5. WHY YOU ENJOYED IT:
      - I liked it because of the comedy, the action and the rhymes

   6. COMMENTS ON MY READING PROGRESS:
      - I think my reading progress is kind of good.

7. MY TEACHERS COMMENTS:
   - Joseph I'm very pleased with your reading too. I would like you to try some fiction books for some variety. Get one you'll be really interested in, how about trying 'Deezle Boy' a story about a boy your age who is crazy about trains, especially diesel trains.

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**SILENT READING EVALUATION DALLAS**

1. NUMBER OF BOOKS READ COMPLETELY: 17

2. TYPES:
   - FICTION: 2
   - NON-FICTION: 5
   - PICTURE BOOKS: 6
   - POETRY: 4

3. NO OF BOOKS INCOMPLETED: 14

4. MOST FAVOURITE BOOK READ:
   - *Tailypo* (Picture Book)

   AUTHOR: Joanne Galdone

   5. WHY YOU ENJOYED IT:
      - I like it because I took it home and read it to my brother.

   6. COMMENTS ON MY READING PROGRESS:
      - My reading is O.K. but there is not many good books.

7. MY TEACHERS COMMENTS:
   - I'm pleased you enjoyed 'Tailypo' I liked reading that with you. You should try to find books that suit you Dallas, then you'll be able to sit longer and enjoy them. What about the new ones I've bought such as 'Hank Pank In Love'?

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* This sheet was completed after ten weeks of school.

**4. Reading Logs** For a short period of approximately four weeks during the middle of the year I requested that the children maintain reading logs which were reflections upon their reading. The children did not respond favourably to this procedure due to a lack of clarification as to why they should do this. In retrospect they already had regular opportunities to share their reactions to their books verbally, thus writing these reactions was a repeat of the same process. Nevertheless the logs provided interesting data that complemented other data sources which tapped comprehension of the text being read.
JOSEPH'S READING LOG EXTRACT
UNEDITED
T.2 Wk. 9 Wednesday Today I found the book Miss suggested I read called 'Deezle Boy' and it's a good book. There is a part that I don't understand in the book about the setting and the description. But I still enjoy the book and the words aren't hard.

Thursday I'm still enjoying this book 'Deezle Boy' and it's very exiting and interesting and I'm starting to understand more about the settings and the descriptions. I'm nearly up to chapter 2 and it's getting better by each page.

Wk 10 Tuesday Today I'm still reading 'Deezle boy' like I was yesterday and I'm nearly up to the 4th chapter. I'm having a little trouble but not too much.

Thursday Today I'm up to the first page of the 5th chapter. I didn't understand a part in the book, its the part about when the chapter started. It seemed like the story was going off track but then I understood when I read a bit more of the story.

Friday Today I stopped reading Deezle Boy' for a while so I read two books instead. They were so easy I read them in a day.

Wk 11 Monday Today I stopped reading 'Deezle Boy' because the excitement level was low so I read a book called 'Sailaway' and now I'm reading these two books because there good.

DALLAS' READING LOG
EXTRACTS
UNEDITED
T.2 Wk.9 Thursday Today I am Reading Australia's Wonderful Wildlife But if we don't do something about the logging there will not be wonderful wildlife. And it's got good pictures

Friday Snakes and Lizards I like it.

Wk 10 Monday Hank Prank in love I'm only on the 2nd chapter and a new girl is in the class and her name is Lin-L-I-N-H Tran getting good.

Tuesday Well Hank I up to chapter 4 and He's getting rely stressed about this gils and he falls sick

T.2 Wk 10 Wednesday Well Hank is getting to no more about Linh he's getting teased about loving Linh and he dint want to get teased So he sead I hate her

T.2 Wk 11 Wednesday I finished Hank it was a good book Linh Mother and Big Bother were lakalered (located) and it was said (sad)

Another data source which monitored the meaning gained from the reading of personally chosen text and the text read by the teacher were Reading Response activities. These included literary crosswords, graphs of plot excitement, character wheels and character report cards. The procedure for these tasks was modelled as a whole class activity prior to students completing their own representations. They were infrequent and were not responses made to every book read.

5. Interviews In addition to the responsive evaluation procedures within this episode the interviews were a invaluable insight into students' perceptions of themselves as readers. The following interview extracts demonstrate this:
JOSEPH'S INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWER: Do you know more about reading than you did at the beginning of the year? What things have you learned, and how did you learn them?

JOSEPH: Yeah I've learned a couple of things like in... our teacher comes around in reading time and tells (Joseph means asks) us 'what book are you reading?' and usually for some of us she tells (asks) us, if she can help us, you know if there's words we can't understand or something.

At the beginning of the year I use to ask Miss something, what was this and other things, I really wanted to figure out what did it mean, if you put the whole sentence together. Later in the year, I started looking things over and over again and then I skipped that bit and read it, and then when I keep on reading about it, or flipped back, I figured out what the thing meant. I thought that to keep on reading would make me more confused, but it made me understand it a bit more.

What's helped me become a good reader is ...... in the book...... I use to have Picture Books they were a bit easy, except there were some words that I didn't really understand, ...... when I pronounce the words, I say it really slow, then I say it a bit faster, then I say it, and then I told (ask) 'Miss, well what does that mean?' then she tells me. She has helped us a bit, 'cept it's me that done it. I've done most of it, the figuring out, up to now I haven't had much troubles about reading. I don't really have to ask Miss now, I just figure it out myself.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think Mrs Hancock thinks of your reading?

JOSEPH: As soon as you said the question I thought of .......... we use to have a reading log, and she told (asked) us what you really think of the book and what's really going on, and what you really say about the good bits. It's like a journal really, a diary. I use to write my comments but she didn't really like the comments I wrote in my reading log. I didn't really finish the book because I wasn't really doing it because ...... (it was) Deezle Boy, I wasn't really enjoying it, .... he got captured. For that period of time she thought I didn't like it. I'm not really reading those kind of thick books. I found this book, it was called Quirky Tales and it's a variety of different stories all put together in one book.
DALLAS' INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWER: Do you know more about reading than you did at the beginning of the year? What things have you learned, and how did you learn them?

DALLAS: When I use to sit next to Mark I improved a lot, cause Mark helped me in choosing a book. It's hard to choose 'cause I read a lot of books, I like looking at the books but I really like adventures and that. When Miss comes around and helps me .... when you've read good she encourages you. She gives up her own time to help you and I've improved a lot. Even my writing has improved.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think Mrs Hancock thinks of your reading?

DALLAS: Miss thinks I'm improving and I thinks she's happy because she has said, "I'm pleased that you've started to read a lot better books".

EXPLANATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SILENT READING EPISODE

The daily survey of reading patterns was central to the process of evaluation of student's reading. The students used their own records to collate information for the reading evaluation sheet (See data 2 above). The purpose for the counting of titles under certain categories was not significant in itself except that it revealed to the reader their pattern of choice. It was not important that one student had read 20 books as compared to another student's 10. I made this clear by explaining that books were different in length and in content e.g. picture books, chapter books and wildlife information books, each reader read at different rates, some readers liked to take books home and therefore finished sooner than had they read only in silent reading time.

Therefore it was not important how many texts were read but what particular types were read and what types and how often texts were not completed. I stressed my interest in seeing the patterns of choice and after reading the information they gave me I would be able to make some suggestions about their reading.

The collating of the information for the evaluation sheet involved the class in reflecting on their own reading records, and checking with my survey if they had missed some dates etc. This process reinforced a purpose for accurate record keeping on their part in order to record and reflect on what they had achieved. I overheard
many comments that showed surprise at their own reading achievements as they revisited and reconsidered their reading patterns.

The survey taken on Joseph alerted me to responses such as continually choosing non-fiction texts. It was not that he was flicking through and only entertaining himself with illustrations, as others would do, for I regularly recorded that he was well engaged with the text. My concern lay in the fact that he was not taking the opportunity to engage with a narrative text that would involve him in unravelling plots, drawing inferences, making predictions and expanding his understanding of complex language structures frequently found in fiction texts. He needed to especially engage with such models of the written form of the English language patterns in order to enhance his command of his second language. It wasn't until the fifth week that he chose fiction, and then after it was intermittent. According to my beliefs and hence expectations of quality engagement this needed to be addressed. I intervened as further data will reveal. Whether I made a supportive decision for Joseph remained to be seen.

**Silent Reading Survey Analysis** (data 1)

To assist in this analysis I devised a set of analytical procedures for the interpretation of the survey data that would complemented teacher field notes, student reading logs and student reflections. These procedures were based on a set of criteria that grew out of my beliefs about what constituted engagement in reading. I believed readers demonstrated engagement in reading if they;

1. Frequently completed a text, with substantial comprehension.
2. Spent sustained periods of time with a text.
3. Demonstrated settled patterns (not constantly changing).
4. Selected a balanced choice of text between fiction and non-fiction.

The analytic procedure for silent reading operated in the following way;
At the conclusion of a two week period the number of days that a student was engaged in reading of various text types was counted. In addition to the six categories of Fiction, Non-Fiction, Short Story
Fiction, Poetry, Picture Book and Choose Your Own Adventure previously mentioned in the explanation of the survey format, another two categories were employed for the analysis in order to record unfinished texts, those that were not given a blackened square to indicate completion and substantiated comprehension. These were UN.FIC - Unfinished Fiction and UN.NF - Unfinished Non-Fiction.

A spreadsheet (Appendix C) represented the collation of the reading patterns tracked via the employment of the S.S.R. Survey. I considered that the analysis of the spreadsheet data needed to be viewed in light of the other responses gained from the data of field notes, logs and reflections. Therefore the interpretative discussions following the graphical representation of the spreadsheet data for each student over the four terms of the school year, draws upon the combination of responses from all responsive evaluation procedures, in order to construct an evaluation of the student's reading development. Although the survey data is presented in two weeks segments there were not always the full 10 days of the school fortnight where S.S.R. was engaged in. In some cases this was due to school sports carnival, long weekends or pupil free staff development days. Also it must be noted that the students themselves may have been absent from school during that fortnight resulting in less than 10 days availability for reading.
Joseph's S.S.R. Survey

The key (reading from top to bottom) represents what I considered to be the greatest to the least engagement in a text.

The text was calculated in terms of the number of days engaged in reading as opposed to counting the number of texts read. Because of the enormous variety of text, and the varying length and complexity of the texts, I determined only to count days of engagement (two Picture Books may have been read in one day, this would be registered as one day on Picture Books). This avoided the comparison of text difficulty. I considered that the purpose of the monitoring/assessment strategy was to enable me to be supportive of the students as individuals. With this view in mind, and in relation to individual developmental rates the complexity of the text was not as relevant as establishing a good reading pattern at whatever level of text complexity that happened to be.

