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Playing with grammar: A pedagogical heuristic for orientating to the language content of the Australian Curriculum: English

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Disciplines

Education | Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Abstract: In this article we introduce a heuristic for orientating to the language content of the Australian Curriculum: English. Our pedagogical heuristic, called 'Playing with Grammar', moves through three separate but interwoven stages: (i) an introduction to the learning experience, (ii) a focus on learning, and (iii) an application of new knowledge where students read and/or write with grammar in mind. We draw on aspects of Bernstein's sociological theories to consider the implications of keeping the content of the Language, Literature and Literacy strands together or apart. We also theorise different pedagogical approaches where teachers or learners control the sequence and pacing of content within the learning experience.

Introduction

We write from the viewpoint established through our expert knowledge base as experienced classroom teachers and educational researchers of language and literacy teaching and learning. We do not position ourselves as linguists or indeed as grammar experts. Instead, our focus is on teachers' pedagogic practices that are designed to support the development of knowledge about language as learners from approximately 4½ through to 15½ years bring skills, experiences and understandings to their interactions with texts. Our aim is to empower Foundation–Year 10 teachers of language and literacy by demystifying the process of teaching. In doing so, we seek to affirm teachers' existing pedagogic expertise and encourage them to make their own choices about the texts they use and the ways they use them. Our heuristic, which we've called 'Playing with Grammar', is made up of three separate but interwoven stages for engaging learners in discovering how language works for readers and writers of text. Heuristics, by definition, employ a practical method that works on rule-of-thumb characteristics. Heuristics do not prescribe a non-negotiable knowledge set or a teacher-proof sequence of activities.

This article is presented in four sections. The first section identifies grammar's contribution to the overarching Aims and Strands of the *Australian Curriculum: English* (hereafter AC:E) by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (hereafter ACARA). We hone in on the links across the four Aims and three Strands. The second section moves beyond the statement that the AC:E does not 'prescribe approaches to teaching' (ACARA, 2016, p. 6), instead considering the affordances of the General Capabilities for pedagogic practices. In the third section, Bernsteinian (1975, 2000) concepts from the sociology of education provide a language of description for our multiple orientations to

curriculum and pedagogical practices. The focus is on the inter-relationship of the three Strands and the different framings of pedagogical practice across the stages of the heuristic. In the fourth section, we explain our pedagogical heuristic in practical terms, then map this onto the Bernsteinian theory introduced earlier. Doing so provides a visual representation of the stages of our pedagogical heuristic.

The *Australian Curriculum: English*

The year 2012 heralded a new era for English Curriculum in Australia – the release of the inaugural AC:E. The AC:E is noted for its 'fairly radical' (Derewianka, 2012, p. 127) choice with the form and function of grammar used within the Language strand, and as we would argue, throughout the AC:E. Up until this point, centring an English curriculum on a theory of language had 'often been lacking' (Derewianka, 2012, p. 127) in the State and Territory curricula across Australia at varying times in what Harper and Rennie (2009, p. 25) refer to as the 'post-grammar years' of 1970s onwards.

The opening section of the AC:E outlines four overarching Aims for students studying within the disciplinary field of English. The four Aims ensure that Foundation–Year 10 students:

1. learn to listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts across a growing range of contexts with accuracy, fluency and purpose;
2. appreciate, enjoy and use the English language in all its variations and develop a sense of its richness and power to evoke feelings, convey information, form ideas, facilitate interaction with others, entertain, persuade and argue;
3. understand how Standard Australian English works in its spoken and written forms and in combination with nonlinguistic forms of communication to create meaning;
4. develop interest and skills in inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of texts, and develop an informed appreciation of literature (ACARA, 2016, p. 4).

This focus on the inner working of 'communication' in Aim 3 is not to deny the way grammar interacts with, informs and enhances the other three aims. Aim 3 provides the metalanguage for talking about how grammar works within language and across a 'growing range of contexts' (Aim 1) and for creating texts with 'accuracy' (Aim 1). Grammar knowledge provides the foundation for talking about how language serves different social functions such as to 'entertain, persuade and argue' (Aim 2) and to inquire 'into the aesthetic aspects of text' (Aim 4). To reinforce this connection, we are reminded of Halliday's (1978, p. 12) remark 'one can hardly take literature seriously without taking language seriously'.

Inherent in these four Aims are two positions for orientating to grammar: (i) the nativist position, which defines what is grammatical on the basis of 'language rules', and (ii) the environmentalist position, which defines what is grammatical by considering language-in-use as a resource for making meaning (Halliday, 1978, p. 17). The AC:E shows a commitment to both the nativist and environmentalist positions, as demonstrated in Table 1. As Halliday (1978, p. 18) contends, 'the two are not in competition; they are about different things'.

