INFLUENCES ON TEACHERS' JUDGEMENTS OF
STUDENTS' LITERACY DEVELOPMENT
IN A VICTORIAN CONTEXT

submitted by


A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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AUGUST 1998
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis presented by me for another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

This doctoral research has been conducted with the assistance of an Australian Postgraduate Award from the Commonwealth Government of Australia through the University Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

All research procedures reported in the thesis have been approved by the RMIT Faculty of Education Higher Degrees Standing Committee (1997 - Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services), the RMIT University Higher Degrees Committee, the RMIT Faculty of Education Human Research Ethics Sub-committee (1997 - Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services) and the RMIT University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Signed: Heather Fehring

Date: 1st August 1998
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although working on a thesis is a long lonely affair it is never a solo effort. I would like to acknowledge those who made this accomplishment possible and express my gratitude.

First, I would like to thank the teachers in this research, Alexandra, Veronica and Georgina,* for their time, professional trust, assistance and most importantly friendship. I would also like to thank the principals of the case study schools, Mary, Colleen and Michael,* for their collegiate assistance with my research. In addition, I would like to thank the students in the three classes I worked in for their patience and insightful comments in relation to literacy assessment, evaluation and reporting.

To my supervisors Dr. Pam Green and Dr. Ray Adams and my external consultant Dr. John Pollock goes my most grateful appreciation for their conceptual guidance, insightful critiques, considered opinions and much needed encouragement and faith.

To my family Michael, Alexandra and Georgina thank you is not enough. During the long hard years of study, researching, drafting and redrafting, your constant support, patience, companionship and understanding were always with me.

To the many people who assisted me along the way, Helen Ericson, Janine Phillips, my colleagues and mentors Garth Brown, Gloria Latham, Maureen Morriss and Valerie Thomas, goes my sincere gratitude. Each supported me in different ways, but each was indispensable to the final production of this work.

* participants' pseudonyms
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SUMMARY

The research presented in this thesis investigates the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development in a Victorian (Australian) context. By establishing the study within the paradigm known as constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), using constructivist (naturalistic) inquiry and qualitative methods of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), the study describes through constructive, interpretive analysis the influences on teachers' decision making processes. By utilising the strengths of ethnographic participant and non-participant observation (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), purposefully selecting case study school sites and participating teachers (Patton, 1990), and using the teachers' voice the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development have been investigated through inductive analysis.

The literature review examines the diversity in the conceptualisation of the concept literacy, describes three of the major views regarding the historical and current theoretical perspectives underpinning English language learning, and presents an analysis of current literacy learning continua. The review focuses the study on a significant gap in the information pertaining to influences on teachers' decision making processes. The research investigates the complexities of teachers' decision making processes in the formation of literacy judgements.

The data collection involved three school sites in metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. The three case studies centred on three main teachers. To facilitate the triangulation of information additional data sources were used: key informant interviews; curriculum and policy documents and classroom and student artefacts.

Seven spheres of influence emerged from the data in this study. These spheres are identified as internalised reflective knowledge, assessment strategy selection, external considerations, dissemination, peer power, standards and macro political context. Recommendations for enhancing educational practice flow from the thesis; they have most relevance to teachers and principals in the field, education policy makers, and to tertiary educators involved in educational change. This study augments the research pertaining to literacy assessment and reporting practices and to the understanding of influences on teachers' judgemental processes.
CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Focus

This thesis explores the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development in a Victorian context. The research was undertaken within three primary school settings. The three case study sites are located in metropolitan Melbourne in Victoria, Australia. The investigation provides documentation of the explicit and implicit influences on the decision making processes of three teachers regarding their literacy judgements.

This study sets out to achieve the following research objectives:

- to investigate the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development in a Victorian context thus addressing the main research question: what are the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development?

- to describe and interpret the findings that influence the teachers' judgements of students' literacy development from the perspective of three teachers, in three primary classrooms in Victoria, Australia.

1.2. The Significance of the Study

1.2.1. Political Background

The quest for knowledge in the area of literacy and literacy related issues is the very reason why this study is needed. Examining the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development involves the questions of what literacy is, what influences teachers' literacy judgements, and how each impacts on the other.

The current thesis spans a time of rapid changes in curriculum, assessment, evaluation and reporting in education in Victoria, Australia. Victorian schools, in a matter of seven years, 1992 to 1998, have gone from school based curriculum development to what is tantamount to compulsory centrally determined outcome-based curriculum. Understanding the broader political and curriculum changes in Australia leading up to, and during this research study, provide a valuable insight into the Victorian context.
The political context in Victoria has been influenced by the following events:

i) From 1982 to 1992 there was a State Labor Government. This government had an educational policy guided by principles such as:
   - school based decision making
   - parental involvement in decision making at the school level
   - access and success for all students
   - multicultural considerations in educational planning

The educational policy was stated explicitly in a published document called *Ministerial Policy No. 6. (Minister of Education, Victoria, 1984)*. During this period schools in Victoria were provided with curriculum documents called *Frameworks* (Ministry of Education [Schools Division], Victoria, 1988; Ministry of Education, Victoria, 1988) which covered curriculum from Preparatory Year to Year 10. These curriculum documents dealt with the major subject or discipline areas and provided a general framework for schools to use when planning their internal school based curriculum policies and procedures. In the 1980s there was a de-emphasis on the transmission-oriented view of pedagogy, curriculum delivery and teaching and learning practices. The focus was on collaborative construction and negotiated curriculum at all levels of schooling. Rather than seeing learning as a mechanistic process of breaking knowledge into smaller pieces for students to acquire sequentially, learning became conceptualised as a constructivist process of creating meaning holistically in a social context.

ii) In the early 1990s a Liberal Political party won office at both the Federal and State levels of Parliament. A Liberal Party took office at the Victorian State level in 1992 and at the Federal level in March 1996. The incoming conservative governments had different ideological perspectives to the outgoing Labor governments.

iii) An economic rationalist approach has guided the economy of Victoria for seven years (1992 - 1998). Major cutbacks in all public sectors have occurred. For the education sector this has resulted in a loss of 8,000 teacher jobs; the introduction of contract teachers; the introduction of principal bonus payments; and the closing down of a number of schools. In the 1990s curriculum delivery for the years Preparatory to Year 10, in the eight key learning areas (English, mathematics, science, languages other than English - LOTE, technology, health and physical education, arts, studies of society and environment) has been driven by documents entitled *Curriculum and Standards Framework* (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995). The introduction of statewide testing in English and mathematics began in 1995 in primary schooling with the Learning Assessment Project (LAP). In 1997 this was extended to the testing of English and mathematics in Years 7
and 9. The project named the Victorian Student Achievement Monitor (VSAM) is to be piloted in 1998 and will become compulsory in 1999. Until May 1998 there has been no educational policy document publicly released from a government authority to equate to the previous Labor Party Ministerial Policy No. 6 (Minister of Education, Victoria, 1984, 1985).

iv) The influence of computer technology is making a significant impact on education in Victoria. The delivery of curriculum is changing rapidly. The notion of bureaucratic centralised data collection in relation to assessment and reporting is affecting significantly teachers' daily work. In Victoria teachers are required to grade their students on a 4 point scale (established, consolidating, beginning, not apparent) using the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* (CSF) (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995) and report this data at two levels of bureaucracy. First, by way of the principals' annual reports using the CASES (Computerised Administrative System Environment for Schools Version 1.7) computer software program and CIMS (CASES Management Information System, Version 2). Secondly, at the classroom level using the computer program called KIDMAP (Executive Memorandum No. 96/021, 24th June 1996, Directorate School Education, Victoria. Refer to Appendix U). A number of writers have already commented that the notion that increasing the scientific and managerial efficiency of classrooms and schools will automatically improve students' learning lacks a deep understanding about the complexity of the learning process (Alexander, Schallert & Hare, 1991; Eisner, 1993b).

The educational climate in Victorian schools can best be described as one of conservatism. There has been a shift away from the focus on community based education programmes to those which are focussed on the attainment of learning outcomes (Hannan & Ashenden, 1996; Spady, 1993).

The change in language referring to education is also interesting. Schools have become businesses, education is delivered, principals are managers, while students and families are clients. The economic and socio-political context has an emphasis on accountability to be achieved through decentralisation and testing programmes at the state and national levels (Richardson, 1995). Such changes are not new to education. Historical analysts of educational change are quick to point out the relationships between economic hardship and economic rationalism, and the implication that falling standards of literacy are somehow responsible (Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1994a, 1994b).
1.2.2. **Rationale**

If teachers base their practices upon their beliefs at any given point in time then they need to recognise how their beliefs influence decisions about what and how they teach. Documenting such influences is an important step in understanding the judgement making process and in turn improving such processes. By documenting teachers' articulation of the influences, based on constructivist inquiry and individual and collective case study analyses, the research highlights the complexity of the decision making process. The need for research of this nature is evident from the lack of literature connecting literacy and teacher judgement. Ascertaining the influences on teacher judgement can only enhance our understanding of issues related to credibility, dependability and accountability.

This research is very timely - the massive technological changes that are occurring in communication networks are challenging us to reconceptualise our notions of literacies and practice. Adapting to the complex interconnections created by the hypertext of technological writing, reading and thinking will change our teaching and learning strategies. However, the question arises: is such development possibly putting in jeopardy the human interaction component, historically considered essential in the cognitive development of young students?

In the Foreword to *Evaluating Literacy: A Perspective For Change* (1991) Garth Boomer wrote:

> Australian teachers for literacy must fight to retain both their preeminence and their rights as the best judges of how well their students are doing. Any schemes that are devised for national reporting on literacy achievements must be grounded in and informed by the rich judgements of the teachers who see children at work every day. (Anthony, Johnson, Mickelson & Freece, 1991, p. v1)

This statement raises many questions about what influences, informs and shapes teachers' judgements in the literacy decision making processes.