Interpretation of the graphical data is best achieved via the following narrative account.

This is a visual account of Joseph's silent reading pattern for term 1. Joseph's most frequent selection for the first two weeks was non-fiction. In weeks 5 and 6 he chose a fiction text for the first time, it was 'Charlotte's Web' by E.B. White, and he slowly but steadily
completed it over a three week period, then read a selection of picture books, poetry and revisited a non-fiction text with which he did not engage well. This pattern of light easy reading after a prolonged stretch with fiction was one I saw frequently repeated by many readers.

In term two Joseph returned to non-fiction and was well engaged with a book on robots for four weeks. He read it from cover-to-cover. In week five he began another non-fiction text 'The Great Inventions'. Although he seemed well engaged with the text I was concerned and discussed with the whole class the manner in which readers generally dip into non-fiction texts, in the hope that he would become aware that reading through to completion was not expected with such texts. His pattern slowly began to change and by week 9 he had persevered for 7 days with a fiction text I had suggested. This did not however suit his interests as his log book entries indicated, and he spent the last week of the term again reading picture books, poetry and Choose Your Own adventure texts. In his log book he mentioned these as being easy and enjoyable.
JOSEPH'S SILENT READING RECORD TERM 3

JOSEPH'S SILENT READING RECORD Term 4
In term three he began with picture books but then discovered some new fiction and short story fiction titles more to his liking, especially the comedy of authors such as Paul Jennings and Roald Dahl. His engagement according to my set of engagement criteria increased and by the end of term three and the remaining term four he established a pattern that was a balanced 'diet' of fiction and non-fiction with the occasional picture and poetry books.

**Summary**

In reviewing Joseph's pattern of reading over the year what becomes clearly evident is his preference for non-fiction. This related to his interest in the subject matter of these texts. However according to my criteria of deep engagement in written text, i.e. sustained reading of fiction, Joseph's reading patterns were not reflecting this engagement. When he did choose fiction it seemed to take an unusually long time to complete. Interventions to foster deeper engagement in fiction consisted of notes in his log book, suggestions of fiction texts and general encouragement to dip into a variety of text types. Joseph was alerted to interesting fiction books through retelling by others and his choices from term 3 onwards reflected a more settle and more engaged pattern.
At the commencement of the year Dallas appeared to have some difficulty in settling on a suitable text. By the end of the first four weeks he had only engaged well with three texts, none of which involved him in any sustained reading. I had intervened on numerous occasions. I suggested a few fiction text which turned out not to be suited to his reading experience. On another occasion I arranged for him to listen to a book I had recorded on tape. He spent one day listening but did not take up the option when he had finished of reading the book himself without read-along assistance. As a result the balance of Dallas' reading was categorized as 'non-engaged' for these weeks.

By week 5, there was some change. I had spent time reading a picture book with him, this was followed by a fiction title 'Thing'. After a holiday with his family he returned to school for the remaining weeks of term, however his engagement in texts was restricted to short verse, and picture books.
Dallas began term 2 well engaged for two days on a fiction text an another three on finished non-fiction, however over the remaining five days of weeks 1-2 five different texts were chosen in the none of which were actually completed. In the subsequent weeks 3-6 a pattern began to emerge of a great deal more time being spent on one or two fiction and short story fiction texts although he only completed one. Engagement was also evident with the non-fiction texts that he chose.

One of these uncompleted fiction texts that he was attempting was being read to the whole class in Shared Reading. I knew that Dallas would have difficult with the text, but I interpreted this response as engagement in the book itself as he was re-reading the chapters read that very morning and attempting to go further in order to know what was going to happen.

By week 7-8 somewhat of a breakthrough in his reading was obvious and was also noted in field notes. He was encouraged to read a text suggested by another student, Mark who sat at his table cluster. The engagement with this short story fiction continued for six days, and another two days spent well engaged with non-fiction. One of the video sessions highlighted this engagement when he was asked to give a retelling to the whole class. His still developing ability to comprehend and orally retell coherently is evident in this data extract:
Dallas shared the story he was reading from a book of short stories to the whole class. The reading of this was a breakthrough for Dallas although his retelling was very disjointed and he needed assistance from myself and others, such as Mark, so a logical sequence could be maintained for the listeners. There were parts of his retelling that were noteworthy though. An example was when he recalled an analogy that the author had used to explain how we couldn't smell the cow dung custard, yet the flies could. The analogy was related to a dog's ability to hear high pitched sounds that we couldn't hear, Dallas explained. When I asked how the father got rich from his cow dung custard mixture, Dallas could not recall and others who had read the story help him out, it was obvious that he had not comprehended some of the main incidents in the short 4 page story.

Response to Video 2

Weeks 9-12 were a continuation of this more settled pattern of reading. Another fiction title text was completed, a more engaged pattern was evident with non-fiction chosen and a more difficult fiction text attempted for two days then returned to the shelves unfinished. These responses were reflecting a level of engagement that had not been previously witnessed.

In term three Dallas' pattern of choices were in the main non-fiction. He was very much involved in research on gorillas and spent silent reading time dipping into text related to primates. He read only two fiction texts completely in the term, although towards the end of the term he did attempt a few fiction titles but finding that they were beyond his experience he returned them to the shelves.
unfinished. Although these responses register as non-engagement according to my criteria they do suggest responses that indicate a willingness on the part of the reader to attempt those titles that held interested for him although they are still somewhat beyond his text experience, for although the original text of ‘Gorillas in the Mist’ by Dianna Fossey (written for adults and from which I read snippets to the whole class) and text such as ‘My Side of the Mountain’ by Jennie George are not matched by his reading processing experience, I considered the experiences were part of the approximating, and taking risks aspect of learning.

Term four saw the following pattern continue. Dallas would spend three and four days on a text then finally return it unfinished. He would choose the text himself and begin enthusiastically and in anticipation that he would finish. The texts were those he had seen others enjoy and share in sharing reading. I was uncertain what he gained from the texts, but I did not discouraging his attempts. I was left with the impression that he had not established what was, and what was not within his range of reading experience.

I learned from the patterns that Dallas exemplified and that I saw echoed in other readers whose interest and concept level lay beyond their reading processing experience, that knowing what they could
read comfortably was the first step in gaining control over their own reading, and building towards the texts that they wished to read. Taking this responsibility, as I saw many of the students do at various times throughout the year, was a major developmental step. Dallas' choices had not convinced me that he had established what was within his experience, as he had not accepted and begun to choose those materials that did match his processing experience.

**Summary**

Dallas' yearly pattern of reading demonstrates that engagement was not always evident. It was present at times but was not maintained. Dallas still had difficulty in choosing books that matched his experience in using the grapho-phonemic, semantic and syntactic cueing systems of the reading process. More sustained reading would achieve this development, and with assistance from teachers and others he would be able to make decisions about what suited him as a reader. By the end of the year Dallas still required this support.
3. WRITING
Monted engagement by:

TEACHER & STUDENT

1. Writing Survey
2. Writing Evaluation

STUDENT

1. Writing Records
2. Writing Evaluation
3. Writing Portfolio
4. Interviews

1. Writing Survey this survey sheet acted in much the same way as the silent reading survey, although the data was recorded differently. As a procedure it was only used over short rating periods of six weeks.

TERM 3 (Survey Period 6 weeks)

**Joseph's Writing Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1. Pen Pal letter to Germany 2nd Draft checked and posted. 2. First Draft Personal Story: 'The Adventures of Arch. E. Olijust'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;as above&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;as above&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;as above&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1. &quot;as above&quot; -2 days; 2. Research Endangered Species Draft 1 &amp; Draft 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>First Draft 'Adventures of Arch. E. Olijust' &amp; Cover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dallas' Writing Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1. Pen Pal letter to Germany 2nd Draft checked posted. 2. First Draft Personal Story: Football , 3. Edited 'Football' with Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1. Edited First Draft 'Football' Lyn and Kellie -1 day; 2. Second Draft 'Football' -1 day ; 3. Research Endangered Species Draft 1.-3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research Endangered Species Gorillas- Draft 1 - 2 (away 3 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;as above&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.&quot;as above&quot; -3 days; 2.My thoughts on Nature Religion (Compulsory ) 1st Draft &amp; Draft 2 -1 day;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1. Research edited Brad and Teacher - 2. Research Draft 2 - 1 day (away 3 days)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. PORTFOLIOS The student's writing folder (date stamped each day indicating the amount of writing achieved in any one episode) provided a tangible record of this episode. I regularly discussed the student's writing with them by informally reviewing pieces in their folder. The compulsory pieces that each student worked on included a wide variety of written forms, from letters, to questionnaires, interviews, crosswords, research reports and
modern day parables, all of which were published (that is worked on to a publishable format) and sent, used, rewritten in appropriate books or put on display. These were finally stored in a published folder together with the best of their published personal writing and built towards a portfolio of their written pieces to be taken home at the end of the school year.

3. Student Writing Survey Keeping a record of the title, date commenced and date completed and/or published in the beginning of their writing folder helped the students to keep track of what they had accomplished or failed to accomplish. These records were utilized by the children when they were asked to collate the quantity of their writing as a mid-year evaluation exercise.

**Collaborative Evaluation Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WRITING EVALUATION JOSEPH</th>
<th>WRITING EVALUATION DALLAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. NUMBER OF PIECES COMPLETED: 15</td>
<td>1. NUMBER OF PIECES COMPLETED 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. TYPES;</td>
<td>2. TYPES;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL FICTION: 1</td>
<td>PERSONAL FICTION: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL NON-FICTION: 1</td>
<td>PERSONAL NON-FICTION: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPULSORY FICTION: 2</td>
<td>COMPULSORY FICTION: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPULSORY NON-FICTION: 11</td>
<td>COMPULSORY NON-FICTION: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. NO OF PIECES INCOMPLETED: 0</td>
<td>3. NO OF PIECES INCOMPLETED: 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. MOST FAVOURITE PIECE OF WRITING: THE ADVENTURES OF ARCH. E. OLJUST</td>
<td>4. MOST FAVOURITE PIECE OF WRITING: SURVEY ON SNAKES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. WHY YOU CHOSE TO WRITE THIS PIECE: I CHOSE THIS PIECE BECAUSE IT IS AN ACTION STORY</td>
<td>5. WHY YOU CHOSE TO WRITE TO WRITE THIS PIECE: I LIKE ANIMALS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. COMMENTS ON MY WRITING PROGRESS: I THINK MY WRITING PROGRESS IS ALRIGHT</td>
<td>6. COMMENTS ON MY WRITING PROGRESS: I LIKE RESEARCH IT IS MORE INTERESTING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. MY TEACHER'S COMMENTS: Joseph I'm pleased with all the written pieces this term. Your News Item for the Drama on conflict was excellent. My only worry is that you seem to take so long to get ready to write. I'm also worried about your personal story that you have been writing all term, when will it end?</td>
<td>7. MY TEACHER'S COMMENTS: Dallas as you know from our talks I am wondering why you don't finish the pieces that you begin. How about you do a second draft of your snake survey and put it on the computer to gather the opinions of the rest of the class when they answer your questions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This procedure was part of the normal writing episodes.
4. **Interviews** the interviews were an insight into students' perceptions of themselves as writers as the following interview extracts demonstrate.