Table 1: Evidence of the nativist and environmentalist grammar positions in the AC:E (ACARA, 2016)

Evidence of nativist grammar position	Evidence of environmentalist grammar position
• accuracy (Aim 1) • fluency (Aim 1) • Standard Australian English (Aim 3)	• range of contexts (Aim 1) • purpose (Aim 1) • variations (Aim 2) • creating meaning (Aim 3) • inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of text (Aim 4)

The AC:E's focus on the environmentalist grammar position draws on Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL) (see Derewianka, 2012). We say 'draws on' as the knowledge about language that is covered in the AC:E does not adopt SFL theory in its complete form. For example, in the Year 3 Content Description ACELA 1482, learners need to 'understand that verbs represent different processes, for example, doing, thinking, saying, and relating …' (ACARA, 2016, p. 46). In SFL theory, a more delicate range of processes are listed (see, Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Tweaking is necessary, as SFL was never intended to be core content for learners aged 4½ to 15½ years. Relocating a disciplinary field from an adult context of use to school curricula is not uncommon. Bernstein (2000, p. 33) explains that the discourse of schooling 'selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute their own order'. This process of re-locating knowledge from the field of production and relocating it as pedagogic discourse is called recontextualisation (Bernstein, 2000). The AC:E thus recontextualises language knowledge, skills and

understandings from the field of linguistics as content for learners from Foundation–Year 10. As expected in a continuum, these skills are aggregated, potentially allowing learners to develop independent and powerful language knowledge throughout their schooling years. Interestingly, some sub-strands begin with the teaching of broad understandings about language and its function in the world and then narrows this focus, whilst other sub-strands begin with a narrower focus, which is then broadened. For example:

- in the Language Variation and Change sub-strand, in their Foundation year, learners are required to take on the broad understanding that the English language is just one of many in the world. This concept narrows throughout the years, with Year 6 learners studying specific regional dialects.
- in the Expressing and Developing Ideas sub-strand, in their Foundation year, learners focus on sentence level grammar, building knowledge about the individual components of a clause, and combining these in Year 10 into broader knowledge about a wide range of sentences and clause structures.

The four Aims are neither linear nor confined to year groupings, as explicated in the English across Foundation–Year 12 statements (ACARA, 2016, pp. 10–11). For example, in the Foundation–Year 2 grouping, students cover a range of modes of language communication for different 'contexts' (Aim 1) and 'for different purposes' including the 'wide range of experiences with language and texts' students bring with them to the school (Aim 2) as well as Standard Australian English, which serves to provide the 'foundation needed for continued learning' (Aim 3) 'through pleasurable and varied experiences of literature' and other texts (Aim 4) (ACARA, 2016, p. 10). The Years 3–6 grouping focuses on students practising, consolidating and extending what they have learnt in Foundation–Year 2 so 'they develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of grammar and language, and are increasingly able to articulate this knowledge' (ACARA, 2016, p. 10). A similar statement foregrounds the explanation of the Years 7–10 (ACARA, 2016, pp. 10–11) groupings.

To further reinforce the knowledge spiral through the years of schooling, the AC:E reiterates that 'learning in English is recursive and cumulative, and builds on concepts, skills and processes developed in earlier years' (2016, p. 6). The Content Descriptions have been written 'to ensure that learning is appropriately ordered and that unnecessary repetition is avoided' (ACARA, 2016, p. 6). However, a concept or skill introduced at one year level may be revisited, strengthened and extended at later year levels as needed. In their analysis of an earlier version of the AC:E, Macken-Horarik, Love and Unsworth (2011, p. 17) concluded that 'language resources don't just become more complex and abstract as students progress through the years', but that the resources introduced in the earliest years 'pattern and co-pattern at all levels of choice in distinctive ways'. Such sentiments align with Halliday's (1978) claim of a separation between the language of childhood (which includes the adolescent years), and the language of adulthood. Halliday (1978, p. 22) refused to attribute the transition to a developmental sequence, stating 'to what extent the individual child traces the evolutionary path in moving from one to the other' as 'immaterial'. He explains the transition as a route that reflects the circumstances of an individual's history and experience.

Another feature of the AC:E is that three interrelated strands support students' growing understanding and skills to achieve the four Aims. The three strands that focus on developing students' knowledge, understanding and skills in listening, reading, viewing, speaking and writing are:

- the 'language strand: knowing about the English language';
- the 'literature strand: understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature'; and
- the 'literacy strand: expanding the repertoire of English usage' (ACARA, 2016, p. 5).

Multiple Content Descriptions are provided for each sub-strand at each year level from Foundation–Year 10 inclusive. However, the Content Descriptions 'do not prescribe approaches to teaching' (ACARA. 2016, p. 6). As Love and Humphrey (2012, p. 174) observe, 'while this new Curriculum offers enormous opportunities, it also carries considerable challenges for teachers about how to work with language as a system of structural and meaning-making choices'. Teachers need 'ways in' to working with the relationship between systems that describe language in all its potential (Macken-Horarik, et al., 2011, p. 13). We recognise this challenge, especially for teachers (ourselves included) who are neither linguists nor grammarians. In the following section we consider the General Capabilities of the AC:E and how these ideas contribute to our pedagogical practice.