There is a need to increase constructivist (naturalistic) research in this field. There is a necessity to have the case rich descriptions of teachers articulating just what does influence their decisions if the profession is to improve or change teachers' practices (Berliner, 1986; Stiggins & Conklin, 1992). Stiggins and Conklin (1992) highlight the impact of unsound decision making in the classroom:

> One major implication of our failure to understand and assist teachers with the task demands of classroom
assessment may be the extensive use of unsound measurement procedures in our schools. The result of poor measurement is poor decision making. At the very least, poor decisions mean inefficient instruction, and at worst they can lead to failure to learn .... (p. 196)

1.2.3. **Terminology Germaine to the Study**

Initially, it was important to establish an understanding of how the key concepts of this study were used in the relevant literature and by the participants involved in this investigation. To understand the influences on teachers' judgements in relation to literacy, it was essential to establish an understanding of what teachers consider to be the key conceptual issues, such as literacy, assessment, evaluation, reporting, literacy continua, and literacy profiles.

In the literature researched for this thesis, an extensive range of definitions of literacy was collected (Appendix A). In the 19th century a person was literate if s/he could write his or her own name and read aloud a passage from the Bible. However, in the 20th century the meaning of 'to be literate' has taken on a range of different and controversial meanings. In the 21st century the notion of multiple literacies will be standard practice (The New London Group, 1996). In this thesis the term literacy is used extensively as it is the word the participants felt most comfortable using and it reflects the current transition stage from literacy to multi-literacies and multiple literacies. This situation is explicated in chapter 2.

In Australia, in the policy and curriculum documents referred to by Victorian teachers and produced by Education, National and State Government Departments there has been a redefinition of the word literacy. The term literacy has been used to encompass the original meaning of the word as stated in the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training (1993) document.

> Sound foundations in language and literacy are essential to all aspects of a child's learning (p. v). In essence the Committee believes that we need: a Nation dedicated to universal literacy - every Australian must be able to read and write in English. (p. vi)

The term literacy in the 1990s now has a much broader interpretation as outlined in the following series of DEET (Department of Employment, Education and Training) publications. The definitions of literacy below encompass all facets of language.
The Language of Australia - Green Paper
Literacy involves the integration of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking. It includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations.
(Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1990, p. 4)

The Language of Australia - White Paper
Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing.
(Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991a, p. 5)

Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text. Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening, and critical thinking with reading and writing. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual's lifetime.
(Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991b, p. 9)

Literacy is not a fixed, unitary, static, unchanging term but a dynamic and constantly evolving concept the meaning of which is dependent upon such factors as the theoretical perspective of the user and the context in which the word is being used. Even the definitions of terms like assessment, evaluation and reporting were not as simple to delineate as one might initially expect. In the six years that this study has been gestating there have been marked changes in the usage of all the major conceptual terms related to literacy, assessment, evaluation and reporting (Appendix E - Glossary of Terms).

A variety of definitions can be found in the literature ranging from writers who use assessment as a synonym for evaluation; writers who use assessment to mean to gather information and evaluation to mean the making of value judgements for decision making purposes; and writers who use the terms assessment and evaluation in the following unusual way:

**ASSESSMENT**
A process concerned with gathering information about students' competencies where the focus is not only on what has been achieved by students, but also on how they have gone about their learning.
(Ministry of Education [Schools Division], Victoria, 1988, p. 62)
EVALUATION
A process where judgements are made about the worth of educational "programs".
(Ministry of Education [Schools Division], Victoria, 1988, p. 96)

However, the following usage of the term assessment has become common practice in major curriculum documents in Victoria:

Assessment is taken to mean a deliberate process used to provide feedback and evidence for a judgement about students' learning in relation to defined goals.
(Directorate of School Education, Victoria, 1996, Section G, p. 1)

This position is reflected in the Australian Literacy Federation's Position Paper No 2:

Assessment and Reporting in English Language and Literacy.
Assessment is the process of collecting a range of information about learners and their diverse achievements, and about performance, and making judgments about the significance of this information. Reporting is the process of communicating the results of the assessment to the stakeholders in appropriate forms.
(Australian Literacy Federation, 1995, p. 3)

In the last decade there has been an increasing interest in the notion of Learning Continua and Profiling with reference to the issue of literacy assessment. The term Literacy Profile is taken to mean "documented information, from a variety of different assessments of an individual student in respect of her/his performance over a range of items defined as the dimensions of language learning" (Fehring, 1988, p. 2). The issue of teacher judgement in relation to students' literacy development and in terms of the notion of Profiling is a relatively unexplored field of study. Do teachers take an expert model stance - use a test designed by an expert and it will give the answer/s, and the objective validation of the teachers' decisions? Do teachers take an intrinsic, personally knowledgeable stance - "I know because I know?" Having assimilated knowledge about literacy development a teacher makes personal judgements about a student's competence and capability and stands by this subjective evaluation.

It is important to point out in this introductory chapter three significant changes in language usage that have occurred during the period of this thesis. Initially the word literacy was used exclusively to mean communication abilities of a nominated group. Many writers in the field now refer to literacies and the word literacy is disappearing from the literature. The words assessment, evaluation and reporting were frequently
used as a triad of terms. To assess meant to gather data; to evaluate meant to make judgements about the data gathered; and to report meant to make public the information (see Appendix E). In current literature, the term evaluate has been dropped from the triad and now the words assessment and reporting are the only two terms used when referring to the literacy decision making processes. The third change that has occurred is with regard to the terms literacy acquisition and literacy learning. A decade ago the literature reflected a use of these two terms, literacy acquisition and literacy learning, as synonyms for each other. The current literature uses literacy acquisition to refer to the informal learning of communication knowledge. Literacy learning refers to the formal process of being taught communication skills. The literature reviewed for this thesis reflects the transition in terminology that has occurred.

1.3. Thesis Organisation

1.3.1. Chapter Structure

Studies, such as this one, which attempt to describe, interpret and thereby understand the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development, must address several issues in order to give a contextual framework to the investigations. The present chapter introduces the context of the study. Chapter 2 explores the relevant literature related to the topic and research question under investigation. The literature review examines four interrelated areas of investigation in order to set the parameters of the research:

- Conceptualisation of literacy
- Historical context of the major English language learning theories
- Literacy learning continua
- Teacher judgement.

The first section in chapter 2 deals with the philosophical and pragmatic issue of addressing the use of terminology. It is impossible to define literacy without examining and critically analysing the major influential theories underlying English language learning. Therefore, this became the second contextual framework to be investigated. The third area encompassed learning continua. Judging development or growth in students' literacy learning requires some notion of what constitutes significant progress towards the goal of literacy. The fourth parameter concerned the breadth and scope of current research in relation to teachers' judgements and students' literacy attainments.
Chapter 3 explicates the research methodology used in this study. As many writers have pointed out, the type of information sought is a major factor in the choice of paradigm, and conversely, the type of information gathered is dependent on the paradigm chosen (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Higgs, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To understand and describe the influences on practicing teachers' literacy decision making directed the thesis toward the constructivist paradigm of inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Consequently, research techniques used were selected from the array of qualitative methods available. The following data gathering methods are used: participant and non-participant observations, extended focused and semi-structured interviews with the teacher participants and key informants, and the content analysis of school curriculum and policy documents and artefacts collected throughout this study.

Chapter 4 outlines the context of the three case study sites and the participants involved in the study. Extended involvement with participants influenced the decision that purposefully selected case study sites and participating teachers be chosen for this study (Patton, 1990). Three metropolitan primary schools in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia and three case study teachers were involved in this research.

Chapter 5 describes the main findings. Seven main spheres of influence on teachers' judgements emerged from the research data collected. However, these seven major spheres consisted of a complex integration of many other influences.

Chapter 6 summarises the findings and draws conclusions relevant to advancing educational change in teaching practice.

1.4. **Boundaries of the Research**

A Doctor of Philosophy dissertation is limited by the very nature of the investigation: one person exploring an issue in a limited time frame. In addition, this research must be contextualised to the three metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria, case study school sites. The data is established within the setting of three classrooms of articulate practising teachers. This is the strength, and the limitation, of the constructivist inquiry approach used in this thesis. What this research does present is a comprehensive landscape of the situation at a given point in time and under the contextual restrictions outlined within this thesis.
Throughout this research there is an emphasis on written literacy; this is not intended to devalue the importance of oral literacy or computer literacy. The research reflects the reality of the usage of the term during the study.

1.5. **A Brief Overview of the Thesis**

The research in this thesis is established within a constructivist paradigm using a constructivist (naturalistic) process of inquiry. The research is theoretically contextualised by the literature review undertaken to establish the parameters of this study and by the purposeful selection of three case study teachers within metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria. The information generated to elucidate the key research question, *What are the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development?*, was an aggregation of qualitative methods of data collection. The research investigates the complexities of teachers' decision making processes when related to making literacy judgements. The findings that emerged from the data collection across the three school sites highlight a number of major influences on teachers' decision making processes. Recommendations for changing practices at the school, education system, and training institution levels stem from this study.
CHAPTER 2.  

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction: Context and Parameters

To understand the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development it is important to establish the major contextual factors of such a study. This literature review examines four interrelated areas of investigation in order to set the parameters of the research:
- Conceptualisation of literacy
- Historical context of major English language learning theories
- Literacy learning continua
- Teacher judgement.