**JOSEPH' INTERVIEW**

**WRITING:**

INTERVIEWER: Do you know more about writing than you did at the beginning of the year? What has helped you be a better writer?

JOSEPH: Oh yes because in the beginning of term one I started a story and I am still on it. It is called "The Story of Arch. E. Olljust". It's a murder-detective. At first I never wrote, I thought to myself "well they went to the police station cause they got a call ...... It's like as if the character is speaking to you or sending you a long letter saying "Hi, my name's...." You know telling someone a really long story by letter.

While I've been writing it I've learned a lot about spelling and also about editing because I've corrected a lot of mistakes. All the mistakes you know, the things that aren't any good in the story, I can get rid of because I shared a bit with other people on the carpet......that was good because some people gave me some really good ideas. And it's by reading all of it, starting at the beginning and seeing if it all connects. Some bits I've written a quarter of a page on and then I tell (means asks) Miss "do you think it is good?" I tell (asks) her at the end of writing and then I say to myself "it might not really connect". If I feel this then when I go to sharing everyone will have a lot of questions.

Miss tells me about a story we read as a whole group. So I try to compare my story to the stories we read on the carpet. I ask myself, "how can you do that? Express yourself. Now why can't I do that with my stories?" So now I try and Miss always goes "Yes! It's pretty good!"

**DALLAS' INTERVIEW**

DALLAS: I know a lot more about writing. At the moment we are finishing our Book Week story. I like research. Mostly I've got a lot of ideas about animals. I took your (meaning the interviewer) advice and I've got three pages so far. It's all about Dianna Fossey, and I'll let, I'll show you when I'm finished. I've got a little bit, it's about three-quarters of a page. That's a part of just a book. But then I start on this other page and I've got that much (demonstrates length) written, and I got another page written the other day. And I'll get another page written today. You (the interviewer) gave me heaps of ideas about that the other day and that's good.

My neatness has got better. My brain is easier to think of ideas now, a lot easier cause Miss helps me. She helps me personally. My brain doesn't get locked, it keeps going with ideas. All the topics she gives us it's really good, all the research she gave us. I know about paragraphs and think of good headings. In my writing I think that Miss thinks I'm going good because I stayed in for about three minutes after the little lunch bell because I wanted to write it down if I haven't finished a sentence. I wanted to stay in and I showed Miss what I had done and she was surprised when I had done so much on the computer. It looked like she was surprised anyway.
EXPLANATION AND INTERPRETATION

The responsive procedures used during this episode informed me of the student's growth and development. In respect to Joseph the responses that I observed and those evident from the evaluation procedures confirmed the belief that he was quiet competent in his written language. At one time I was concerned at the amount of time taken on a personal story. I frequently conferenced with him to reassure myself that despite the fact that he had not completed it, the writing was of a constructive nature;

AUGUST FIELD NOTES
Joseph is still working on a detective type story begun back in Term 1. I've heard him share it to the class and it's quite good. If he can finish it, it should end up an entertaining piece - whether he will worries me. I notice how little writing gets done between daily date stamps and I pointed this out to him. He assured me that he does a lot of thinking which is true, I notice this, however he is liable to be easily distracted and talks to his friend Aaron at the same table. This talk might be on the story but I'm not quite sure.

OCTOBER REFLECTIONS Week 2 & 3
Joseph has finally finished his personal story. The development in his writing since February has been incredible. I am very impressed with his skill of using analogues;

‘fighter planes that popped out of the sky and disappeared into the clouds where they came from like a dolphin would do in the water.’ (p.4)
‘then with a smile I flicked my arms out put the bazokas on automatic and "WHAM"!! The executors were no more but a Pro Hart painting all over the wall.’ (p.12)

He also showed some skill at creating mood, His descriptions were vivid and conveyed his meaning well.

I told him how pleased I was with the story and he was thrilled about my reaction. He had begged me to read it all (18 pages) and put it in my basket to take home over the weekend.

Joseph Shared his story the following week with the whole class. I had to read it as it was so long. Many students were restless especially the girls who found the subject matter uninteresting.

The feedback after the sharing was disappointing in that the students only appeared to listen in order to "catch him out" e.g. you said this and then you did something different, 'that car was blown up before, how could you be driving it again?'

These were all comments to check the logic of the story. In most cases Joseph could explain away the problems and in a few incidents he realised slight changes needed to be made to the text to keep it logical. Such experiences are a strain on some writers who share. In some cases I've noticed students
don’t finish their piece after such sharing because they lose interest and don’t sustain themselves through to final draft.

Joseph didn’t let this worry him however- that very night he went home and made some changes to his story. This shows his confidence in his writing and his ability to carry through his intended actions towards completion.

In respect to Dallas a much different developmental path was evident through the responsive evaluation data. It was obvious that writing was difficult for Dallas. The video session demonstrated his reluctance to bring to completion any of the written tasks that he had begun. With a few exceptions this pattern continued through until July when these field notes were recorded.

**MONDAY**

Dallas is having a great deal of trouble writing a personal story. He is grumpy with me and people around him. I spoke to him about a think page.

DALLAS: "I know what you are going to say, ‘Write down all the things you can think of to write about’, but I can’t think of anything."

TEACHER: “Well Dallas what about noting down things that you like”

DALLAS: “There’s only one thing that I like - that’s football.”

TEACHER: “Well why don’t you write down the reason why you like it so much.”

Off he went reluctantly.

**WEDNESDAY**

Dallas is writing a Personal Fiction. Yells out to Matt who is struggling with a topic ‘Write about football Matt - it’s easy’

**THURSDAY**

Still writing.

**FRIDAY**

Shared his football story- students enjoyed it.

The following week saw him commence a second draft of this piece and begin his research on his chosen endangered species gorillas. His writing had extended to a whole page and I was pleased with his perseverance on it. I wondered whether this was the beginning of better writing engagement. It was two weeks latter (he had been away sick for five days) that he returned to the second draft of the football piece.

I noticed his reluctance to complete it being more interested now in his research piece. I discussed this with him, saying that the football piece was a compulsory piece that had to be published, and I stressed that he must do it within the next few days. He insisted that he would get it done but for now he wanted to work on his research. Later in writing I noticed him intent on the task, then he broke off to tell me that Judy (my Canadian colleague and the Interviewer of the students) had suggested that
he stop taking notes and just write what he knows about gorillas from the movie that we saw. So he told me he has written half a page - and that he wanted to have it published. He wanted to say things that might make the poachers stop doing what they were doing. "I might like to send it to Kid's Zone Magazine or something like that" was his suggestion.

We proceeded to have sharing on the carpet - he kept writing, almost 2 pages. I noticed he constantly rereads what he has written. His ownership of the piece is very strong.

November

Today writing involved planning a play "fractured Fairytales" in groups. Students have broken into groups to commence this planning. At this point most students had completed the second drafts on their endangered species, except for Dallas and a few others. I sat with Dallas and assisted in the editing of his now 5 page long piece. At the same time the groups were working on the plays and Dallas' attention was drawn to his group where the social interaction was so interesting that he requested that he join the group and not do his second draft. He pestered me to join them - I saw it as a behaviour pattern he had repeated many times, i.e. avoiding the completion of a task he had begun. I refused his request saying that he had a responsibility to complete his writing.

TEACHER: "Dallas I want you to understand something. The reason why I want you to continue working on your writing is not because I don't want you to be part of that group, it's because I want you to learn something very important, (this had been one of the hardest things for him to learn all year) I'm trying to teach you something Dallas and it's that there are some things that you start that must be finished - such as this writing. You've done a great job on that piece and it's completed to first draft stage, so how about you go ahead and finish it now. We've (Brad and I) helped you with the editing so how about getting it done?"

By this time the tears were rolling down his face. He settled down and sometime later I heard him say to his group who were working on the floor, "I'm in your group aren't I? ..... 'cause I've only got half a page to go on my second draft".

It had been a hard lesson related to the process of writing that Dallas had to learn, but I felt that it was a developmental step that was well and truly consolidated after this experience. The completed piece of writing was a impassioned plea to stop the poaching of Gorillas and logical reasoning as to why we should save the lives of this special endangered species. Part of it reads;

'Gorillas are not dangerous, so why destroy them? I would like to see a gorilla and a poacher have a fight and the poacher with no weapon and to see the poacher's face. The gorilla is not fierce when it charges if you run it will charge for a long time until you stop running. When you do it will stop charging and then it will move the troop. Are you wondering what a troop is? It means a group, like a flock of sheep.

I'm like Diana Fossey, if I was around gorillas for thirteen years I could not go away either. If I had to describe the gorillas in two words it would be 'Gentle Giant'.
Dallas’ improved development was not one of a gradual nature. It took this one topic that interested him to bring about visible evidence of his latent writing capabilities, which up until this time, had not been witnessed. I would not have considered he was capable of such writing, I now viewed him in a totally different light and had much higher expectations of him.

The responses that were received from Dallas over the course of the year presented me with a new and different concept of engagement. Although he did not bring to completion pieces of writing, he was nevertheless unconsciously engaging in certain aspects that finally found form in this one piece of writing. In light of this I began to reflect on many of students’ interview responses related to the writing process. The patterns that had emerged were these;

When answering the question ‘What has helped you to become a better writer?’ I discovered a pattern of answers that identify four strategies. It seems that those students who I deem effective writers attribute their improvement in writing to;

(i) Books as an influence and models of ways of writing.
(ii) Experiences as an influence, especially in regard to gaining a topic.
(iii) Sharing their writing, taking suggestions, ideas and encouragement from peers and the teacher.
(iv) Knowing more about the mechanics of writing e.g. spelling, paragraphs and writing longer pieces.