Potential Pedagogical Practices in the *Australian Curriculum: English*

Included in the AC:E are seven General Capabilities that provide some guidance for pedagogical practice for the Content Descriptions. For example, the general capability of Critical and Creative Thinking talks about subject English using practices of '**discussion**', 'the close **analysis** of texts', '**interacting** with others' and students '**justify[ing]** a point of view and **respond[ing]** to the views of others' (ACARA, 2016, p. 14, our emphasis). In the General Capability of Ethical Understanding students '**apply** the skills of reasoning, empathy and imagination, **consider** and **make judgments** about actions and motives, and **speculate** on how life experiences affect and influence people's decision making and whether various positions held are reasonable' (ACARA, 2016, p. 15, our emphasis). The General Capability of Personal and Social Capability talks about pedagogical practice within the disciplinary field of English as students engage in '**close reading** and **discussion** of texts' and '**develop connections** and **empathy** with characters in different social contexts' (ACARA, 2016, p. 15, our emphasis). The General Capability of Intercultural Understanding specifically references the disciplinary field of subject English where students **interpret** and **analyse** 'authors' ideas and positions in a range of texts in English and in translation to English' and learn 'to **question** stated and unstated cultural beliefs and assumptions, and issues of intercultural meaning' (ACARA, 2016, p. 15, our emphasis).

Taken together, the General Capabilities suggest something other than teacher as the sage on the stage, grammar content as only the nativist position, or indeed grammar instruction to regulate the behaviour of the mass population. This is the premise that influenced the development of our pedagogical heuristic of 'Playing with Grammar'. Our heuristic also has its genesis in a range of research and ideologies circulating in the 1970s and 1980s that adopted a Durkheimian (see Thompson, 1982/2000) perspective of considering the individual as a social and intelligent organism who functions within a situated context. In particular, we are influenced by Halliday's (1978) 'Language as a Social Semiotic', Vygotsky's (1978) cultural-historical approach to language and play, Schwartz's (1983a) and Rietz's (1983) separate descriptions of 'Language Play' and Heath's (1983) seminal ethnography 'Way with Words' and her three decade long linguistic study published as 'Words at Work and Play' (2012).

Halliday (1978) posited that the 1970s is marked by a resurgence of the theme of 'language and social man[sic]', an acknowledgement that an individual exists within social environments where language is the main channel through which patterns of thoughts, actions, beliefs and values are transmitted. This perspective acknowledges language as a contextualised social practice. Halliday elaborated that this transmission of social roles of combinable kinds does not happen so much by overt instruction, but implicitly 'through the accumulated experience of numerous small events, insignificant in themselves', in which individual behaviour is 'guided and controlled' in specific contexts of use in such a way that the individual uses language to establish, develop and maintain personal relationships (1978, p. 9). This functional view hones in on what an individual can do with language by understanding the internal organisation and patterning of language. Important for our discussion here, Halliday (1978, p. 18) insists such a position is applicable 'at any stage in the life of the individual, up to and including adulthood'.

We acknowledge there is no one definition of play that encompasses all the views, perceptions, experiences and expectations it promotes. That is because play is complex, even though it is 'almost synonymous' with childhood (Schwartz, 1983a, p. 81). We see play as both reproductive and generative to literacy learning. We therefore see play as an important force through which to facilitate literacy development (Kervin & Verenikina, forthcoming). Halliday (1978), Schwartz (1983a), Rietz (1983) and Heath (1983, 2012) all provide detailed accounts of the way children of varying ages play with language – its structure, its sound, its meaning and its communicative conventions. Much of this play occurs with others in supported contexts where interactions and resources are paramount. Schwartz (1983a, p. 81, emphasis in original) contends that:

> language play permits children to be angry and obstreperous; it lets them defy authority and test reality. And it does all this *safely* precisely because it is a *play* behaviour, a simulation of what is real. In addition, language play provides a free, unselfconscious way in which the child explores, hypothesises, tests, verifies, and practices with language … without coercion.

Through play an individual is able to explore and demonstrate their appropriations of language and literacy. In taking this approach, we acknowledge the significance of diverse backgrounds and the richness of the literacy knowledge learners (and teachers) bring

to educational contexts. To appropriate is more than just learning to read and write through mastery of a symbol system and associated rules; language knowledge empowers the learner to be an active member of the literate community (Rowsell & Harwood, 2015). Through appropriation, a language user activates cognitive, social and motivational dimensions. Play provides opportunities to engage with social interactions that are crucial to learn the appropriations of context-bound important, cultural practices (Baker, Afflerbach & Reinking, 1996). Literacy development occurs as learners demonstrate greater mastery of language as a cultural tool, and apply their knowledge in appropriate ways.