The first section of this chapter explores the concept of literacy. The changing nature of literacy means that it can no longer be taken for granted that literacy has one common meaning. Educational writers are increasingly referring to literacies, defining literacy in terms of cultures, contexts, tasks and historical perspectives (Comber, 1993a; 1994; Gee, 1990, 1991; Lankshear, Gee, Knobel & Searle, 1997; Lankshear & Lawler, 1987; Luke, 1988, 1993a; Mayo, 1995; Street, 1990, 1993). To understand teachers' judgements of literacy it is important to establish the diversity of opinion in relation to this concept. The literature abounds with discussion of the way that teachers' understandings and beliefs about what constitutes literacy should not only influence what they teach, how and to whom, but also when, and why they teach the way they do. The choice of materials and resources should be influenced by the beliefs teachers hold about English language learning and the goal of literacy for all. However, the first assumption to be dealt with in this literature review is that the judgements teachers make of students' literacy development should be based on some underlying conceptualisation of what constitutes literacy and the development of literacy.

It is important, when examining the definition of literacy, to examine and analyse the major influential theories underlying English language learning. Such a perspective will not only give a context to the differing definitions, but also to the analysis of the influences on teachers' judgements. The influence of the political and educational contexts underpinning teachers' beliefs about English language acquisition needs to be acknowledged. The second section of this literature review deals with this area of
investigation. The third section examines learning continua. Judging development or growth in students' literacy learning requires some notion of what constitutes significant progress towards the goal of literacy. The fourth section examines the breadth and scope of current research into teacher judgement and students' literacy development.

2.2. Conceptualisation of Literacy

Literacy is a term used daily throughout the world. It is spoken about, written about and assessed frequently in many text forms (refer to Appendix I for media examples). Text is a generic term used to refer to all forms of communication including newspapers, reference books, television, and spoken language. What does literacy mean? How are literacy standards determined?

It is important for educators to be clear about what it is they understand by the term literacy. Teachers base their classroom practices on their beliefs, values and current understandings of language learning and the development of literacy. Parents base their decisions about their children's literacy, in part, on the trust they have of teachers' professional competence. Politicians and bureaucrats stake their reputations on the success of the education system they manage, which in turn rests, at least in part, on the competence of the teachers to develop literate students. The use of the term literacy may not be the same for all these groups in the educational community. To examine the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development it is important to establish the range of conceptualisations of what constitutes literacy. One teacher's point of view of what constitutes literacy influences the curriculum programming in her or his classroom which in turn influences the literacy assessment techniques chosen to assess literacy development. Another teacher, with a different viewpoint of what constitutes literacy, will be influenced by a different set of assumptions. In the latest literacy dictionary published by the International Reading Association the origins of the term literacy are described in the following way.

Literacy derives from the Latin literatus, which, in Cicero's time, meant "a learned person". In the early Middle Ages, the literatus (as opposed to the illiteratus) was a person who could read Latin, but after 1300, due to the decline of learning in Europe, it came to signify a minimal ability with Latin. After the Reformation, literacy came to mean the ability to read and write in one's native language. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the substantive literacy first appeared in English in the early 1800's, formed from the adjective literate, which occurred in English writing as early as the middle of the 15th century. Richard Venezky. (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 142)
In the media and in technical reports we often read statistics such as the following:
"Of the 4294 million inhabitants aged 15 and over living on our planet in 2000, almost
1 billion, or 21.8%, will know neither how to read nor write" (UNESCO, 1990, p.
4). However, rarely is the term literacy defined or are such terms as know how to read
or know how to write explained. These are complex and problematic areas of
investigation. In order to make judgements about the development of literacy, and to
measure growth or change in literacy, it would seem a self evident truth that one
should be able to define, or at least be able to describe and outline clear parameters of
the concept to be discussed or measured (Edelsky, 1989; Kurzman, 1994).
Psychometricians purport to be able to measure any aspect of literacy, the difficulty is
in finding agreement amongst all the interested parties as to the authenticity of such
results (Hill, Holmes-Smith & Rowe, 1993; Linn, Baker & Dunbar, 1991; Shepard,
1991, 1993). In relation to defining the concept of literacy, finding agreement amongst
the many different theoretical perspectives about the definition of the term becomes an
almost impossible task. The issue becomes: what has been measured? If you cannot
define literacy, how can you measure literacy? If you can measure literacy but cannot
agree on what has been measured, what in fact have you measured? The complexity of
the concept literacy, and the importance of learning the English language, is evident in
this 1996 statement from Standards for the English Language Arts by the International
Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English.

Language is the most powerful, most readily available tool
we have for representing the world to ourselves and
ourselves to the world. Language is not only a means
of communication, it is a primary instrument of thought, a
defining feature of culture, and an unmistakable mark of
personal identity. Encouraging and enabling students to
learn to use language effectively is certainly one of society's
most important tasks.
(International Reading Association and National Council of
Teachers of English, 1996, p. 1)

Historically, the term literacy appeared in the English lexicon sometime in the 19th
century. However, the concepts of literate and illiterate date back several centuries
(Venezky, Wagner & Ciliberti, 1990). A distinction between a low level functional
literacy and a cultured higher level literacy has existed since the term literacy was
coined. Over the past century lower level functional literacy has been given various
titles such as the following:
• pragmatic literacy
• functional literacy
• everyday literacy
• practical literacy
• basic literacy.
To be literate in the sense of higher order classical literature the term most used is *cultural literacy* (Venezky, Wagner & Ciliberti, 1990).

An investigation of any number of historical definitions illustrates a diversity of opinions, the changing nature of the concept literacy and the complexity of the issues involved in establishing a unitary meaning for the term (Refer to Appendix A for a comprehensive collection of chronologically ordered definitions of literacy).

The rather simplistic notion that literacy refers to the ability to read and write has changed considerably over the decades. An overview of a number of definitions since 1850 reflects such change. In 1850 to be literate one had to "Write (one's own) name and read aloud a passage from the Bible" (Gill, 1993, p. 13).

In the early part of the 20th century the prevailing influences of the positivist paradigm of knowing meant that psychometrists needed to be able to measure relevant concepts. With respect to literacy, a person was deemed literate if capable of undertaking simple tasks of reading and writing. In order to report national and international levels of literacy, the tasks needed to be easily administered, scored and statistically recorded. Therefore, definitions of literacy were simple and easily measured as the following two definitions illustrate. In 1910 the US Census Bureau called people literate if they could write in any language (even if they were only able to write their name). The definition of literacy UNESCO used in 1951 was: "A person is literate who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life" (Gill, 1993, p. 13). This definition was still being used in the 1970s (UNESCO, 1970b, p. 15).

The term functional literacy emerged in the 1970s. The use of the phrase *functional literacy work* was used predominantly in UNESCO publications. This phrase encompassed the notion that the teaching of reading and writing as well as occupational training were integrated activities that should not be conducted separately or disassociated in time from each other (UNESCO, 1970a).

**1970s**

UNESCO provided the following guidelines to its member states in 1978 'UNESCO Revised Recommendation Concerning the International Standardization of Educational Statistics'.
The following definitions should be used for statistical purposes:

(a) A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his (sic) everyday life.

(b) A person is illiterate who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.

(c) A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development.

(d) A person is functionally illiterate who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development.

(Limage, 1993, p. 29)

The 1970s and 1980s were predominantly the eras of influence of such educationists as (Cambourne, 1987; Cambourne & Turbill, 1988; K. Goodman, 1989b; Y. Goodman, 1985, 1989) and writers such as Smith (1978) and Graves (1983). The knowledge gained from psycholinguistic theory (a combination of psychology and linguistics) was very influential. The belief that language learning should encompass all the modes of language (speaking, listening, reading and writing and later viewing) emerged. This view held a considerable amount of influence with educationalists such as teachers, tertiary lecturers and curriculum writers. This influence impacted on the teaching of English language learning and can still be seen in Australian curriculum documents in the 1990s (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 1994; Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995; Directorate of School Education, Victoria, 1995a, 1995d, 1996). The notion of the wholeness of English language learning was evident in the definitions of literacy during these decades.

1980s

Literacy as defined by Garton and Pratt (1989) refers to: "the mastery of spoken language and reading and writing". (p. 1)

The term 'literacy', as I am using it, refers to all those uses of language in which its symbolic potential is deliberately exploited as a tool for thinking. (Wells, 1989, p. 4)
In the Australian context the parameters of the definition of literacy took on a broad and wide ranging set of attributes. An interesting collection of definitions emerged from these two original statements taken from the following two publications:

**A. Australia’s Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy** (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991a)


**A.** Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing. (Department of Employment, Education and Training 1991a, p. 5)

**B.** Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.

Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening, and critical thinking with reading and writing. **Effective literacy** is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual's lifetime.

**All Australians need to have effective literacy in English,** not only for their personal benefit and welfare but also for Australia to achieve its social and economic goals. (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991b, p. 9) (Bold type appears in original text.)

Curriculum developers in Australia attempted to incorporate all facets of the academic debates about the nature of literacy. In the English language publications of the 1990s many variations of the previous two definitions of literacy can be found.

**1990s**

**Australian Capital Territory**

Literacy is the foundation of all learning. It is the key to our children's success in school and the basis on which they build their future.

... Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately in a range of contexts. It is also involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing, and includes the cultural knowledge that enables the speaker, writer or reader to
recognise and use language appropriate to the social situation. In the English learning area, literacy also involves viewing.
(Australian Capital Territory Government, Department of Education and Community Services, 1998, p. 1)

South Australia

Literacy involves the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking; it incorporates numeracy. It includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognize and use language appropriate to different social situations. For an advanced technological society such as Australia's, our goal must be an active literacy which allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think, create and question, which helps them to become more aware of the world and empowers them to participate more effectively in society. "South Australian, Draft State Literacy Strategy, 1990".
(Weeks & Leaker, 1991, p. 14)

Victoria

Board of Studies Victoria

Curriculum and Standards Framework - English Section

The development of literacy is central to the English curriculum. Literacy involves speaking, listening, reading, writing, and thinking within a cultural context. It enables a user to recognise and select language appropriate to different situations.
(Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995, p. 9)

Such all encompassing definitions of literacy can become unmanageable. Although seemingly easy to write about, such definitions became impossible to use for psychometricians seeking to operationally define variables in order to measure literacy. The need to assess achievement in literacy for system accountability purposes has always had a significant influence on the way in which literacy has been defined. Taken to an extreme, perhaps, is this statement by Williams (1988) in his article “How Will You Identify the Quality Achievements?”.

To me the answer to how we are to identify quality achievement is quite clear in principle. The achievements will be basic skill achievements in the first instance, they will be identified by measuring them (testing students, if you like), and their quality will be assessed by comparison with an accepted standard, if one can be agreed on, and/or by comparison with a relative standard, the average of students as a whole. (p. 116)

Psycholinguists and socio-linguists are able theoretically to encompass the complexity of the changing nature of literacy. However, for psychometricians, who are primarily concerned with the pragmatics of being able to operationally define literacy variables,
the increasing complexity of the concept literacy is too difficult a challenge to accommodate, as is evident in the following statement.

There are numerous definitions of literacy, each with its own purpose. What needs to be avoided is the kind of omnibus definition that is becoming more and more popular in Australia that includes reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, numeracy and problem solving. (Griffin & Nix, 1991, p. 4)

By the early 1990s the influence of critical theorists and systemic functional linguists made a significant impact on Australian educational communities (Christie, 1991a; Freebody & Welch, 1993; Gee, 1990; Lankshear, 1993b, 1994; Lemke, 1995; Luke, 1993b; Martin, 1991). The debate about what constituted the dimensions of literacy changed. The focus on the language abilities of the individual shifted to a focus on a body of knowledge that encompassed the wider social context of knowing. The ability to critically analyse text and be aware of the genres of power had a significant impact on the meaning of the term literacy. Genre of power has a dual meaning: first, knowing how to write in the style appropriate to the purpose of the communication, as, for example, an argumentative text, an instructional text or a report; secondly, understanding the implicit and explicit effects textual material can have upon the reader. The significance of this change is evident in the subsequent two statements. First, "literacy is defined as: The ability and the willingness to use reading and writing to construct meaning from printed text, in ways which meet the requirements of a particular social context" (Au, 1993, p. 20). Secondly,

The texts of everyday life are not innocuous, neutral texts requiring simple decoding and response. They are key moments where social identity and power relations are established and negotiated. Consider these examples: toy advertisements construct a world of gendered childhood and then invite the reader into that world as an enthusiastic consumer. Contracts build up legal versions of the world — with actors, possible actions and consequences — and then lock signatories into binding obligations and compliances. Texts and authors thus re/present and construct a version of the social world; and they position or locate the reader in a social relation to the text and to that world. They do so through various linguistic and semiotic techniques. (Luke, O'Brien & Comber, 1994, p. 140)

Australian teachers in the 1990s have come under the influence of the advocates of social critical literacy and the genre school of thought. Several Australian states and territories have encompassed the notion of critical literacy, and the explicit teaching of genre impacts on many curriculum statements (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 1994; Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995; Education Department of Western Australia,
1994e; Department of Education, Queensland, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d, 1994e; Department of School Education, Victoria, 1996). Curriculum documents such as these have the potential to influence teachers' notions of what constitutes literacy and their evaluative judgements in terms of assessing students' literacy development.

This analysis of the defining qualities of the concept literacy indicates that one definition of literacy may not be possible. The concepts of literacy and literacy standards depend upon many changing factors. Considerations such as the following almost certainly necessitate multiple definitions of literacy in the future: the fact that literacy is culturally and contextually bound; the influence of the reigning theoretical philosophy in relation to English language acquisition; and the political and socio-economic climate of the time period. Such issues have been raised by the following writers Bloome (1997), Christie (1990a, 1990b), Comber (1994), Furniss & Green (1993), Lankshear & Lawler (1987), Street (1990, 1993) and Wickert (1989). Wickert (1989) encapsulates the changing nature of literacy in the following statement.

Literacy is not a clearly definable positive/negative accomplishment. It is a set of skills that people have to varying degrees. Their ability to use these skills may vary from one context to another. The notion of a minimum standard is relative, which is why the debate about standards of literacy will always be controversial. It is relative to social and cultural norms, to time and place, to purpose and intent. (p. 4)

The concepts of multi-literacies and multiple literacies are emerging trends which have also been identified by the Australian Literacy Federation (Australian Literacy Federation, 1996) and the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia in the recently released document Australian Literacies. An accompanying volume to the The National Literacy Policy for Australia: The Commonwealth's Role in Literacy and Language Education (National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia, 1997; Kemp, 1997). Future definitions of literacy will no doubt be metamorphosed by the influence of new technologies, as Synder (1995) notes in this statement:

We are in the midst of a new age marked by important social, cultural and textual changes. We are in a period of transition from a modern industrial society in which the principal mode of literate exchange is the book to a post-industrial society in which the principal mode of literate exchange is the evanescent video display terminal. The move is from a model of literacy based in print to a model of literacy based in computer technology. We have hardly begun to think about electronic text. We can use it to do things no one has done before in the language classroom. What we have ahead of us is a great opportunity to rethink language and literacy studies. (p. 34)
In this context of multiple and multi-literacies we would do well to reflect on the possibility of a school literacy - a concept of literacy defined by the parameters of schooling and one that may have less relevance to non-school contexts. However, in the 21st century the view that literacy constitutes a unidimensional concept that is measurable will become a thing of the past. Literacy is a dynamic and changing multi-dimensional concept. It may well be time to discontinue the use of this concept and move on to more appropriate concepts for the future generations of language learners.

The point that needs to be made, in relation to the current research study, is that to examine and understand teachers' judgements of literacy development, it is essential to understand teachers' usage of the term literacy. If the conceptual, philosophical, or theoretical mind maps that teachers hold of what constitutes literacy underpin what they teach as literacy curriculum, it follows that these will frame how and what they assess and evaluate. One particular teacher may hold a traditional view that literacy encompasses reading and writing. Another teacher, perhaps even in the same school, may hold the viewpoint that literacy is an integration of skills involving reading, writing, oral language, viewing and critical thinking. It follows that these two teachers may well look for different evidence of literacy development, use different assessment techniques, place different values on different observations, and perhaps make different conclusions about a student's level of literacy competence. What influences a teacher's choice of meaning ascribed to the term literacy is also an important consideration to this research. Difference in itself is not a problem but it can become a problem if teachers are not able to articulate their underlying beliefs and assumptions and therefore justify their literacy judgements.

2.3. Historical Context of Major English Language Learning Theories

Central to the investigation of this thesis is the issue of addressing the historical context of the major theories underlying English language learning. As outlined in section 2.2, the changing and controversial nature of defining literacy has influenced what is perceived to be the goal of literacy acquisition and literacy learning. This, in turn, has influenced what is assessed as evidence of literacy development. Understanding the theories that underpin teaching and learning practices involved in learning the English language is also important. Ascertaining if the teachers in this study have, and can articulate, a theoretical foundation for their English language teaching strategies is also a relevant part of this research. What philosophical and
theoretical perspectives teachers hold can then be examined in relation to the theories explicated in the educational community. In the 20th century, more specifically, in the last 50 years, there have been three major periods of theoretical influence relating to Australian literacy education: the behaviourist and skills oriented theories of the 1950s and 1960s; the psycho-cognitive and whole language philosophy of the 1970s and 1980s; and the socio-cultural perspective of the 1990s. All three theoretical perspectives can still be found in teaching and learning practices in Australian schools. However, what is not known is the extent to which teachers implement these theories as purist models of language learning or modify and develop eclectic interpretations. Do teachers develop teaching and learning practices in the classroom based on the theoretical models they believe? Do teachers’ assessment and evaluation practices reflect their theoretical beliefs? Do other influences impinge on teachers’ judgement making processes when they are assessing students’ literacy development?

The following section outlines three of the major influential philosophical and theoretical perspectives of English language acquisition and learning. The review will focus on the Australian context. This section will lay the foundation for examining and understanding the influences on teachers’ theoretical perspectives of literacy development.

2.3.1. **Behaviourist and Skills Orientation of the 1950s and 1960s**

The behaviourist and skills oriented approach of the 1950s and 1960s supported the notion that literacy learning is a developmental acquisition of pieces of information and skills. The acquisition of literacy, assumed to be learning to read and write, was viewed as a simple perceptual process. A reader or writer became literate by translating letters to sounds and words. This perceptually dominated process involved learning that the graphic symbols (alphabetic letters) on the page had names and that the letter names had corresponding sounds. The combination of letters resulted in the production of monosyllabic and polysyllabic words. Learning to read and write was considered to involve a sequential acquisition of letters and sounds, diphthongs and digraphs, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and finally whole passages of writing (Christie, 1990a, 1990b). The underlying learning theory supported a notion of small pieces of information being combined and building onto each other to form complex and abstract learning. Learning was achieved by practice, drill and repetition. Understanding, as Pearson and Stephens (1994) point out, was not considered a higher order cognitive function.
Comprehension of written material was nothing more than comprehension of speech produced by the reader. In this simple view of reading, there was no difference between oral and written language comprehension. But reading was not really viewed as a language process. Instead it was thought of as a perceptual process that, when accompanied by a translation process, produced a linguistic code which was treated by the brain as a language process. (p. 23)

In relation to models of the reading process, Schraw and Bruning (1996) describe several underlying epistemologies that readers bring to the reading task. Two of these models are relevant to the behaviourist approach to literacy learning.