The emphasis for these students was on the first three strategies the fourth was rarely mentioned. In contrast the less confident writers generally mentioned the fourth strategy as being the one by which they judge their improvement. For some students in this less confident range there was some mention of the other strategies demonstrating that they were growing towards the recognition of other strategies.

Being made aware of these patterns of responses I find myself (in the role of facilitator) in somewhat of a dilemma.

Do I demonstrate more frequently and directly those strategies that the effective writers use so the less confident writers will engage with them and adopt them?

or

Is the knowledge that effective users draw on, a result of processes developed over time and experiences undergone that have resulted in these understandings (they constructed their own representations)? If so then there is no way these processes can be hastened and no way to expedite experiences for less confident writers except by maintaining supportive learning conditions and providing regular opportunities and real purposes and audiences for their writing, because it is under these learning conditions that these understandings will be engendered.

SEPTEMBER REPORT TO SUPERVISOR
What I had learned from these interviews and from the particular responses received from Dallas' data, was that although I may not have 'seen' evident of engagement there were many demonstrations and models of learning provided within the episode structures of this whole language classroom that students did engage with, although they may not have demonstrate this engagement until a particular experiences provided all the connections for them. I believe Dallas' written piece on the gorillas was an example of this delayed manifestation of engagement.

**4. SHARED WRITING**

Monitored engagement by:

**TEACHER**

- 1. Field Notes

**STUDENT**

- 2. Reflections

**1. Field Notes** To assess engagement during sharing writing I again used field notes and student reflections.

**JOSEPH’S SHARING WRITING RESPONSES**

**T.3 Wk. 4 Monday**

Always willing to inquiry into others 'pieces in sharing. Not afraid to show his true feelings as this incident demonstrates:

Aaron his friend had written a story in which Joseph featured as one of the characters. But he wasn't happy with the role he played. "Why did I have to be the one in the story who ate all the food - it offends me and it doesn’t make the story any more interesting". He had made a good point.

**DALLAS’ SHARING WRITING**

**T.3 Wk. 3 Monday**

Dallas made some good suggestions today when Adam shared his piece on the Bush Trip

Dallas: How did your Mum know you had gone away, because you said you got home before her?  
Adam: We had left our bikes out the front. I'll have to add that.  
Dallas: You didn't say what you did with the equipment the backpacks etc - your mother would have known if she'd seen them.  
Adam: We hid them.  
Dallas: But you didn't say that.  
Adam: I'll put that in too.
JOSEPH'S REPLY TO REQUEST FOR THE PURPOSE OF SHARING 31st July

I think sharing stories on the carpet is good because it helps me and everybody else in our class about new ideas the people in our class think about to fix people's stories, and it makes other people's stories more exciting and it makes sense.

Wene we are Down on the flore sering (sharing) some times I can't here. And now I am trying to be beter at school so I can get a motor bike. and so I am trying hard to liston to the stories and I lison to the qestions so thene no one can say qestions and my dad and my mum won't me to be very smate and I won't to be smate and sow I can play football and still be smart at the same time and ride motor bikes and wene I get older I'll have a good Job and a Good life.

In addition student recorded reflections specifically related to their writing development over time. This was achieved by demonstrations of how to review written pieces comparing initial written piece with three later pieces. This was done in groups. I had asked two writers to share with the class samples of their writing spanning a period of six months. In groups the students compared and contrasted these pieces and I monitored and offered support to each group. Through this interaction and demonstration the students were prepared for the task of reviewing their own written pieces.

JOSEPH: The story is called "Family Mystery" and um, firstly one thing I want to say about the story is that Jane has got a good idea about the story but when she writes it she doesn't take her time like wait, think it up and then write it. I can see that she's got, not just one or two sentences and then the date stamped. They're not like my stories. See my stories, I have to think it up as I go for some thing. She's very rarely got some close themes together. As well she doesn't think it up as she goes I can see that in her writing.

She's got a couple of spelling mistakes. She gets better as she writes it and um, when I'm reading it the writing and stuff gets a bit better you know. But at first it's bad. Like when you're walking you know; starting out bad.

TEACHER: Do you mean the handwriting?

JOSEPH: No not the handwriting, the meaning and stuff. It gets better as she goes on.
EXPLANATION AND INTERPRETATION

Sharing writing was an episode in which much of the work of the previous episodes culminated. The responsive evaluation data for this episodes demonstrated this interrelatedness.

Previous data confirms that both Joseph and Dallas engaged in this episodes in their individual ways which helped me to see that there were many different ways in which students would demonstrated their engagement. Joseph tended not to speak out and contribute in a large group although he was always drawing on the interactions that were going on to make sense of his own learning. Dallas on the other hand always wanted to contribute, and in order to do this he had to listen to the pieces being shared so he knew what question to ask the author.

SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS PROCESSES

Analysis of the responsive evaluation data was an on-going process because I needed the information that the data revealed to 'drive' the learning, therefore it did not occur at some remote point of time 'after' the data was collected. During the inquiry this analysis began to provide answers to my double-sided teacher/researcher question in much the same way that the ethnographic data had done. It was difficult to capture succinctly all that was learned from the responses that were given and those received from the students in the process of using these procedures. What accumulated was explicit and in turn tangible evidence of the phases of student growth and development. This was valuable 'evidence' that supported the evaluations I made of student learning outcomes, for myself, the students, the parents and the school principal.

The first purpose for the analysis was to evaluate individual student growth and development and in doing so to build up individual profiles of student learning outcomes that I presented and discussed with parents during interviews and in the written format, the yearly report card, compiled at the conclusion of the year. I was confident the responsive evaluation data had enabled this to occur.
The second purpose for the analysis was to establish the cues of engagement that signified growth and development in this classroom. The analysis of the patterns of responses registered by both teacher and student revealed the intuitive means by which I had previously drawn upon in determining how students were developing. However at the level of formal research this on-going analysis needed to be taken from the 'hard disc' of the teacher's consciousness and translated into 'copy' for others to review. What emerged through recurrent references from both myself and the students to particular responses within each episode were 'engagement cues'. Monitored over time these cues established patterns of engagement or non-engagement and enabled an assessment to be made in respect to the interventions which I deemed necessary for the fostering and enhancing of student development, and eventual learning.

Thus analysis of the data from each episode began to build up a data base of engagement and non-engagement cues. These cues represented the extreme ends on a continuum. In reality student responses ranged along the continuum. I saw that my role as facilitator was to recognize the cues, interpret them in terms of each individual's path of learning and determine the support the learner needed in order to foster responses at the engaging end of the continuum.

For the episodes of Sharing Reading, Silent Reading, Writing and Sharing Writing the data provided the following sets of engagement and non-engagement cues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPISODE</th>
<th>NON-ENGAGEMENT CUES</th>
<th>ENGAGEMENT CUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHARING</td>
<td>• Rarely contributes to the discussion following a reading session.</td>
<td>*Contributes to the discussion following a reading session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READING</td>
<td>• Shows confusion when orally retelling events from the previous day's reading.</td>
<td>*Can give a near accurate oral retelling from previous day's reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rarely takes the opportunity to make predictions about events, characters and outcomes of the current text.</td>
<td>*Will make predictions about events, characters and outcomes of text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Makes predictions and inferences that are not closely matched to the text.</td>
<td>*Make inferences that are closely matched to the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Have some trouble choosing a text and finishing it.</td>
<td>*Able to choose a text and finish it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Often asks the teacher to help in choosing a text.</td>
<td>*Rarely asks the teacher to help in choosing a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Always asks other people about a text before deciding to read it.</td>
<td>*Takes note of suggested texts, but usually reads the blurb and makes up their own mind in the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* The size of the print and the thickness of the text always affects the choice of text.</td>
<td>*The size of the print and the thickness of the text does not affect the choice of text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Mostly reads one type of text.</td>
<td>*Will read a variety of text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Takes some time to settle down to read, takes a long time selecting, often returns text and selects another during one reading session.</td>
<td>*Sets down to read straight away when silent reading commences. Not usually distracted during a reading session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Will read a book for three to four reading sessions before deciding it doesn't interest them.</td>
<td>*Will decide the book doesn't interest them after one reading sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Will stop reading when a word is unfamiliar. Doesn't guess the meaning always asks someone what it is before reading on.</td>
<td>*Will read on past a word that is unfamiliar and guess at its meaning. Doesn't stop reading if the text still makes sense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Doesn't like to read aloud to the teacher during reading time.</td>
<td>*Willingly reads aloud to the teacher in reading time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Often has difficulty remembering what was read in previous reading session.</td>
<td>*Remembers what was read in previous reading session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Doesn't tell others about exciting or interesting parts in his/her text after reading time.</td>
<td>*Likes to tell others about exciting or interesting parts in their text after reading time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Doesn't think about the text as they read, or make predictions about the events and characters in the text as they are reading.</td>
<td>*Thinks about the text as they read. Makes predictions about the events or characters in the text as they are reading.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SILENT READING**

* Mostly reads one type of text.
* Takes some time to settle down to read, takes a long time selecting, often returns text and selects another during one reading session.
* Will read a book for three to four reading sessions before deciding it doesn't interest them.
* Will stop reading when a word is unfamiliar. Doesn't guess the meaning always asks someone what it is before reading on.
* Doesn't like to read aloud to the teacher during reading time.
* Often has difficulty remembering what was read in previous reading session.
* Doesn't tell others about exciting or interesting parts in his/her text after reading time.
* Doesn't think about the text as they read, or make predictions about the events and characters in the text as they are reading.