Therefore, we conceive of play as an approach that creates many opportunities for sharing oral and written language that capitalises upon each learner's 'locquaciousness and humour… [where] dialogue between teacher and children and among children is encouraged, … [where] children and teacher laugh easily and often, … [where] incongruity and diversity are enjoyed… imaginative solutions to problems are sought [and] invention and experiment are prized' (Schwartz, 1983a, p. 87). This pedagogy of play is in contrast to didactic processes that breed tension and shun difference. We argue that to support language development educators need to embrace language learning as a social process where the quality of interaction with more knowledgeable language users (Vygotsky, 1978) is critical. A focus on play provides individuals with opportunities to demonstrate and practise what they know about language in authentic situations with authentic texts while also being challenged to move to new understandings as they participate in quality literacy learning opportunities.

In the next section, we turn to theory to provide the descriptive lens for our choices around the separation or combining of the curriculum strands and choices in the control of pedagogical practices.

Theory – Bernstein's Sociology of Knowledge and Pedagogy

Bernstein's (1975, 2000) sociology of knowledge and pedagogy provides a useful lens for thinking about the choices teachers have for (i) connecting the grammar content from the Language strand to the Literature and Literacy strands, and (ii) structuring the pedagogical relationship between teachers and learners. Specifically, Bernstein's (1975, 2000) concepts of 'classification' and 'framing' are introduced.

Theoretically, classification refers to the strength or weakness of the boundaries that exist between knowledge contents (Bernstein, 1975, 2000). Classification does not distinguish what is classified; rather, classification refers to the insulation separating or combining the categories. The categories that interest us are the connections between the grammar content from the Language strand and the content of the Literature and Literacy strands. When there is little that links these strands together, the categories are said to be sharply distinguished from each other and are referred as having 'stronger classification', symbolically represented as C+. With C+, each strand has its own distinctive specialisation or what Bernstein (2000, p. 7) calls 'its unique identity, its unique voice, its own specialised rules of internal relations'. Where the classification of the strands is weaker, there are less specialised discourses, less specialised identities and less specialised voices. When weaker classifications are present, symbolically presented as C–, the rule is, according to Bernstein (2000, p. 11) 'things must be brought together'. From this axiom, classification provides a measure, in the figurative sense, of the degree of specialisation of forms of knowledge (see Dowling, 1998). Stronger and weaker classification of the relationship between the grammar content of the Language strand and the content of the Literature and Literacy Strands can be located along a continuum, as per Diagram 1.
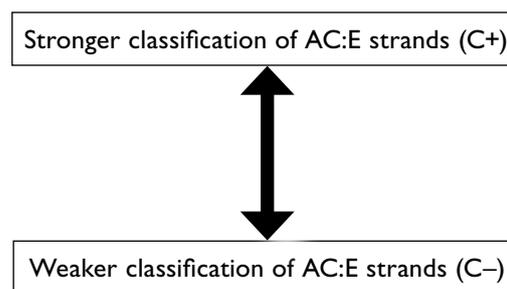

Stronger classification of AC:E strands (C+)

Weaker classification of AC:E strands (C–)

Diagram 1: Continuum of classification of curriculum content from C+ to C–

A classificatory system can only reproduce itself through relations of control. Bernstein (1975, 2000) explains relations of control via the theoretical concept of framing. Framing refers to the locus of control over the selection of the communication: its sequencing (what comes first, what comes second); its pacing (the rate of expected acquisition); the criteria; and the control over the social base which makes transmission possible (Bernstein, 2000). In school contexts, framing

is about who controls the intersubjective relations of teachers and learners that 'frame' and mediate the curriculum content knowledge. Framing therefore is the realisation of the 'form of control which regulates and legitimises communication in pedagogical relations: the nature of the talk and the kinds of [pedagogic] spaces constructed' (Bernstein, 2000, p. 12). In this way framing gives rise to relations of how valid curriculum content knowledge is transmitted by teachers and acquired by learners via pedagogic acts.

Like classification, framing is also described by its strength or weakness. Notions of stronger and weaker framing are also relational. The strength of framing refers to the range of options available to teachers and learners for the structuring the transmission and acquisition of knowledge. Stronger framing, symbolically represented as F+, occurs when the teacher appears to have more control over the selection, sequencing, pacing, criteria and social relations within pedagogic spaces. In F+ pedagogies learners are accorded very few options. Weaker framing, symbolically represented as F–, is generally evident via more learner-centred pedagogy. For example, learners may assert what appears to be more overtly agentive speaking positions, epistemic authority and interactional strategies. In this practice, the learner seems to have more control over the pedagogical relationship, but in reality, learner control is never absolute. Learners still have to work within an expected/accepted pedagogical frame. Stronger and weaker framing can be located along a continuum, as per Diagram 2.
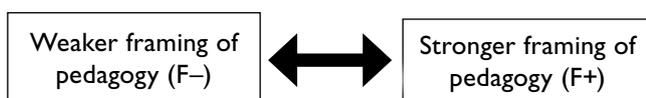

Diagram 3: Four possible orientations to pedagogic codes: intersecting the classification of AC:E strands with pedagogical framing

Diagram 2: Continuum of pedagogical framing from F– to F+

Classification and framing together translate into a pedagogic code that regulates the legitimate communication of 'what' is taught and 'how' it is taught. When the two continua of classification and framing, each with stronger or weaker representations, are intersected, four possible orientations to pedagogic codes are possible (see Diagram 3).