The *transmission model* is based on the assumption that meaning is transmitted directly from the author to the reader. This model views the reader as a passive receiver, whose primary objective is to extract the author’s intended meaning, rather than as an active maker of meaning. (p. 293)

The *translation model* is based on the assumption that meaning resides in the text independent of the author’s intended meaning or the reader’s ability to construct alternative interpretations. In this view, readers are expected to decode the message presented implicitly or explicitly by the text without reference to their own experiences, the cultural milieu in which the text was written, or presumed intentions of the author. (p. 293)

Skills oriented approaches to literacy development support the notion that the whole is a sum of the parts. This notion of aggregation, as compared to integration, resulted in teaching and learning activities that concentrated on sub-skills practice (Valencia & Pearson, 1987). A concentration on teaching phonics and whole word recognition predominated in the skills oriented approach to reading instruction. To learn to read a student translated graphic symbols into sounds, and to learn to write a student translated sounds into graphic symbols. Structured and sequentially complex reading materials (basal reading schemes) were developed to support the skills oriented approach to literacy development. Decontextualising the features of the language for study purposes, and the use of rote memorisation as a learning strategy, were common practices. Such views of language acquisition and literacy learning influenced the assessment and evaluation techniques chosen to measure English language development. Traditional approaches to assessment concentrated on the product rather than the process of learning and often utilised standardised tests to measure literacy standards. Such tests were seen to be appropriate to assess literacy by using tasks involving decoding word meanings, automatic sight vocabulary, comprehension measured by reading and answering questions on isolated sentences or short paragraphs, and comprehension measured by multiple choice questions.
Figure 1 is a graphic representation depicting the factors and sequence considered to be important in a Behaviourist model of literacy acquisition. It is worth noting that in the 1950s and 1960s the concept of literacy was predominantly concerned with reading and writing, rather than a more inclusive interpretation that encompasses oral language.

![Diagram of literacy development of an individual](image)

**Figure 1.** Behaviourist model of literacy acquisition

When attempting to evaluate the behaviourist model of literacy acquisition it is enlightening to reflect on Vygotsky's seminal work *Thought and Language*, originally
published in 1934 (Vygotsky, 1934/1962). Vygotsky wrote about how researchers understand the complex cognitive psychological structures involved in thought and language. He postulated that there were two ways to analyse for understanding.

The first method analyzes complex psychological wholes into elements. It may be compared to the chemical analysis of water into hydrogen and oxygen, neither of which possesses the properties of the whole and each of which possesses properties not present in the whole. The student applying this method in looking for the explanation of some property of water - why it extinguishes fire, for example - will find to his surprise that hydrogen burns and oxygen sustains fire. These discoveries will not help him much in solving the problem. (Vygotsky, 1934/1962, p. 3)

A similar situation exists in learning language. Learning the discreet elements that constitute a word or a sentence will be insufficient to understand the spelling and meaning of the sentence: "Send her down, Hughie". (This is an old country Australian expression. The context for this expression is that of an Australian farmer looking up to the heavens and meaning, 'Lord, send down the rain and plenty of it'. Historically, 'Hughie' is a corruption of Jupiter Pluvius, the Roman god of rain.)

A significant change and a challenge to the behaviourist theories of literacy acquisition came from the influence of the linguist Noam Chomsky. Chomsky wrote Syntax Structures in 1957 and Aspects of the Theory of Syntax in 1965. His work revolutionised the linguistic world with the notion of Transformational Generative Grammar. The new grammar acknowledged the complexity of English language structures and promoted the belief that comprehension could not be explained by linear sequencing of the meaning of individual words (Pearson & Stephens, 1994). Transformational Generative Grammar plus an appreciation of the ease with which small children acquire oral language prompted a view that humans may have a 'Language Acquisition Device' (LAD) - an innate cognitive structure specifically for learning the language of the community into which the individual is born. This controversial theory heralded a new era of literacy teaching and learning.

2.3.2. **Psycho-Cognitive Era of the 1970s and 1980s**

The swing from the teaching of literacy (as reading and writing) to the teaching of English language - reading, writing, speaking and listening - occurred as a result of the impact of the marriage of psychology and linguistics which created psycholinguistics. Linguists, such as Chomsky (1957, 1965), who promoted
Transformational Generative Grammar, argued that children were innately predisposed to learn language. Psychologists combined studies of learning with studies of language acquisition. Research studies soon demonstrated that if children produce sentences such as "I kept my toys in my room", "I eated my dinner up", "I have two feet", which they do, then they could not be simply imitating language, as the behaviourists advocated. Sentences such as these demonstrated that children were actively producing and generalising rules about the formation of plurals and the past tense in the English language.

The research of the psycholinguists built upon, and enhanced, the language experience approach in Australia and later the whole language movement. The emerging whole language movement promoted the belief that whole language was a philosophy of curriculum, learning, teaching, and language (K. Goodman, 1989a). Historically, the movement and name originated from a group of North American teachers. The whole language movement spread throughout the USA, Australia and New Zealand. The emphasis in the teaching programmes was on the individual. The focus of teaching was on the development of reading and writing for personal enjoyment, personal growth and the expression of individuality in real life situations. The psychological basis of philosophies such as whole language accounts for the focus on the inner development of the student rather than the development of an awareness of the importance of social participation. The outmoded skills-based theory of learning changed to a conception of learning as a constructive process whereby the learner draws on multiple sources of information to interpret text and gain meaning. The whole language movement emerged, explaining the successful acquisition of literacy on a basic premise that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Edelsky, 1991; Moorman, Blanton & McLaughlin, 1994). According to Anstey and Bull (1996) the theoretical underpinnings of the whole language theory rest on two basic assumptions:

1. the oral and written modes of language are only superficially different—that is, at the deep processing level of production and comprehension of language different but parallel processes are engaged; and

2. through reproducing the conditions in which children acquire oral language, the written modes of language can be successfully taught. (p. 134)

The reading and writing processes were considered to be active constructive processes in which the individual flexibly uses not only the information on the page, but also previous experiential information to make meaning of texts. The notion that learning to read is a strategic process involving learners in actively using print cues to construct a model of the meaning of the text is an important premise of the whole language
understanding of literacy acquisition. In part, a psycholinguistic model of the reading and writing process relates to the transactional model of the reading process articulated by Schraw and Bruning (1996).

The transactional model is based on the assumption that a text means different things to different readers regardless of what the author intended or what the text contains. In this view, readers interpret a text given their own personal goals and purposes within a particular context. Thus, meaning is constructed by the reader with respect to his or her prior knowledge of the topic domain, previous reading experiences, and situational objectives. In this view, reading is an inherently subjective process rather than an act of receiving the author’s meaning or translating the meaning of a text in the most objective manner possible. (p. 293)

The whole language movement moved the teaching of English from an approach dominated by separate subskills to an integrated whole language philosophy and heralded in a decade of the usage of such terms as:

- child-centred curriculum
- learner-centred curriculum
- immersion in whole language
- student control
- ownership of learning
- naturalistic learning
- authentic language use / authentic texts

Teachers applying psycholinguistics principles in their language curriculum, and teachers using the whole language philosophy, believe that language should not be learned by dividing it up into separate skill areas and taught through practice, drill and repetition. They believe that learning to read, for example, should be an active constructive process not a passive receptive and decoding process. Progressivist education had important implications for schools: it marked a move towards a school-based curriculum and a rethink about student assessment and evaluation (Shepard, 1991). Many writers in the field of language development gave legitimacy to practices such as skimming and scanning in reading, forming hypotheses and making inferences during text interpretation and using contextual cues. They replaced absolute correctness with refinement of close approximations in reading, writing and spelling. Literature based English language curricula superseded
sequentially structured reading schemes and oral and written language acquisition was integrated with the development of thinking and building knowledge (Cambourne, 1989; Cambourne & Turbill, 1988; Fox, 1997; K. Goodman, 1989b; Y. Goodman, 1985, 1989; Graves, 1983; Smith, 1978). The whole language proponents were critical of the heritage of basal readers in schools, as is evidenced by this statement by K. Goodman (1989a).

Basals have defined reading as a series of skills and a collection of words; stories in basals are nothing more than the means to practice [sic] certain skills and words. Consequently, the literature in basals is censored, abridged, purged, and rewritten to support the skill sequence and controlled vocabulary. (p. 69)

However, the significant influence of the cognitive and developmental theorists such as Piaget and Vygotsky (1934/1962) on the development of the whole language learning principles should not be understated. The notion of stages, phases and levels of cognitive development was a powerful influence on the thinking about literacy development and curriculum design (Callagan [sic Callaghan] & Rothery, 1988). The impact of the whole language movement on the development of instructional approaches to literacy in Australia was very significant (Christie, 1990a; Richardson, 1991; Rousch, 1989; van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1994). Educational writers in Australia such as Cambourne (1987, 1988a, 1990) and Turbill (Cambourne & Turbill, 1988, 1994; Turbill, Butler & Cambourne, 1991) became very influential as recognised experts in the theory and practices of whole language teaching. Whole language as a teaching philosophy swept across the whole of Australia. Consequential changes resulted in curriculum policies and classroom practices reflecting whole language principles. Rousch (1989) comments on the extent of the impact of the whole language movement.