* Able to choose a text and finish it.
* Rarely asks the teacher to help in choosing a text.
* Takes note of suggested texts, but usually reads the blurb and makes up their own mind in the end.
* The size of the print and the thickness of the text does not affect the choice of text.
* Will read a variety of text.
* Sets down to read straight away when silent reading commences. Not usually distracted during a reading session.
* Will decide the book doesn't interest them after one reading sessions.
* Will read on past a word that is unfamiliar and guess at its meaning. Doesn't stop reading if the text still makes sense.
* Willingly reads aloud to the teacher in reading time.
* Remembers what was read in previous reading session.
* Likes to tell others about exciting or interesting parts in their text after reading time.
* Thinks about the text as they read. Makes predictions about the events or characters in the text as they are reading.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPISODE</th>
<th>NON-ENGAGEMENT CUES</th>
<th>ENGAGEMENT CUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WRITING</strong></td>
<td>Has trouble thinking of a topic to write about for personal writing.</td>
<td>Can usually choose a topic to write about in personal writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn't think about what to write or how to improve his/her writing outside writing time.</td>
<td>Often thinks about what to write and how to improve their writing outside writing time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually ask for help with ideas.</td>
<td>Rarely have to ask for help with ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideas come slowly when they have begun writing, often doesn't finish pieces that they begin.</td>
<td>Usually find it easy to write once they have begun, and mostly finish what they have begun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worry about correct spelling in first drafts.</td>
<td>Doesn't worry about incorrect spellings, just lets the ideas flow in first drafts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writes only in writing session.</td>
<td>Writes in writing session and at home, and will choose to write at other times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writes the same type of text, rarely varies genre of personal writing.</td>
<td>Writes different types of text, varies genre of personal stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Takes a long time to begin to research a topic. Has difficulties taking coherent notes from resources and constructing a written retelling of topic.</td>
<td>Is resourceful in research. Takes coherent notes and is able to reconstruct appropriate written retellings of topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulties continuing piece of writing from previous writing session. Forgets ideas and often begins another piece each day.</td>
<td>Usually can remember where they were up to in previous writing session and continues with their ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn't like to have others edit their writing.</td>
<td>Accepts others as editors of their writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn't like to edit other's pieces or ask questions to help the writer.</td>
<td>Edit other's pieces and asks constructive questions of the writer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn't completes a second draft without a great deal of encouragement.</td>
<td>Often completes a second draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHARING WRITING</strong></td>
<td>Listen to others in sharing and editing but doesn't often change his/her piece as a result.</td>
<td>Listens to others in sharing and editing and usually adjusts their pieces as a result.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn't share writing in whole class situations. Is embarrassed and afraid of questions about their writing.</td>
<td>Shares writing with the whole class even though they are embarrassed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn't makes suggestions to those sharing their writing.</td>
<td>Often makes suggestions to those sharing to help them with their writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn't concentrate in whole class sharing forgets the plot or details of the characters of the piece being shared.</td>
<td>Does concentrate during shared writing and follows the plot or details of characters of the piece being shared.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analytic processes that went on during the year consolidated the set of assessment cues outlined above. I realised that these were the criteria on which I based the overall evaluation of the students as I prepared to write the formal yearly report as part of the school policy. As the students themselves were constantly kept informed of their own learning through the procedures in that they reflected upon and tracked their own patterns of reading and writing choices and discussed and wrote about their products and processes, I decided to check my own evaluations with the student's own assessment of their language learning responses. I knew that the students had contributed to my understanding of their own paths of growth and development and that consulting them by asking them to reflect and select from my list of engaging and non-engaging cues as a means of describing themselves as readers and writers would be a means of validating my evaluations.

This became the third analytical process for the responsive evaluation data - a member-checking procedure. Firstly the emerged set of engagement cues were collated into two random lists of responses. Then the students were asked towards the end of term four, to circle the responses that best described themselves as readers and writers. These responses were read to the whole class allowing ample time for clarification and discussion on any listed description for which they were unclear as they proceeded to circle selections on their own sheets. Responses to this procedure are shown below in respect to the students, Joseph and Dallas. Only those responses selected by the students are shown, the complete set of cues from which they could choose is included as Appendix D.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>JOSEPH'S RESPONSES</strong></th>
<th><strong>DALLAS' RESPONSES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Read books that other people have read.</td>
<td>* Read books that other people have read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Will stop reading a book after about one chapter if I don't like it.</td>
<td>* Will stop reading after two days if I don't like a book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Read about one book a week if it is long</td>
<td>* Read about one book a week if it is long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Don't get up often in silent reading to change my book.</td>
<td>* Don't finish books quickly only read them here at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Rarely ask my neighbour or teacher to help me with something I don't understand.</td>
<td>* Ask my neighbour or teacher to help me when I get stuck on something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Enjoy the books I read.</td>
<td>* Enjoy the books I read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Take notice what others say about books but make up my own mind in the end.</td>
<td>* Read a book only if it was suggested by the teacher or my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* After reading a long book that really took a lot of concentration I choose a book or a magazine that is easier to read.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* When I come to a word or a phrase I haven't seen before I spend some time working it out and if I can't I stop reading and ask someone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* During the reading of a book I have to sometimes be encouraged to keep reading until I have finished.</td>
<td>* When I come to a word I haven't seen before I read on past it and guess its meaning or don't worry about it if what I'm reading still makes sense (sometimes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* When choosing a book I like to find out from someone who has already read it if it's a good book. If the other person didn't like it, I don't read it.</td>
<td>* When I come to a word or a phrase I haven't seen before I spend some time working it out and if I can't I stop reading and ask someone (sometimes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* I don't have to find out what a book is about from someone else because I read the blurb and make up my own mind.</td>
<td>* During the reading of a book I have to sometimes be encouraged to keep reading until I have finished (sometimes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The cover of a book doesn't make a big difference when I'm choosing a book.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The size of the print isn't as important as what the book is about when I am making a choice.</td>
<td>* Make a decision whether to read a book by how interesting the cover looks (sometimes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* I check to see how small the print is in the book before choosing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSEPH</td>
<td>DALLAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Like to tell others about exciting or interesting parts of the book after silent reading time.</td>
<td>* Sometimes tell my mum or dad about a good book that I am reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Sometimes tell my mum or dad about a good book that I am reading.</td>
<td>* Usually don't talk about my books to my parents or the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Often check to see how much I have to read before I complete the book.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Sometimes I am disappointed when a book ends because I wanted to know more about it.</td>
<td>* Sometimes I am disappointed when a book ends because I wanted to know more about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Quite happy to read books with or without illustrations.</td>
<td>* Prefer to read books that have some illustrations (sometimes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* I don't mind being asked by the teacher to read a part of my book to her</td>
<td>* Quite happy to read books with or without illustrations (sometimes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Don't like to stop reading during Silent Reading for a rest.</td>
<td>* Don't like to stop reading during Silent Reading for a rest (sometimes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Not concerned about having to finish quickly. Happy to take my time and enjoy a long book.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Remember what you were up to in your reading don't usually read the same part again.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Make predictions in my head about what is going to happen further on in the book. Think about it after I have stopped reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Joseph's and Dallas' responses were consistent with the evaluations that I had constructed in respect to their reading. When considered in terms of the the cues of engagement and non-engagement, Dallas' responses aligned frequently with those of non-engagement. There were responses however that indicated evidence of change towards the engagement end of the continuum. Joseph responded to each set of descriptions by choosing one alternative, whereas Dallas did not. Inferences can be drawn as much from the responses given as to the responses unselected. For example Dallas did not select the response that indicated he frequently changed his text in silent reading. Either he is not aware of this pattern or that he considers that this is normal and all readers do this.

The following are the responses given by Joseph and Dallas in respect to their views of themselves as writers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Joseph's Responses</strong></th>
<th><strong>Dallas' Responses</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Can usually choose a topic to write on when given a free choice.</td>
<td>* Have trouble thinking of a topic to write on in free choice writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Ideas come slowly when I've begun to write, sometimes don't finish.</td>
<td>* Ideas come slowly when I've begun to write, sometimes don't finish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Only share writing when I have to in editing and sharing times.</td>
<td>* Don't usually worry too much about spelling in the first draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Don't usually worry too much about spelling in the first draft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Listen to others' suggestions in sharing time and when others edit and try to improve my piece.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Sometime sharing is embarrassing but I like it when others enjoy my writing and sometimes give me good ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Writing is easy when I am making up a story.</td>
<td>* Writing is easy when I am giving my opinions or giving the reader some information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Good stories can be short or long and are interesting if the description helps the reader get a picture in their head. And if it makes me laugh, cry or feel scared.</td>
<td>* Good stories are long stories with chapters. They can take ages to write.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Think that editing has to be done so others can read my writing without problems.</td>
<td>* Rarely think about what I'm writing except in writing time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Like to edit other people's pieces.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Like to let a few people see my writing, and it doesn't matter if they are my friends, I still get comments that help or tell me that they enjoyed it</td>
<td>* Like to let a few people see my writing, and it doesn't matter if they are my friends, I still get comments that help or tell me they enjoyed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Rarely ask for teacher help in choosing a topic. Sometimes she helps without me asking for it.</td>
<td>* Often ask teacher to help me choose a topic to write about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* In writing time I find that I write best if the classroom is very quiet.</td>
<td>* Mostly I like to be able to talk during writing time so I can share and get help as I go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* When I have been writing about a page or more then I like to talk or share.</td>
<td>* Have trouble continuing my piece of writing from the day before. I forget what my ideas were and where I was up to in the piece.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Usually can remember where I was up to in my story when I begin writing the next day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Can write about all different things. It doesn't have to be the same kind of story.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Enjoy others' stories but like to make up my own mind about topics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph's Responses</td>
<td>Dallas' Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Usually finish the pieces of writing that I begin.</td>
<td>* Often start a piece of writing with a lot of interest but get bored with it and I don't finish it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Like to finish writing quickly so I sometimes take my writing home.</td>
<td>* Only write because I have to in our writing time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Find that I am writing more often at home now, for example, letters and notes to my parents and friends and some stories.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Enjoy the writing that I do, like to read over pieces written at the beginning of the year.</td>
<td>* During the writing of a piece, I have to be encouraged to keep going until I am finished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* During the writing of a piece, I have to be encouraged to keep going until I am finished</td>
<td>* Enjoy writing in research times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Enjoy writing in research times.</td>
<td>* I am proud of my writing when I have written about two or three pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* I am proud of my writing when I have written about two or three pages.</td>
<td>* It doesn't really matter if a piece of writing takes one or more days in writing time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* I am proud of my writing when it sounds good. Doesn't matter if it is a long or short piece.</td>
<td>* Usually can remember the interesting facts that I discovered in my research and can write it down when asked to without looking at my notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Often tell my Mum or Dad about some piece I am writing.</td>
<td>* Don't usually think about the books I have read when I am writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| * It doesn't really matter to me if a piece of writing takes one or more days in writing time. | * When editing someone's piece of writing I notice these things:  
- when it doesn't make sense  
- when there's a word that doesn't sound right in the sentence  
- when something is spelt incorrectly  
- when talking marks are needed. |
| * Usually can remember the interesting facts that I discovered in your research and can write it down when asked to without looking at my notes. | * When editing someone's pieces of writing I have trouble noticing when these things are used incorrectly:  
- when something is spelt incorrectly  
- when a new paragraph has to be used  
- when talking marks are needed  
- when a person has used an apostrophe incorrectly. |
| * Don't usually think about the books I've read when I am writing.               |                                                                                |
| * When editing someone's piece of writing I notice these things:  
- when it doesn't make sense  
- when there's a word that doesn't sound right in the sentence  
- when something is spelt incorrectly  
- when talking marks are needed. |                                                                                |
| * When editing someone's pieces of writing I have trouble noticing when these things are used incorrectly:  
- when something is spelt incorrectly  
- when a new paragraph has to be used  
- when talking marks are needed  
- when a person has used an apostrophe incorrectly. |                                                                                |
These responses were confirmation that the evaluation - the conclusions I had drawn about their individual language learning at the end of grade five, were consistent with the student's own views. This evaluation in the form of the school report, was a description of the student's learning which reflected the combined realities of both teacher and the learner. Joseph's father provided a written reply when asked what he had noticed about his son's language development throughout the year. In it he stated that;

*Mainly in writing and creating stories, Joseph has developed more skill and I notice a certain degree of personal style. Normally he talks a lot about what he's writing and asks my opinion about it. He feels very secure in developing ideas and situations when writing a story. I think he needs to be more careful with his calligraphy. But generally speaking I'm very pleased with his progress.*

Parent Response Sheet

Dallas' mother did not write a response but in the interview offered to parents as an opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the year-long study she stated;

> 'Although I am aware that Dallas' ability in language lags behind that expected of a grade five student, it is the first time in Dallas' years at school that I have been reassured and shown through examples that growth and developed in language had occurred throughout the year.'