Diagram 3 displays the four possible orientations to pedagogic codes, with the top left hand quadrant being stronger classification (C+) of the AC:E strands within weaker framing (F–) of pedagogical practice. The top right hand quadrant is stronger classification
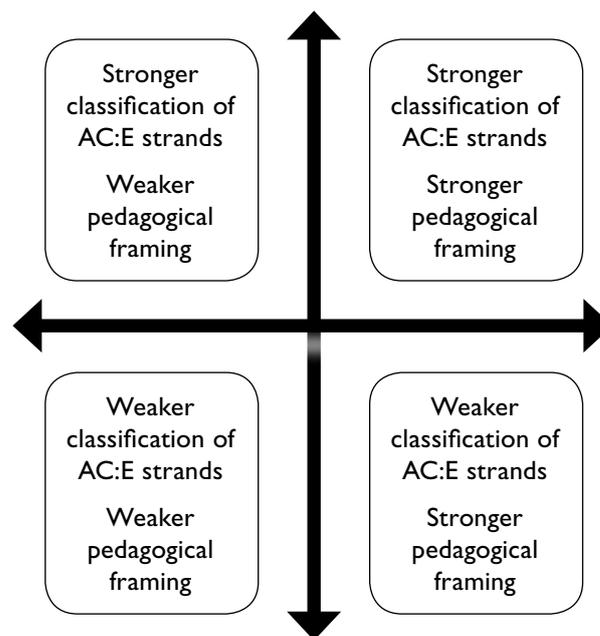
(C+) of the AC:E strands within stronger framing (F+) of pedagogical practice. The bottom left hand quadrant is weaker classification (C–) of the AC:E strands within weaker framing (F–) of pedagogical practice. The bottom right hand quadrant is weaker classification (C–) of the AC:E strands within stronger framing (F+) of pedagogical practice. Each orientation to the pedagogic code of knowledge and social relations produces its own implications for teachers and learners.

To show how this theory can be used to describe choices for the classification of the AC:E strands and framing of pedagogical practice, we consider an account of grammar teaching. In this account, Derewianka (2012, p. 143) describes the traditional way grammar teaching has often been taught: 'through exercises from a textbook or 'ditto sheets' at the level of individual sentences and often using inauthentic language designed simply to teach a grammatical point'. Theoretically speaking, Derewianka's (2012) account evidences stronger classification (C+) between the fields for knowing about the English language and the other AC:E strands of Literature and Literacy as well as stronger framing (F+) of pedagogical practice as the teacher (or the text book) seems to control the selection, sequencing, pacing, criteria and social relations within pedagogic spaces. A visual representation of this orientation to pedagogic code is shown by the grey quadrant in Diagram 4.
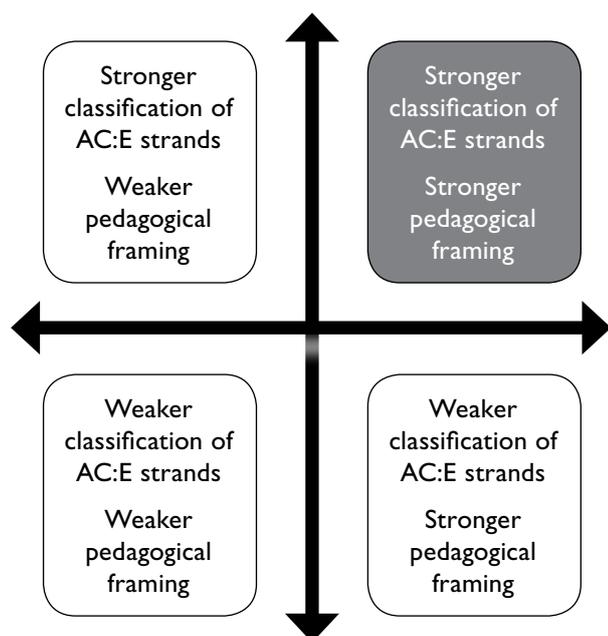
Diagram 4: Traditional grammar lessons show orientation to C+ of AC:E strands and F+ pedagogy

This orientation to pedagogic code privileges the nativist position which defines what is grammatical on the basis of 'language rules' (Halliday, 1978), what Macken-Horarik, et al., (2011, p. 20) refer to as a 'grammatics of deficit'. Whilst this orientation of C+ of the AC:E strands and F+ of pedagogy provides clear right and wrong answers, learners become passive receivers of knowledge. Given the interrelated nature of the three strands of Language, Literature and Literacy in the AC:E we 'should, ideally, see the end of the discrete, unconnected and often discredited grammar programs of times past' (French, 2012, p. 206). Our interest is in developing what Macken-Horarik, et al. (2011, p. 20) refer to as a 'grammatics of potential', where the nativist and environmentalist positions (Halliday, 1978) are both privileged and where what is grammatical considers language-in-use as a resource for making meaning. Herein lies the challenge. Teachers need 'ways in' to working with the relationship between systems that describe language in all its potential, and specific choices from these systems that co-pattern in particular ways with particular texts (Macken-Horarik, et al., 2011). As Love and Humphrey (2012, p. 174) observe, 'while this new Curriculum offers enormous opportunities, it also carries considerable challenges for teachers about how to work with language as a system of structural and meaning-making choices'.