Not only has the national paradigm shifted substantially towards a whole language approach, we find that in all states of Australia the whole language philosophy is not only encouraged by authorities, but in some states it has found its way into authoritative curriculum documents. (p. 17)

The epistemological philosophy of English language learning of the previous 20 years began to be challenged: "One cannot reconcile direct instruction with natural learning. Meaningful, predictable, authentic texts are incompatible with carefully controlled vocabulary and decontextualized phonics instruction" (K. Goodman, 1989a, p. 69).

Language learning theorists and cognitive learning theorists questioned the reductionist view that a complex phenomenon, such as language learning, could be reduced to

The individual, and the individual's experiences and needs, became the centre of the whole language movement. This resulted in a marked change of direction in terms of the curriculum. This change is sketched out below.

In contrast to traditional curriculum, teachers became concerned with identifying the skills and processes their students brought to their actual use of language. They focussed on learning processes as opposed to learning content, on developing a 'relevant curriculum' as opposed to a 'core curriculum', and on the meaning intentions of the learner rather than on the formal correctness of his/her language use. Not surprisingly, this leads to the celebration of non-judgmental, informal assessment procedures. (Macken & Slade, 1993, p. 208)

What constitutes a whole language classroom can vary from individual teacher to individual teacher, from group to group, and from country to country, and to find a definitive programme can prove to be a very difficult task. The whole language movement has a political arm known as the TAWL (Teachers Applying Whole Language) group. In one edition of the newsletter published by the Australian TAWL group can be found the following ten key belief statements of the organisation (Teachers Applying Whole Language, 1995). Table 1 contains a summary of the ten belief statements. (A copy of the full text is contained in Appendix V.)

Table 1  Belief Statement Executive Committee TAWL (Melbourne)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• is continually developing, drawing on a set of underlying principles that inform teaching practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• is based on the centrality of meaning involving teachers and students in authentic language use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• values the language, culture and lives of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognises that authentic language use means students learn language, use language to learn and learn about language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• views listening, speaking, reading and writing as integrated, not separate, domains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognises that individual learner's knowledge is socially and collaboratively constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognises that all language is used in context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognises that students are active in their learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognises that students learn the subsystems of language (e.g. phonics, syntax, punctuation) as they engage in whole language use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognises that teachers are professionals continually learning and developing the empowering ability of articulation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Teachers Applying Whole Language, 1995)
Figure 2 is a personally constructed graphic representation of the key features of a model of literacy acquisition based on psycho-cognitive and psycholinguistic principles. The figure encapsulates the importance of meaning making to the process, the prominence of the individual, the integration of the modes of language - reading (viewing), writing, speaking, listening - and highlights the significance to the cognitive process of the integration of thinking. The figure also illustrates the significance that psycholinguists afford the context of the learner's immediate language environment. The significance of contextual factors is restricted to the family and the school in this model.

Figure 2. Psycholinguistic model of literacy acquisition
An early critical analysis of research into whole language was undertaken by Stahl and Miller (1989). In a more recent and very comprehensive critical review of the literature in relation to whole language Moorman, Blanton and Mc Laughlin (1994) outlined the following three explanatory characteristics of this movement.

First, proponents view whole language as a comprehensive philosophy, theory, perspective, movement, and/or set of beliefs or intentions. Whole language is not practice, it is a set of beliefs. Foremost among the guiding principles of whole language is the belief that reading and writing are language systems which are best left whole during instruction. Any reductionist attempts to decompose literacy instruction into component skills is not whole language (Moorman, et al., 1994).

The whole language literature views reading as a meaning-centered transaction between reader and author. In this view the reader is seen as constructing personal meaning on the basis of semantic, syntactic, graphophonic, and pragmatic cues found in the text and in the social context in which the reading takes place.

Reading is often defined as a “psycholinguistic guessing game”....

On the basis of these perspectives on reading, whole language advocates develop a framework for reading and writing instruction. An important assumption in this framework is that the process of learning to read and write is parallel to the process of learning to listen and speak. (Moorman, et al., 1994, pp. 313 & 315)

A consequence of these assumptions is the belief that whole language models of literacy instruction should be based on models of oral language acquisition (K. Goodman & Y. Goodman, 1979). This principle became one of the most hotly contested assumptions of the whole language theory (Byrne, Fielding-Barnsley & Ashley, 1996; Luke, Baty & Stehbens, 1989).

Secondly, whole language is described as an international "grass roots movement" (K. Goodman, 1989b, p. 207) involving teachers who are professional decision makers and curriculum leaders.

Thirdly, the whole language philosophy places the child at the centre of curriculum decision making. The teacher's role is perceived to be that of co-learner, guide or learning facilitator, compared to the previously authoritative, didactic teacher's role whereby the teacher controlled the delivery and content of all knowledge. Curriculum programs evolve from students' interests; cross curricula subject integration is
encouraged; and students are expected to actively participate and be involved in negotiating the classroom educational processes (Moorman, et al., 1994).

What teachers assess and evaluate as evidence of literacy development from a whole language perspective can be markedly different from the behaviourist perspective of literacy development (Harp, 1993; Winograd, et al., 1991). Pearson and Valencia (1987) compiled an enlightening list of the discrepancies between the reading model underpinning the active, constructive, strategic reader and the reading assessment schemes current in the 1980s.

- Prior knowledge is a major determinant of reading comprehension, yet we mask any relation between knowledge and comprehension on tests by using many short passages about unfamiliar, sometimes obscure, topics.

- Real stories and texts have structural and topical integrity which influences reading comprehension, yet we assess reading comprehension using short bits that rarely approximate authentic text.

- Inference is an essential skill for comprehending words, sentences, paragraphs, and entire texts, yet many assessments rely primarily on literal level questions.

- Prior knowledge and inferential thinking work together to help the reader construct meaning from the text. Because these attributes vary across individuals (and within individuals from one situation to the next) and 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.

- To accomplish the goals of reading, readers must orchestrate many so-called skills, yet many of our reading assessment schemes fragment the process into discrete skills, as if each was important in its own right.

- Flexibility - the ability to monitor and adjust reading strategies to fit the text and the situation - is one hallmark of an expert reader, yet we seldom assess how, when, and why students alter their approaches to reading.

- The acid test of learning from text is the ability to reconstruct and apply knowledge flexibly in new situations, yet our assessment schemes rarely ask students to do so. Instead, we seem to be comfortable with tasks that seldom go beyond restating textual information. (pp. 6–7)

Assessment, evaluation and reporting techniques appropriate within a whole language philosophy of literacy development encompass the following attributes, as outlined by Chow, Dobson, Hurst and Nucich (1991).

To be consistent with our goals, we devise and use literacy evaluation that is developmentally and culturally appropriate, genuine in nature, inclusive of a variety or range of literacy purposes, purposeful to the learners, and directly connected to the teaching program. (p. 83)
Assessment and evaluation strategies developed in the 1980s, which complied with the theoretical framework of the whole language philosophy, covered a very broad range of new techniques. Table 2 contains examples of literacy assessment techniques which are well documented throughout the literature on whole language and evaluation.

Table 2  Assessment and Evaluation Strategies Associated With a Whole Language Philosophy of Literacy Development

- Anecdotal Notes/Records
- Student Conferences
- Interviews (students and parents)
- Observation Forms
- Learning Logs
- Reading logs
- Writing and Reading Folders
- Portfolios
- Student Self Assessment
- Reflective Journals
- Teacher Constructed Tests
- Miscue Analysis/Running Records
- Read and Retell
- Checklists

Purpose and audience took on new dimensions in the assessment process. What was the information needed for - diagnosis, credentialling, knowledge evaluation, process evaluation? Who needed the information - students, parents, teachers, administrators, bureaucrats, the public audience? The theoretical principle that assessment data must be interpreted within the same framework that underlies the curriculum delivered began to govern the assessment techniques selected to ascertain the information requested. The term authentic assessment entered the metalanguage of literacy assessment. Authentic assessment refers to techniques that are grounded in the reality of the purpose of being literate. If comprehension, or understanding of a text, is the purpose of the task being undertaken, then a read and retell exercise is considered a more authentic assessment activity than a multiple choice test.
In the 1980s and early 1990s there was perceived to be a conflict of interest between the system accountability requirement to have broad based quantifiable statistics and the principles of whole language. In Victoria in 1995, for example, the Directorate of School Education began a state-wide testing programme in Year 3 and Year 5 of primary schooling. The programme is called LAP - Learning Assessment Project. So far the LAP programme has tested in the key learning areas of English, Mathematics - 1995; English, Mathematics and Science - 1996; and English, Mathematics and Studies of Society and the Environment - 1997. The state-wide nature of the test and the methods of data collection restrict the testing programme to paper and pencil short answer or multiple choice items. Whole language advocates have publicly opposed the assessment and evaluation of literacy using state-wide testing programmes such as the LAP. The following statements are taken from two letters distributed by the State Director of the Australian Literacy Educators' Association - Victorian Branch, and are evidence of the strength of the feeling against such literacy assessment techniques (Appendix M).

**Cover Letter**
(on Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA) Letterhead)

To all members of ALEA in Victoria

As a state initiative and liaising with the TAWL (Teachers Applying Whole Language) Special Interest Group, I have agreed to use our professional banner to approach parents and teachers informing them of the dangers of the forthcoming LAPS tests in Victoria.

**Two paged Letter Addressed to Parents**
Final Paragraph

We therefore urge you, as parents, to consider your options in relation to the L.A.P. tests, very carefully. The options are,

1. To allow your child to sit the tests.
   or to support teachers by,
2. Keeping your child at home on the test days.
3. Writing a letter to the school, refusing permission for your child to be tested.