The evaluations that I ultimately made of the learning outcomes of all the students were the result of the responses, in terms of both processes and product, gathered from the responsive evaluation procedures. By 'sitting beside' my students I had 'come to know' them in ways that informed my beliefs and therefore my practice. The processes of responsive evaluation, the 'orientation to the program activities' (Stake, 1975) or 'the things students do and how they do them' inside the classroom, enabled interpretations to be made by both the teacher and learner about student knowledge, understandings, abilities and attitudes.

The procedures provided the means for interaction, analysis and interpretation, and through this process the teacher's expectations were mediated by the student's perceptions of their own learning. Whereas teacher expectations may have register certain responses as non-engagement, the perceptions the students provided over time allowed for clarified and confirmation of these judgments. This continual interaction and mediation was an integral factor in the process of evaluating teaching and learning. It was in this manner that responsive evaluation improved the teaching and learning that occurred in this whole-language classroom.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

The journey of this inquiry began in a classroom and continued over a period of one school year during which time the inquirer in the role of teacher/researcher collected and interpreted two levels of data as part of a process of evaluating student growth and development in language learning. The methodology used was naturalistic inquiry drawing on the methods of ethnography, action research, grounded theory and responsive evaluation.

The purpose of the inquiry centred around the process experienced by the teacher-researcher in implementing responsive evaluation.

The first stage in understanding the process was to bring to a conscious level the pragmatic settings of the inquiry. These were the socio-political, educational and physical contexts that surrounded and impinged on the teacher and the classroom at the time of the inquiry.

The second stage was to understand the assumptions underlying the contexts as well as the theoretical and conceptual issues surrounding assessment, evaluation and teaching and learning in a whole-language context.

The third stage involved the articulation of the means by which the inquiry was conducted. This involved descriptions of the components of the inquiry, the educational paradigms operative in the educational contexts of the inquiry, the methodology that emerged from this paradigm in the form of compatible procedures and techniques for carrying out research.

The fourth stage was the description and analysis of the process. Descriptions of what happened, how it happened and why it happened emerged as the 'story' of the inquiry unfolded.

The fifth and final stage of the inquiry journey was the evaluation. This stage will be reported in this conclusion. As previously stated Kemmis and Stake claim;
the very impulse of evaluation is to link the thoughts - the understandings and interpretations - of real people to action and to real contexts of action. Whose questions does it answer? Whose perspectives does it recognise and emphasis? Whose work does it affect? Whose interests does it serve?

In evaluating the process that I experienced as teacher/researcher in this inquiry, the link between my thoughts, that is my understandings and interpretations and the 'value' of this experience for others in terms of the multiple meanings that emerged are best conveyed by asking 'What meaning does this inquiry have for....;

(i) myself as a teacher-researcher concerned about the inadequacy of traditional student evaluation such as standardised tests to measure literacy development in a whole-language context,
(ii) classroom teachers, who seek models of evaluation that aim to improved the processes of teaching and learning, and
(iii) educators and administrators who seek a better understanding of student learning patterns through evaluation procedures that offer descriptions of the 'markers' of growth and development?

THE MEANINGS OF THE INQUIRY

(i) For myself as a whole-language teacher/researcher.

In discussing the meanings, sometimes termed the products, findings or the outcomes of a naturalistic inquiry, action-researchers invariably experience the discovery that in the process of setting out to achieve one particular purpose other understandings and meanings are discovered that were not initially envisaged. The inquiry reported here is no exception to this pattern.

The purpose of the inquiry was to focus on the process the action-researcher experienced. Whilst this focus was maintained the practice of self-reflection emerged as the prime means by which the description, analysis and evaluation of the process was achieved. It was within the self-reflective practices of the responsive evaluation procedures that the most valuable product of the inquiry was
discovered - the means by which a teacher's perceptions of an individuals' learning can be found to be enhanced by the learner's own realities of their learning being conveyed through their responses.

'As researchers collecting data that exist as experiences before our eyes, we must never forget that such data are always filtered behind the eyes, through our own conceptual structures and beliefs ..... some of what we see is not really there at all; instead it is created through the interaction of the world outside of ourselves and our inner cognitive structures .' (Burton, 1986)

Taking Burton's concept further I would propose that the inquiry resulted in the researcher experiencing a greater interaction between beliefs - the inner cognitive structures, and experiences - the world outside ourselves, thus providing the conditions for a socially constructed reality from which meanings and interpretations can be drawn in order to gain further knowledge of the phenomena under investigation, which was the evaluation of student literacy growth and development.

By way of further illustrating this meaning the analogy of Socrates' parable of the prisoners in the cave, as reported by Plato in book seven of 'The Republic' (translation by Grube, 1974, p. 192) will be used.

' ..... imagine men to be living in an underground cave-like dwelling place, which has a way up to the light along its whole width, but the entrance is a long way up. The men have been there from childhood, with their neck and legs in fetters, so that they remain in the same place and can only see ahead of them ..... Light is provided by a fire burning some way behind and above them. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a path across the cave ..... and along this is a low wall....... like the screen at a puppet show ..... men carry along that wall, so they overtop it, all kinds of artifacts, statues of men, reproductions of other animals in stone or wood fashioned in all sorts of ways, and as is likely, some of the carriers are talking while others are silent.

Do you think such men (the prisoners) could see anything ...except the shadows which the fire casts upon the wall of the cave in front of them? ..... And is not the same true of the objects carried
along the wall? ... such men would believe the truth to be nothing else than the shadows of the artifacts...

... if one of them was freed, had to stand up suddenly, turn his head..., walk and look up towards the light, ... the flash of fire would make it impossible for him to see the objects of which he had earlier seen the shadows. What do you think he would say if he was told that what he saw then was foolishness, that he was now somewhat closer to reality, ... do you think he would be at a loss and believe that the things which he saw earlier were truer than the things now pointed out to him?

... if he was dragged (beyond the cave) .... with the sunlight filling his eyes, he would not be able to see at once the things which are now said to be true.

I think he would need time to get adjusted before he could see things in the world above; at first he would see the shadows most easily .... and then the things themselves.

The journey of this inquiry can be likened to the journey depicted in Plato's retelling of Socrates parable. Prior to the inquiry my perceptions were shadows or illusions, during the inquiry these perceptions were enhanced through a new way of 'seeing the world' related to the assessment of the growth and development of language learners. The discovered meaning or reality, was; that knowledge about a learner's growth and development can be acquired 'through a reciprocity between thought and action'. This concept is a pervasive theme in the work of epistemologists such as Piaget and philosophers such as Dewey who claim that in order to understand phenomena there must be interaction with that phenomena at an intellectually honest level which will render understandings that enhance the teacher's ability to participate or act in respect to the phenomena. One of the major understandings gained from this action-research can be summed up as - knowing that 'action' in concert with 'reflection' by both teacher and learner is a powerful means by which teachers can 'come to know' students' paths of growth and development in language learning. In this way 'shadows' take on 'real forms'.

The two concepts of 'action' and 'reflection' also represent the dialectic nature of this particular inquiry. The 'actions' that I undertook as the practitioner were in part the learning practices that I adopted in the classroom. The ethnographic level 1 data described
these actions and uncovered the beliefs and values from which they were generated. The beliefs and values were seen to be based on understandings and knowledge gained from past experiences in respect to learning, learning language and the fostering and enhancing of that learning. Other 'actions' were the responses given and received by teacher and students in the course of employing responsive evaluation procedures. The outcomes of these procedures produced level 2 data. At both levels 'action' was purposeful.

'Reflection' on the part of teacher, student and participant observers was the prime method of data collection and interpretation at both levels of inquiry. Through reflection in the role of teacher/researcher I was able to turn what was intuitive understandings or impressions into propositions that were then used to clarify judgments and decisions related to the ways in which I could support individual's growth and development in language learning. As Schutz explains:

'When, by my act of reflection, I turn my attention to my living experience, I am no longer taking up my position within the stream of pure duration, I am no longer simply living within that flow. The experiences are apprehended, distinguished, brought into relief, marked out from one another; the experiences which were constituted as phases within the flow of duration now become objects of attention as constituted experiences.' (Schutz, 1967, in Burton, 1985, p. 721)

Prior to the employment of responsive evaluation I observed, formed impressions and considered the responses I received from my students on a day-to-day basis. It was from these observations, impressions and responses that I devised intuitive knowledge about their growth and development. However it was the process of conducting my reflections and those of the students, in a rigourous and disciplined manner within the procedures of Responsive Evaluation that enabled me to understand the fullness of the meaning of the multitude of face-to-face interactions occurring in the classroom. Frederick Burton (1985) reports this same experience in A Teacher's Conception of the Action Research Process although he did not refer to the use of responsive evaluation.

In claiming that the power of reflection characterised one of the most important meanings of this inquiry the following questions are
raised - How can this meaning be gained by other teachers? What processes generated this meaning? In other words what meaning does this inquiry have for:

(ii) classroom teachers, who seek models of evaluation that aim to improved the processes of teaching and learning.