In the section that follows, we explain the logic of text selection and then introduce each of the three interrelated stages of our pedagogical heuristic. We also describe each stage via the theoretical orientations

noted above so the general rule-of-thumb principles of our heuristic are clarified.

Pedagogical heuristic: 'Playing with Grammar'

By way of explanation, our pedagogical heuristic has evolved out of reflections on our teaching practices. We've published some demonstration lessons for Foundation–Year 2 as Exley and Kervin (2013) and for Year 3–Year 6 as Exley, Kervin and Mantei (2015). A more descriptive account of this heuristic in practice is provided in Exley and Dooley (2015).

Before the learning experience begins, a stimulus text needs to be selected. In the demonstration lessons we've already published, we've used community signs, poems, full length picture books containing a single sentence, single pages from a longer picture book, or single paragraphs from a chapter book. It might be that a learner selects a text on the basis of a need to find out more about something that has come up in their lives (Rudman, 1983). It might be that a teacher has identified a text on the basis of its possibilities for teaching about language in use. The stimulus text might be an authentic text from the home or community of a learner. Or the stimulus text might be a piece of literature. We like using high quality children's literature because we appreciate how children's book authors sweat over every single word choice. We also know that playful language is not reserved for the young learner. Our fundamental premise is that the stimulus text uses language that is real and with purpose. The stimulus text should also be relatively brief; the stimulus text must be open to multiple explorations within a learning experience.

Stage 1: An introduction to the learning experience

Stage 1 of our pedagogical heuristic is called 'An introduction to the learning experience'. In terms of the learning experience, we resist 'front-loading' grammatical features for students to incorporate uncritically into their texts. We are influenced by the empirical evidence from Nystrand, Gamoran and Carbonaro (1998), Wray, Medwell, Fox and Poulson (2000), Myhill (2005) and Exley and Dooley (2015) who document the successful outcomes of learning experiences where teachers consciously focus on language in context. In our opening learning experience, the stimulus text is explored, the situations of production and consumption are considered and multiple connections are made to the disparate life worlds of the learners. We also subscribe to Schwartz's (1983b, p. 39) assertion that

the search for meaning in language will be enhanced 'if language is experienced as a whole entity, rather than as discrete units'. As Halliday (1978, pp. 28–29) notes, 'any account of language which fails to build in the situation as an essential ingredient is likely to be artificial and unrewarding'. In Stage 1, the teacher's role can be subtle and indirect or ramped up if more scaffolding is required for learner engagement; the goal is to ensure that this introduction contains enough of what is familiar to enable the learner 'to bridge the discontinuity of what is new to what is old' (Schwartz, 1983b, p. 40). As we recall our own practices in classrooms, we note our preference for not rushing this introduction. If we are to remain committed to the need for learners to experience, mull over and revoice their thinking at a later stage (e.g. the next day), it seems important for this introduction to be separate from Stage 2.

Theoretically, this introduction stage demonstrates a C– of the AC:E strands and a F– of pedagogical framing. Diagram 5 represents this orientation to classification of curriculum knowledge and the framing of pedagogical practice in the grey quadrant.
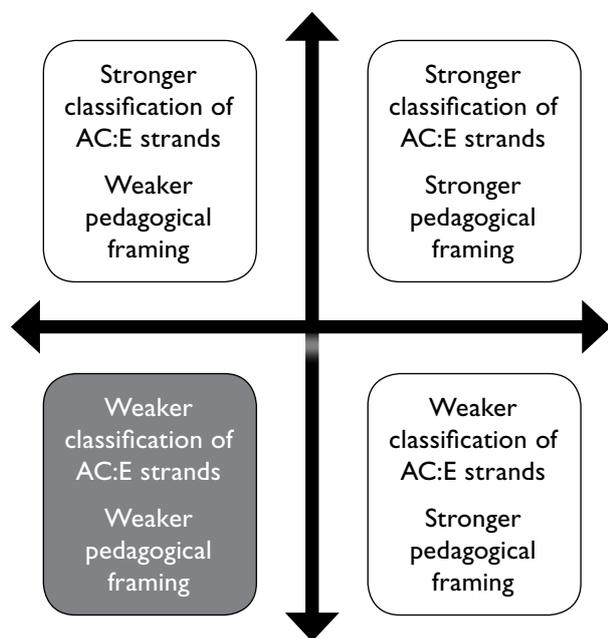