Letters were signed by the ALEA National President, Victorian State Director, TAWL Convenor and a founding member of TAWL. (Refer to Appendix M for full text of letters.)
In their work dealing with improving literacy assessment, Winograd, Paris and Bridge (1991) raise the issue of the dilemma between a philosophy of learning and teaching that advocates one concept of learning, and then the use of an assessment technique which is contradictory to those learning principles. 

If it is believed that fragmenting language and language learning should be avoided during reading instruction, then students’ ability to respond to whole texts that contain coherent, authentic language should be assessed. If teachers spend time teaching students to be critical thinkers, then students should be judged on how well they answer opened-ended questions, take risks, explore diverse interpretations, or analyze challenging texts. (p. 111)

Data collection had to be in authentic contexts; assessing learning processes became part of evaluation programmes (for example, process writing, performance assessment and portfolios of work); problem solving skills were incorporated into the assessment process, and self evaluation techniques were developed to enhance student responsibilities and reflective abilities. The key issues in literacy assessment and evaluation became the development of a variety of techniques to cater for the diversity of needs and clients requiring the information (Wilson & Fehring, 1995). Collecting, organising and interpreting the information gained from the rich repertoire of multiple measures teachers had at their disposal took on new dimensions of complexity. As mentioned previously, Table 2 contains a list of recognised assessment and evaluation strategies to be found in reference material supporting the notion of whole language teaching and learning programmes (Cambourne & Turbill, 1988, 1990, 1994; Cambourne, Turbill, Butler & Langton, 1994; Church, 1993; Harp, 1993; Wolf & Gearhart, 1994). It is interesting to compare Table 2 with the information compiled from a professional development session I conducted on March 26th 1996 in an outer region of Melbourne, Victoria (Appendix H). At this session I asked the 150 participants to nominate the current literacy assessment and evaluation strategies that were being used in their schools. The information in Table 2 and Appendix H is very similar. Many literacy assessment techniques gleaned from the literature review have also been nominated by the 150 participants.

For 30 years psycholinguistic theories of literacy acquisition and development dominated the English language field. Throughout Australia the psycholinguistic influence can be seen in curriculum documents at the central government level (Ministry of Education, Victoria, 1988) and at the school level, in policy documents and professional journals and associations (Teachers Applying Whole Language - TAWL Special Interest Group [SIG] within the committee structure of the Australian Literacy Educators' Association [ALEA]). Teachers influenced by this philosophy are
likely to have a particular view of what constitutes literacy, as well as holding a particular view on how the English language curriculum should be structured and will assess and evaluate literacy in ways consistent with the whole language philosophy. It was not until the late 1980s that basic tenets of the whole language movement began to be challenged. By the early 1990s the influence of the critical social theorists and the genre school of thought began making a mark on teachers' thinking regarding literacy development in Australia.

2.3.3. Socio-Cultural Era of the 1990s

In Australia, from the mid 1980s onwards, a socio-cultural understanding of literacy emerged. The terms used in the literature to refer to the theories or models proposed during this period vary. Among the more popular labels are the following: critical literacy, social critical literacy and genre school. I have chosen to label the era socio-cultural as an umbrella term to encompass all the nominated theoretical perspectives. The underlying ideas of the time period were grounded in critical theory perspectives and emerged as a challenge to the psycho-cognitive and psycholinguistic theories of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.


Critical literacy focusses on the need for students to understand the construction of texts and the ways in which texts position readers and viewers, how the text is used to represent the world, whose interests are promoted by the text and what assumptions are implicit in the text. Shor (1993) used the following description of critical literacy in his critique of Freire's educational writings.

*Critical literacy.* Analytic habits of thinking, reading, writing, speaking, or discussing which go beneath surface impressions, traditional myths, mere opinions, and routine cliches; understanding the social contexts and consequences of any subject matter; discovering the deep meaning of any
event, text, technique, process, object, statement, image, or situation; applying that meaning to your own context. (p. 32)

Literacy viewed from a socio-cultural perspective assumes that literacy is constructed by the society in which the language learner lives. Literacy is perceived to vary according to a complex interaction of purpose, place, culture, institution, historical period, economic circumstances, power relations and political persuasion.

In Australia, this significant educational development emerged as the genre school of thought in relation to the teaching of writing (Christie, 1991b, Comber, 1993a). The genre approach was based on the theoretical constructs of the systemic functional model of language developed initially by Halliday in the early 1970s. (3)

It is based on a functional model of language, which systematically describes the relationship between the context in which language occurs and the actual language used. This model, through its theory of register and description of grammar and discourse, relates context of culture and context of situation to actual language use. It is based on the belief that grammar itself is functional, that is, language is organised in the way it is because of the meanings it realizes.
(Hammond, 1987, p. 164)

This change in thinking about what constitutes literacy had ramifications for the ways teachers assessed and evaluated literacy. The emphasis changed from the psycholinguistic belief in the individual reconstructing personal language to a notion that to be literate the learner needs to be a critical reader and writer. This perspective emphasises literacy as social and cultural practice. To be literate means to be able to critically examine the ways in which language works, to question the underlying meaning in any piece of text, as well as to understand how cultural differences influence both the meaning of language and one's ability to effectively participate in cultures dominated by written language. Readers are encouraged to challenge the notion that text is "an uncontestable representation of reality" (Rivalland, 1993, p. 2). Speaking, listening, reading, viewing, writing and the creation of visual images are active social practices. Students need to learn how, to whom and under what circumstances messages can be constructed. They need to understand how readers and writers, through texts, construct a particular view of the world. They also need to learn how much of that construction is conveyed through the unstated information in the text - the information or values the writer fails to make explicit (Rivalland, 1993).

Socio-linguists are significantly influenced by the belief that all education is political in nature, and that "learning to become literate by definition involves engaging with, and
perhaps transforming and critiquing, a particular culture or subculture's ways of seeing the world, its ways of valuing, weighing and understanding the world" (Luke, 1995, p. 168). Therefore, one responsibility of teachers is to empower students to become agents of social change. With reference to teaching practices this has been interpreted as explicitly teaching students to understand and be able to use the genres of power in any society. Christie (1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1995) has written extensively in the area of critical literacy and succinctly states the position as follows:

To be literate in the contemporary world is to understand the very large range of written forms, text types or - as I shall call them here, genres - which we all need for both reading and writing essential to participation in the community.

To learn to recognize and create the various genres found in one's culture is to learn to exercise choices - choices in building and ordering different kinds of meaning and hence, potentially choices in directing the course of one's life. Learning to control such genres, with their patterned uses of language, is a matter of practice and opportunity, and here the schools have a major responsibility to provide good educational programmes for the teaching and learning of literacy.
(Christie, 1990b, p. 3)

The work of Gee (1990, 1991) has been influential in the development of critical literacy. Gee writes of discourse and Discourses. Discourses are ways of being in the world that integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes. Discourse with a lower case d refers to the linguistic analysis of spoken and written discourse. Discourse with an upper case D is more than just linguistic analysis of language, it also includes discourse as a subset of the field of Discourse. All social, cultural and economic groups have their own Discourses, and to be part of the group one must be aware of the operating rules. This knowledge empowers an individual to operate successfully within the group. Gee (1990, 1991) also distinguished two categories of Discourse, Primary Discourse and Secondary Discourse. Primary Discourse refers to the language structures and socio-cultural ways of knowing that we naturally acquire from our initial family environments. Secondary Discourses are consciously learned through interaction with different groups we participate in throughout our lives - peer groups, sporting groups, educational groups, vocational groups and professional associations. Critical literacy advocates raise important issues in relation to the teaching and learning of Secondary Discourses. Teachers need to understand the differences between students' Primary Discourses and the Secondary Discourses of school life. There will be many students who require explicit teaching to learn how to operate within the Secondary Discourse of school life. Students need to be
empowered to learn the discourses of the many Secondary Discourses they will be required to function in throughout life.

Drawing together all the main features of the socio-cultural model of literacy acquisition is a complex task. How literacy is conceptualised is important. How such factors as the individual, family, community and society interact and influence each other are important components of such a view. Figure 3 is a personally constructed graphic representation of the key features of a model of literacy acquisition and learning based on socio-cultural principles. This diagram highlights the belief that literacy practices are embedded in multiple social and cultural contexts.

Figure 3. Socio-cultural model of literacy acquisition and learning
Writers such as Christie (1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1995), and Luke (1989, 1993b) have been very critical of the psycholinguists who, for a decade, have been equating the process of oral language development with the development of written language. Psycholinguists support the notions of creating a natural learning environment and the development of processes where children are encouraged to write down their oral language, invent spelling, and take responsibility for choosing their own writing form. The basic argument forwarded to support the natural learning environment view has been that young children learn to speak and comprehend complex mother tongue languages in home environments without trained professional teachers.

The corollary for the learning of reading and writing has been to recreate this natural learning environment for the development of literacy. Moorman et al. (1994) argue that linguists have not reached a consensus on how oral language is acquired and that the process of acquisition is still highly controversial. The authors provide evidence that there are three first language acquisition models: a top-down model (that supports the belief that "children acquire knowledge of language systems through active communication in the immediate speech community" p. 318); a bottom-up model (that supports the idea that children acquire phonological language units and then combine such units into meaningful language); and an interactive model (supporting the idea that parallel and iterative processing enables higher order semantic knowledge and lower order level phonological and syntactic knowledge to interact and influence each other). All three first language acquisition models support top-down, bottom-up and interactive models of literacy instruction. This appears to challenge the psycholinguists' argument that written literacy learning follows the same acquisition process as oral language learning. "There is no linguistic basis, then, for the claim that the teaching of literacy should follow the pattern of first language acquisition" (Moorman, et al., 1994, p. 318). This view was restated by Richardson (1997): "teachers and researchers can no longer claim, or simply assume, that there are natural or 'naturalistic' conditions for language learning, or that literacy inevitability follows on from oral language development" (p. 334).