In setting out to implement responsive evaluation it became obvious through the description of the steps taken in the inquiry, visually depicted in Figure 3 (Chapter 4), that a particular model of evaluation had evolved. This model shown below in Figure 5, characterises a grounded theory of inquiry into classroom evaluation, a theory that teachers can employ in their inquiries into and reflections upon the congruency of their teaching and evaluating practices, and the subsequent clarification of their beliefs, their teaching/learning practices and the related evaluation practices which give rise to cues of learning engagement which in turn inform and refine beliefs, practices and evaluation in a continuing cyclical process of meaning making.

This model forms a structure in which a number of processes can occur. The first stage of the model is the statement of beliefs that underlie instructional practices, the second is the instructional practices themselves, the third the forms of evaluation of the instructional practice, and finally the cues or signals that register the quality of engagement or non-engagement within the evaluative procedures attached to each specific episode.
The model represents the stages of a process a teacher can employ in articulating their evaluation practices. Although the process is depicted as sequential and somewhat linear, the actual use of the model results in a recursive, overlapping process towards articulation. The experience of this inquiry is conveyed by this model. The model is the 'map' of the journey. Other teachers who wish to come to a closer understanding of the relationship between the theory driving their practice particularly in relation to evaluation, can take the same journey through the employment of this model. In this sense the model becomes a powerful reflective tool of professional development.

The recommendations that could be made for further research into evaluation of learning arising from this inquiry, centre on the use of this model. Because the model is a reflective tool, it provides a focus for teachers to begin reflective action/research within their own classrooms. The model is at present being employed in a district wide evaluation of learning project (ELI 1991) in the Illawarra area of New South Wales. Initial responses from teachers as they employ the model as a reflective tool is that they are discovering that beliefs
are so embedded within practices that it is through the REconsideration and the REsearch of their practices that their beliefs are revealed. This first step begins a process of fine-tuning of beliefs and practices, which continues as teacher discovers an alignment or non-alignment of their evaluation practices with their teaching and learning practices (that is the interaction between stages two and three). It is at this point that teachers begin to search for evaluative practices that truly reflect the teaching/learning practices of their classroom, or the teaching/learning practices that have begun to be fine-tuned through the interplay of stages one and two. In the project underway in the Illawarra, the teachers are at many different points of discovery within this model. With assistance from co-researchers they are personally constructing understandings about responsive evaluation and negotiated evaluation (Woodward 1991) which is a means of reporting learning outcomes that involve on-going interactions between teacher, student and parent. As teachers move towards learning how to describe learning, they come closer to the reality of describing the apparently invisible, qualitative dimensions of learning. In my inquiry they were depicted as cues of engagement, although they are more commonly referred to as 'markers' or 'indicators' of learning.

At the conclusion of this inquiry the empty segments of the model were able to be completed thus rendering the outcomes depicted in Figure 6.

The experience of using the model lead me to the following conclusions;

1. That assessment of my students is best achieved in a 'whole' and not a piecemeal manner.
2. That assessment is 'do-able' within the context of my classroom and my time demands.
3. That assessment can be practical in that it can provide me with 'a window' into the ways in which my students are learning that in turn informs me about the suitability of my teaching practices and their ways of learning.
4. That assessment practices can give both myself and the students a sense of achievement and cause to 'celebrate' growth and development in learning.
This last realisation 'cause to celebrate' is perhaps the missing ingredient in our role as teachers today. Public perceptions of teachers and statements of our worth (in monetary terms) have disempowered us. By taking away the role of evaluators of our students' learning, and our own learning about how it is that students learn, we are being further 'deskilled' and confidence in ourselves as knowledgeable and articulate practitioners of our teaching "art" is being eroded.

Employing the model of evaluation proposed here is one way of taking control of the teaching and learning that occurs in our classroom. In this way teachers will have reason to 'celebrate' as their awareness of the growth and development of their students' learning is revealed.
The meaning that this inquiry has for;

(iii) educators and administrators who seek a better understanding of student learning patterns through evaluation procedures that offer descriptions of the 'markers' of growth and development,

can be summed up in terms of the current climate related to assessment.

The determining of student learning outcomes has always been a contentious issue in education. In the current climate of fiscal restraint the focus of this concern rests with the concept of what education is really for. Governments, industry and the general public, in their roles as stakeholders in the educational process are redefining the purpose of education. This re-definition is taking the form of viewing students' learning achievements in terms of how they directly relate to the quality of the country's resources, in this sense, human resources.

When viewed through this 'economic' lens, education can be seen as being either 'cost effective' or 'cost ineffective'. Currently governments believe that determining effectiveness can be done through assessing 'standards' with an agenda employing instruments based on a positivistic educational paradigm. Overtly, the student's learning standards are 'measured' and covertly, teacher's teaching standards are measured via 'state-wide', one shot, computer-scored standardised tests. It is argued by governments that this form of assessment will improve teaching and learning.

By the employment of a model of evaluation such as the one demonstrated in this inquiry educators and educational administrators can come to accept that learning is not a linear process that can be measured, but a dimension like the dimensions of space and is therefore beyond measurement. They will also come to see that an instrumental form of assessment, that is, a means of determining accountability, as a measure of student's learning outcomes, and as a tool for improving teaching and learning, is as illusionary as the shadows on Plato's cave wall.
By exploring alternative evaluation such as responsive evaluation procedures that provide for multiple realities as a means of determining learning outcomes, those who believed in such shadows of real learning will begin to see 'markers' and 'indicators' that reflect the reality of the learning outcomes.

As prisoners of such instrumental evaluation measures educators and administrators align themselves with the government and business perspectives that perceive the purpose for assessment to be:

(1) the means of measuring the standard of the human resource,
(2) the means of measuring whether the standard is improving, and
(3) the means of measuring 'cost effectiveness' of the education system, that is, to determine whether the country is 'getting its money's worth' and whether the teachers are doing their job?

It could be argued that assessment for these purposes works against the educative purpose of improving teaching and learning. It is my personal belief that education - that is, drawing out each individual's potential to make sense of her/his world, or as Paulo Friere would say 'to read the world' has little to do with profit and loss. It is a human right, and has more to do with building up individual resourcefulness. A resourcefulness for dealing with uncertain futures. A resourcefulness that will equip students to think critically, consider multiple realities, not just one 'right' answer to problems and to understand that knowledge is not something that is poured into them, but something that is created by them in collaboration with others, such as their teachers and their peers.

Educators and administrators who view evaluation in terms of the above means of accountability can take from this inquiry a new meaning of accountability conveyed via the following understandings;

- accountability that involving keeping records and making them open to view, is an achievable outcome of responsive forms of evaluation,
- in respect to accounting for the literacy development of a country's population, any assessments of growth and development with expressed purposes of improving language teaching and learning, will need to match the understanding of how literacy works.

Finally in accepting past literacy research that states;

(1) that literacy is learned under collaborative and interactive conditions.

(2) that literacy is learned with the support of 'real' resources - texts and 'real' purposes and with 'real' models or demonstrations and

(3) that literacy is learned in conditions that: value approximation and the constructing of personal representations under non-risk conditions; allow for reflection on those approximations and representations, such as “Why did I do it that way?”, Did it work for me? and ‘How can I do it better?’,

it is my belief, and one I set out to explore via this inquiry, that these understandings and the processes inherent in them should be assessed and from these assessments evaluations constructed about any learner's growth and development.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This inquiry represents only one exemplar of how a teacher and her class went about assessing literacy learning outcomes in a context where the above understandings operated. It was a learning context in which the assessing became a resource in itself. A resource for richer learning, or ways of knowing - ways of reading the world.

' When I disclose what I have seen, my results invite other researchers to look where I did and see what I saw. My ideas are candidates for others to entertain, not necessarily as truth, let alone Truth, but as positions about the nature and the meaning of the phenomenon that may fit their sensibility and shape their thinking about their own inquiries.' (Peshkin, 1985, in Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p.8)
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APPENDIX A

BELIEFS AND VALUES OF THE INQUIRER

Personal Background

I brought to this inquiry beliefs and values nurtured by my life experiences, especially my educational experiences. These began when I attended a catholic primary in a small country town on the coast of New South Wales Australian, followed by a secondary boarding school. In the main my teachers were catholic nuns who besides fostering Christian ethics also modelled a strong sense of justice. Some of them also conveyed 'quiet' feminism, a sense that it was possible to achieve anything as long as you 'had a go'. Living in a community of peers who had to rely on each other and not our families also alerted me to the need for collaboration.

My early years as a teacher were full of enthusiasm and energy in an environment where the conditions of encouragement, sharing and respect were exhibited by a fellow teacher in his supervisory role. Confidence and energy drained when this role was taken on by an 'Infants Mistress', i.e. a non-teaching female in charge of a large K-2 (kindergarten to grade two) section of the school. Monitoring practices of frequent 'testing' and of all children physically reporting weekly 'results' lined up outside the school office with the weekly test in hand. This offended my sense of professionalism. All teachers were obliged to adhere to these practices and whilst the overt intention was to praise the children's efforts, the covert assumptions were that teachers had to be monitored. Such 'one shot' efforts under formal conditions failed to show the small gains in confidence and attitude that I observed over time in my children's learning. These practices undermined the monitoring and supporting role in the children's learning that I felt I should play.

During this period I attended one of the many after school in-service presentations offered by the local Teacher's College. The speaker shared his recent insights into the reason for some children's reading difficulties and I began to reflect upon those children who at the first grade level were already demonstrating difficulties compared to their peers. Having felt the frustrations of not knowing how to help these children I sought the help of this
'expert'. For the early '1970's his advice was quite new and refreshing;

It was advice that 'sat' well with my personal beliefs and as a result was slowly but surely implemented into classroom practices for the benefit of those struggling readers. I was relieved to see the barriers to reading dissipate and small successes build their confidence in taking greater risks. I also realised that their personal concerns and interests were at the heart of their written pieces. This was real writing and real reading.

Experience in another language learning context setting was met some years later when again I puzzled over the learning task that my adult migrant students were facing as they attempted to acquire the skills of English as their second language (sometimes third or fourth). The sole criteria in all their attempts to use the language was to understand and make themselves understood. In this context all learning was meaning centred, and being confident adults meant they were willing to take risks. Due to their circumstances the need to learn English was equally matched by their need to function in an Australian cultural setting.

In order to learn more about these learning processes lead me to study further at a post-graduate level in the field of literacy. An outcome of this study was a greater awareness of the traditional roots of our thinking about language and learning and an understanding of the contemporary knowledge base built on the basis of naturalistic research into the developmental practices of children learning to reading and writing. The propositions that this contemporary thinking about language learning presented were a catalyst in the changing classroom teaching practices. The premise on which much of this thinking was based, that is 'that language learning is fostered successfully in supportive meaning-centred environments, with high regard for the meeting of personal needs and interests', found harmony with my beliefs in the rights of the individual and the need to work collaboratively in all learning situations.