Diagram 5: Introduction to learning experience shows orientation to C– of AC:E strands and F– pedagogy

Stage 2: A focus on learning

Following Rietz (1983, p. 102), our thoughts are that the stimulus text 'acts primarily as a tool for the development of access to language – it does not teach about language'. It is thus necessary for the pedagogic practice to shift gears. Stage 2, 'A focus on learning', considers the language patterns within the stimulus text. Our preference is for an 'open' pedagogic relationship between teacher and learner and learners and learners 'where reasons for contents, competences, and procedures are explained and discussed' (Morais & Neves, 2001, p. 214; see also Morais & Neves, 2016). We conceive of this open pedagogic relationship as relatively liberal and learner-centred with the teacher picking and choosing the points in time to provide clarity and overt instruction as is required.

We see two major benefits in instituting an open pedagogic relationship. An open pedagogic relationship permits learners' considerable tacit grammar knowledge, acquired through their years of experience as effective language users, to be activated (Myhill, 2005). Doing so respects learners as the capable language users they are. An open pedagogical relationship also permits an explicit metalanguage to be 'discovered', shared and reflected upon by learners and teachers together. We resist offering a schedule of teacher prompts. Instead, we suggest teachers actively pull together the points of discussion from Stage 1 by encouraging the learners to articulate their tacit grammar knowledge whilst also guiding them to 'discover' how language works to make meaning. Doing so constructs language as a field of inquiry rather than a finite set of understandings. Doing so also capitalises upon the learners' innate way of thinking about language as a search for meaning within a particular context of use. Aside from developing a learner's internalised metalinguistic awareness, the teacher's role is also to develop a learner's explicit metalinguistic vocabulary as a resource that is 'more cognitively accessible for reflection and decision-making' (Myhill, 2005, p. 89).

Theoretically, the constructivist approaches outlined in Stage 2 orientate towards a C– of the AC:E strands and a F+ of pedagogical framing. Diagram 6 represents this orientation to classification of curriculum knowledge and the framing of pedagogical practice in the grey quadrant.

The shift between Stages 1 and 2 concern the strengthening of the pedagogical framing. Stage 2 places much greater demands on teachers' knowledge of content within a stronger pedagogical frame. Shulman (1986) would call this teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, or PCK. As its name would suggest, PCK is the amalgam of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. It is the knowledge base upon which teachers draw as they transform their content knowledge into content of instruction. Shulman (1986,
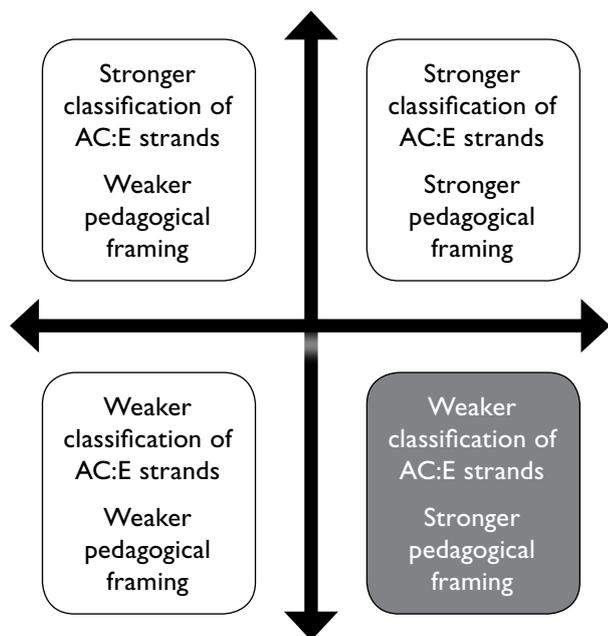
Stronger classification of AC:E strands Weaker pedagogical framing	Stronger classification of AC:E strands Stronger pedagogical framing
Weaker classification of AC:E strands Weaker pedagogical framing	Weaker classification of AC:E strands Stronger pedagogical framing

Diagram 6: Focus of teaching shows orientation to C– of AC:E strands and F+ pedagogy

p. 8) described PCK as the knowledge base that teachers draw upon to 'decide what to teach, how to represent it, how to question students about it and how to deal with problems of misunderstanding'. To enact Stage 2 effectively, as represented in Diagram 6, teachers need a deep and wide pedagogical content knowledge base to be able to respond to learners' misunderstandings or questions or 'to react sensitively to any grammatical issue that may arise unexpectedly' (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005, p. 21). We don't make light of this point. As Exley and Richard-Bossez (2013) found, misjudging Stage 2 pedagogies has serious implications for different sorts of learners.

Stage 3: An application of new knowledge where students read and write with grammar in mind

The explicit metalinguistic vocabulary from Stage 2 provides the resources for Stage 3, 'An application of new knowledge where students read and write with grammar in mind'. Stage 3 is based on the premise that the opportunity to play with language in all of its forms, to manipulate it playfully, 'will continue to enhance the child's mastery of literacy' (Schwartz, 1983b, p. 40). We've been deliberate with our choice of language here, activating learners with the verb 'play' and adverb 'playfully' to ensure our description of Stage 3 is not being misconstrued as a return to traditional neo-conservative grammar lessons. As with Stages 1 and 2, we advocate for the space and time for learners to make mistakes, and to trust in their abilities to review

and revise their thinking to enhance their reading and writing of text (see Schwartz, 1983b; Heath, 2012). The concept of application is an important one. Stage 3 requires learners to capitalise upon the metalinguistic awareness and metalinguistic terminology borne out of Stage 2 to identify and 'use the patterns of language choices from successful writers' (see Macken-Horarik, et al., 2011) to enhance their reading (Exley & Cottrell, 2012) and writing of text (Myhill, 2005).

Theoretically, Stage 3 returns to a C– of the AC:E strands and a F– of pedagogical framing. Diagram 7 represents this orientation to classification of curriculum knowledge and the framing of pedagogical practice in the grey quadrant. The point of difference between Stage 1 and Stage 3 is the lesson content is now about reading and writing with grammar in mind. The teacher's role is less dominant than in Stage 2, but no more distant. Issues will arise if progressivist pedagogies are adopted that limit Stage 3 to learners' own reference points (see Exley & Richard-Bossez, 2013). The teacher is still on hand, physically, emotionally and intellectually, should individual learners wish to continue discussions from Stages 1 or 2. The teacher also needs to have a formative or summative mechanism to ensure learning has progressed and that learners are satisfied that learning has progressed.
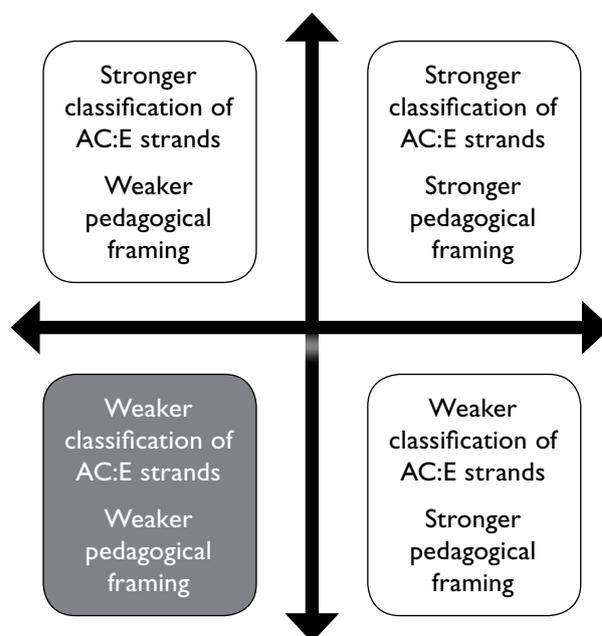
Stronger classification of AC:E strands Weaker pedagogical framing	Stronger classification of AC:E strands Stronger pedagogical framing
Weaker classification of AC:E strands Weaker pedagogical framing	Weaker classification of AC:E strands Stronger pedagogical framing

Diagram 7: Application of new knowledge shows orientation to C– of AC:E strands and F– pedagogy

Concluding Discussion

In contrast to the decontextualised approach to teaching grammar recounted by Derewianka (2012) in an earlier section of this article, our 'Playing with Grammar'

heuristic ensures a strong focus on the three strands of the AC:E working together. In our heuristic, knowledge about the English language (Language Strand) works with 'understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature' (Literature Strand) to expand the 'repertoire of English usage' (Literacy Strand) (ACARA, 2016, p. 5). The relationship between grammatical concepts and meaning is foregrounded throughout in positive contextualised ways rather than tacked on as an application at the end. Our approach is not dissimilar to what Australian teachers have come to value themselves. As one Year 9 teacher recounted:

> I do not teach my students about grammar that is irrelevant to what I'm teaching e.g. one off lessons about adverbials from a text book. I do however teach it explicitly but as long as it is connected to the writing I am asking my students to do at the time (Love, Macken-Horarik & Horarik, 2015, p. 178).

Changes through the three stages centre on movement from F– pedagogies (Stage 1) to F+ pedagogies (Stage 2) and back to F– pedagogies (Stage 3). This movement, called 'weaving' (Cazden, 2006; Kwek, 2012; Exley & Richard-Bossez, 2013), marks out observable relations of pedagogical practice. This weaving allows an immersion in experience (Stage 1) that is more inclusive of learner difference, whilst allowing learners to discover and build their own knowledge from contexts of language use that they understand (Stage 2) and then use this knowledge in their reading and writing practices (Stage 3). Put another way the pedagogy moves from a semi-progressivist orientation (Stage 1), to semi-traditional orientations (Stage 2) and back to semi-progressivist orientations (Stage 3). In this heuristic, learners meet texts, make meaning from texts, interrogate texts and use texts to better understand how to make meaning as readers or writers of texts.

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