With concern for meaning and relevancy as the central focus to all language learning. I endeavored to translate these language learning theories into my own classroom practices. Whilst I was confident that with my students were actively 'engaging' at their own
pace in learning episodes I was uneasy about reporting this learning via numbers and grades. Fortunately I was not coerced into having my students sit for standardised tests nor in the most recent years any school based tests due to our principal's belief that such grading was an artificial representation of learning and that the competition it generated was unnecessary. I'm not sure that all the parents or teachers agreed with her, but for my part I was pleased not to have to consider my students in terms of where they ranked in the class.

Like many other Australian school reporting formats a required comment plus an 1-4 rating (1- Excellent, 4-Needs Assistance) was required for each subject. This was supplemented by an A-above average standard, B-average and C-below average work effort. Thus it was possible for a child to receive a 4A - Needs assistance but excellent effort.

Although I was confident about describing my students learning, I did not want to classifying it in terms of a 1-4 as this could not convey what growth had occurred. However if I did away with the 1-4 rating what would I put in its place. How would I describe growth? Would it be in terms of change? How would I explain what has helped each student to develop? I needed to become more aware of my intuitive understandings i.e. 'How do I know what I know?'
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**Dallas**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: Kids Zone
- Week 2: 
  - National Geographic: Explore

**Lyn**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: Kid Power
- Week 2: 
  - National Geographic: Kid Rollie's Stories

**Kelly**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: Midnight Hour

**Allison**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Ben C**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Reno**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Ben G.**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Toni**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Renelle**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Mark**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Joseph**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Lane**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Aaron**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Dad**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**National Geographic**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Explore**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories

**Antigua**
- Week 1: 
  - National Geographic: The Magpie Stories
Key

F  - Fiction
NF - Non Fiction
P  - Poetry
PB - Picture Book
C.Y.O. - Choose Your Own Adventure
S.SF - Short Story Fiction (numerous stories in one book)
S  - indicates child is reading the same as previous day
■  - indicates child has completed text
■  - indicates child has completed text at home

A.N.Z.A.C. - Public Holiday
Assembly Practise - Class rehearsal for a performance to
the remaining classes - this occurs once a term i.e. every ten weeks. We prepare
an entertaining item - drama, dance or
educational in nature.

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APPENDIX C
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Indicates that the student completed the task. 2nd Draft indicates a draft completed after the first.
APPENDIX D
Circle the things that best describe what you do and think during Silent Reading.

WHAT I DO WHEN I'M READING?

* Able to choose a book and finish it
* Take a long time to choose a book
* Ask the teacher to help me choose a book
* Can read without taking notice of visitors and other interruptions
* Remember what I was reading yesterday when I am asked
* Choose the same type of book often
* Read and try not to disturb others by talking
* Read books that other people have read
* Will stop reading after two days if I don't like a book
* Read about three (3) books a week
* Get up in silent reading a few times to select different books
* Finish books quickly because I read them at home

* Have some difficulties choosing a book and finishing it
* Can usually choose a book that I like
* Rarely ask the teacher to help me with a selection
* Often find it hard to concentrate when there are interruptions
* Can usually remember what I was reading yesterday
* Like to read different types of books
* Find it hard not to talk to my neighbour during silent reading
* Like to make up my own mind about what to read
* Will stop reading a book after about one chapter if I don't like it
* Read about one book a week if it is long
* Don't get up often in silent reading to change my book
* Don't finish books quickly only read them here at school
* Ask my neighbour or teacher to help me when I get stuck on something
* Enjoy the books I read

* Ask my neighbour or teacher to help me with something I don’t understand
* Rarely ask my neighbour or teacher to help me with something I don’t understand

* Read a book only if it was suggested by the teacher or my friends
* Don’t always enjoy the books I read, only read because I have to read in silent reading

* After reading a long book that really took a lot of concentration I choose a book or a magazine that is easier to read
* Take notice what others say about books but make up my own mind in the end

* When I come to a word I haven’t seen before I read on past it and guess its meaning or don’t worry about it if what I’m reading still makes sense
* After finishing a long fiction book I usually start on another one straight away that is similar

* During the reading of a book I have to sometimes be encouraged to keep reading until I have finished
* When I come to a word or a phrase I haven’t seen before I spend some time working it out and if I can’t I stop reading and ask someone

* When choosing a book I like to find out from someone who has already read it if it’s a good book. If the other person didn’t like it - I don’t read it
* I don’t have to find out what a book is about from someone else because I read the blurb and make up my own mind

* Make a decision whether to read a book by how interesting the cover looks
* The cover of a book doesn’t make a big difference when I’m choosing a book

* I check to see how small the print is in the book before choosing it
* The size of the print isn’t as important as what the book is about when I am making a choice

* Like to tell others about exciting or interesting parts of the book after silent reading time
* Don’t worry about telling anyone about an interesting part of the book I’ve been reading
* Sometimes tell my mum or dad about a good book that I am reading
* Often check to see how much I have to read before I complete the book
* Sometimes I am disappointed when a book ends because I wanted to know more about it
* Prefer to read books that have some illustrations
* I don't mind being asked by the teacher to read a part of my book to her
* Stop every now and then to have a rest from reading during silent reading time
* Like to read along with the cassette because I don't have to stop for words I haven't seen before
* Prefers books, magazines, non-fiction and poetry books that can be finished in one or two days
* Forget where I was up to in my book the day before, sometimes read the same bit again
* Make predictions in my head about what is going to happen further on in the book. Think about it after I have stopped reading

* Usually don't talk about my books to my parents or the teacher
* Don't usually bother to check how much more I have to read before I complete the book
* Don't ever wish the story would go on. I am quite happy for the book to finish where the author decides
* Quite happy to read books with or without illustrations
* Would prefer not to read the book aloud to my teacher
* Don't like to stop reading during Silent Reading for a rest
* Like to read along with the cassette for entertainment
* Not concerned about having to finish quickly. Happy to take my time and enjoy a long book
* Remember what you were up to in your reading don't usually read the same part again
* Doesn't often make predictions about my silent reading book. Don't think much about it when reading time is finished
WRITING RESPONSES

Circle the things that best describe what you do and think during Silent Reading.

WHAT KIND OF A WRITER AM I?

* Can you usually choose a topic to write on when given a free choice?

* Usually find it easy to write once I've got started.

* Like to discuss my writing with a friend as I write.

* Worry about misspellings and this slows down my writing.

* Listen to others' suggestions in sharing time and when others edit and try to improve my piece.

* Find writing time with the whole class a bit scary because I worry about criticism.

* Writing is easy when I am giving my opinions or giving the reader some information.

* Good stories are long stories with chapters. They can take ages to write.

* Think about what would make a good story when I'm doing something else.

* Would rather not have to edit my writing.

* Like to edit other people's pieces.

* Have trouble thinking of a topic to write on in free choice writing.

* Ideas come slowly when I've begun to write, sometimes don't finish.

* Only share writing when I have to in editing and sharing times.

* Don't usually worry too much about spelling in the first draft.

* Listen to others in sharing and editing but don't often change the piece.

* Sometime sharing is embarrassing but I like it when others enjoy my writing and sometimes give me good ideas.

* Writing is easy when I am making up a story.

* Good stories can be short or long and are interesting if the description helps the reader get a picture in their head. And if it makes you laugh, cry or feel scared.

* Rarely think about what I'm writing except in writing time.

* Think that editing has to be done so others can read my writing without problems.

* Prefer not to edit other people's pieces.
* Discussing with just one friend is the best way for me to improve my writing

* Often ask teacher to help me choose a topic to write about

* In writing time I find that I write best if the classroom is very quiet

* Mostly I like to be able to talk during writing time so I can share and get help as I go

* Have trouble continuing my piece of writing from the day before. I forget what my ideas were and where I was up to in the piece

* Like to write about the same kind of thing, for example, adventure stories or about sailing

* Get ideas for stories from hearing other people's stories

* Often start a piece of writing with a lot of interest but get bored with it and I don't finish it

* Likes to finish writing quickly so I sometimes take my writing home

* Only write because I have to in our writing time

* Like to let a few people see my writing, and it doesn't matter if they are my friends, I still get comments that help or tell me they enjoyed it

* Rarely ask for teacher help in choosing a topic. Sometimes she helps without me asking for it

* I can write if there is talking or silence

* When I have been writing about a page or more then I like to talk or share

* Usually I can remember where I was up to in my story when I come to writing time the next day

* Can write about all different things. It doesn't have to be the same kind of story

* Enjoy others' stories but likes to make up my own mind about topics

* Usually finish the pieces of writing that I begin

* Don't take my writing home, only write here at school

* I am writing more often at home now, for example, letters and notes to my parents and friends and some stories
* Enjoy the writing that I do, like to read over pieces written at the beginning of the year

* During the writing of a piece, I have to be encouraged to keep going until I am finished

* Enjoy writing in research times

* I am proud of my writing when I have written about two or three pages

* Often tell my Mum or Dad about some piece I am writing

* Prefer to write poetry, letters and things that can be finished in one writing time

* Have a lot of trouble remembering the information I've written down in research and can't write much when asked to write without looking at my notes

* Get ideas and ways to write things and new words to use in my writing from the books that I have read

* When editing someone's piece of writing I notice these things:-

- when it doesn't make sense

- when there's a word that doesn't sound right in the sentence

- when something is spelt incorrectly

- when a new paragraph has to be used

- when talking marks are needed

- when the person has used an apostrophe incorrectly

(Tick those that you notice)

* Don't really enjoy writing and rarely look back over pieces from the beginning of the year

* Rarely have to be encouraged to complete a piece of writing

* Have some trouble knowing what to write in research time

* I am proud of my writing when it sounds good. Doesn't matter if it's long or short

* Rarely tell my Mum and Dad about my writing

* It doesn't really matter if a piece of writing takes one or more days in writing time

* Usually can remember the interesting facts that I discovered in my research and can write it down when asked to without looking at my notes

* Don't usually think about the books I have read when I am writing

* When editing someone's pieces of writing I have trouble noticing when these things are used incorrectly:-

- when it doesn't make sense

- when there is a word that doesn't sound right in a sentence

- when something is spelt incorrectly

- when a new paragraph has to be used

- when talking marks are needed

- when a person has used an apostrophe incorrectly