Christie (1991b) is also critical of this aspect of the psycholinguistic theories of language development. She highlights the historical situation.

In the evolution of the human species writing developed reasonably late, and it evolved to serve purposes that the spoken mode did not serve so well. ... The creation of writing systems opened up new ways of dealing with experience, and in the processes, the grammar of the written mode came to be quite differently organised from that of speech. (p. 145)
For young children, Christie (1991b) advocates shifting the focus of the language teaching away from "concerns with the fields of personal and familiar experience" (p. 149).

Fields of personal experience, I earlier suggested, are often those most commonly exploited in the writing program of the early childhood years, and this very largely explains the fact that much of the writing done in these years has many of the characteristics of speech, rather than of writing. While there may be merit in letting young children write down speech, there is no particular virtue in persisting with programs that promote the writing of talk. (p. 149)

In the 1990s there was a rebirth in the notion of explicit teaching in relation to children's knowledge about the various genres of written text and the ways in which language is structured (Collerson, 1994; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Cusworth, 1994; Knapp, 1989; Knapp & Callaghan, 1989; Knapp & Watkins, 1994; Knoebel & Lankshear, 1994; Wray & Lewis, 1997). One of the reasons for this change in thinking can be related to a change of attitude towards the whole language movement. There are complex economic, political and educational reasons for the growing criticism of the whole language movement to literacy acquisition. A world wide down turn in international economies has often resulted in political forces seeking to find causal explanations and focus on accountability issues. Education has traditionally been used as a scapegoat. The issue of falling standards has been raised over and over again to camouflage the underlying causes (Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1994a; Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1994b; Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1997). In Australia, following nearly two decades of the methods of teaching and the principles of curriculum organisation being influenced by the whole language movement combined with a process approach to writing, and with the system still being strongly influenced by educational events in Britain, it was not surprising that change occurred in the 1990s. The educational climate was ready for change.

Christie (1990b) was one of the educationists who was instrumental in this change in Australia. She is highly critical of the lack of intervention in children's literacy development. She is particularly concerned that teachers hold an erroneous view "that children must be left 'to find their own way', or to make their own choices in using language" (p. 18). Concepts such as ownership began to be questioned in contexts such as:

- personal ownership of authentic writing
- personal construction of meaning in writing and reconstruction of meaning in reading.
These contexts, which are deeply embedded in the whole language philosophy, began to be considered as an over simplification of the complexity of literacy. Systemic functional linguists pointed out that literacy acquisition is interwoven with one's cultural context and pertains to the creation of shared meanings.

A child learns language through interacting with other people, not just by being immersed in language. It follows that the role of the adult is crucial. The adult provides a kind of 'scaffolding' for the child in the construction of meaning. (Hammond, 1987, p. 172)

The contention was that all connections between sounds and meanings are artificially created in a social context and agreed to by the users of the language. Moorman et al. (1994) draw some of these contentions together in their critique of the whole language movement.

Meaning is generated in language by means of a socially defined code that connects sounds and concepts, and by means of a set of syntactic rules that govern how words may be combined. The use of language is a rule-governed activity, and the persistent "natural" metaphors of the whole language movement obscure that fact. Children learning to read and write are in fact learning those rules. Without them, reading and writing would not be possible. (p. 325)

Under the influence of the systemic functional linguists the word text has taken on a broader meaning than just in reference to the printed word. The word text can be taken to refer to any meaningful stretch of language - oral or written. "In the English statement and profile [A statement on English for Australian schools, Australian Education Council, 1994a and English - a curriculum profile for Australian schools, Australian Education Council, 1994b] 'text' is a general term which refers to any communication written, spoken or visual, involving language" (Campagna-Wildash, 1994, p. 1).

Texts have a function not only to transmit information and meaning, but also to be a thinking technique to create new meaning. For students to be empowered in any society they need to be able to deconstruct the deep meaning of all forms of communication. Critical literacy encourages the explicit teaching of the social structure of language. The argument proposed is that it is simply not enough to provide students with the opportunities to use language. Students need guidance, direct teacher input and teacher support in their development of oral and written language. Students without assistance about how language works "are likely to fail" (Hammond, 1987, p. 176). In addition, the notion of multiple literacies is becoming an accepted concept (Stokes, 1996, May).
Furthermore, articles are already appearing in literacy literature referring to visual literacy, information literacy (Snyder, 1995) and oral literacy. In literature on informational technology, the term *hypertext* has introduced a concept that is revolutionising the notion of learning to read and write.

Hypertext is an information medium, composed of blocks of text connected by electronic links, which offers different pathways to readers. It's a means of connecting information in a nonlinear manner with the computer automating the process. Unlike paper documents, which generally compel readers to read in a linear fashion, from left to right and top to bottom, hypertext documents encourage readers to move from text node (chunk of text) to text node, rapidly and nonsequentially. A key difference between hypertext and linear text is the degree to which hypertext readers may choose from multiple paths through a body of text. (Snyder, 1995, p. 27)

What this means for teachers influenced by systemic functional linguists, the genre-based school of writing development and the notion of critical literacy acquisition, is a change of emphasis with respect to what is collected as evidence of literacy growth. Such teachers may make their judgements based on students' abilities to critically analyse text, to write in a variety of socially appropriate genre, and to demonstrate an understanding of the impact of such influences as racial and gender bias on the interpretation of meaning in texts.

Critical literacy theorists (who encompass the genre school advocates) are not, however, without their critics (Brock, 1993; Richardson, 1991). In a scathing attack on Frances Christie's work Rosen (1988) made the following statement:

I learnt a long time ago that the ideas that come out of institutions have an institutional context. The ideas have to serve the interests of the people in the institutions. In other words, genre theory is merely yet another way academics can stay in business, and continue to dominate 'lower' ideological institutions e.g. schools, or social workers. Again, looked at it this way, genre theory doesn't look quite so world-changing. (Rosen, 1988, p. 9).

This statement is not being reported to give credence to the author's comment, but to illustrate the level of the division between supporters of the various educational theories. The unfortunate tendency for the creation of divisive conflict between educationists advocating new points of view is not always productive. The level of the debates whether between skills based and whole language advocates, or between whole language and critical literacy advocates, has been confusing and divisive.
(Cambourne, 1989; Christie & Rothery, 1989; Rosen, 1988). In many ways such either/or debates are damaging to the educational community who are attempting to deal with multi-faceted concepts of literacy (Laslett, 1991).

The teaching profession is driven by the practical decisions that have to be made to design and implement curriculum to enhance the literacy development of students. Criticism is so often levelled at teachers for not reflecting current change. The question that is raised at the school level is: whose theory should teachers be reflecting? Deciding which theoretical base will be the foundation for curriculum documents at the classroom and school level is not an easy task. The current study of the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development investigates whether or not teachers' decisions are reflecting a theoretical base, and if so, which philosophical stance guides their literacy assessment decisions.

2.4. **Literacy Learning Continua**

In order to make judgements about students' literacy development not only is it important to have a clearly stated conceptualisation of the word literacy, but also a notion of what constitutes progress along a literacy learning continuum. The difficulties of defining and agreeing on what constitutes literacy were explored in Section 2.2. The following section deals with a number of the fundamental issues related to what constitutes being literate. The historical context of the testing movement highlights the goal of prediction as being the main purpose for measuring literacy. The impact of the international Outcomes-Based Education Movement signalled a major change in thinking regarding literacy assessment. The significance of this movement with regard to teacher judgement and moderation, and the development of literacy learning continua such as the literacy profiles and the English profiles, is examined in this section.

2.4.1. **Historical Context**

In the mid to late 19th century achievement in the USA was being assessed using a variety of standardised tests (Madaus, 1993; Resnick & Resnick, 1985). In the UK psychologists and educational measurement writers, such as Spearman and Burt, were very influential in the testing movement (Vernon, 1960). In Europe in the early 1900s, the French psychologist Binet developed a measure of intelligence which began a major period of influence regarding testing mental abilities. The publication of Binet's first intelligence test in 1905 was for the purpose of "identifying children with special educational needs" (Gipps & Stobart, 1993, p. 3).
His [Binet] work in developing a test of intelligence spawned the growth of testing to manage the selection and sorting of individuals for a wide variety of societal purposes. For much of the 20th century, educational settings have provided significant application contexts for selection testing. As testing gained general acceptance for the management of individuals, various testing programs for differential selection and placement were instituted in school systems. (Glaser & Silver, 1994, p. 395)

The acceptance of IQ testing was simple: "it was scientific, and therefore 'objective', and the single figure was a marvellous shorthand way of describing children .... Furthermore, the theory behind the tests suggested that these measures could be used to predict future academic performance" (Gipps & Stobart, 1993, p. 5). The short answer response appeared around 1910 and the multiple-choice item was accredited to Frederick Kelley in 1914 (Madaus, 1993). (A debated accreditation as some historians credit the Chinese with this development in testing.) (4) With increasing numbers of students staying on to secondary schooling, the role of IQ testing changed to one of "sorting and selecting normal children in the system" (Gipps & Stobart, 1993, p. 5).

The notion of differential selection based on an assessment of ability began a new wave of testing. In 1916 Terman of Stanford University published an extensive revision of Binet's IQ test which covered almost the entire range of intelligence from childhood to adult. "This Stanford-Binet scale was the most useful, and the most widely applied, of all psychological tests for the next twenty-one years" (Vernon, 1960, p. 11). In 1917 Otis developed a group administered IQ test, the Army Alpha. This overcame the main problems with the individually administered Binet IQ test. In 1955 Lindquist invented a high speed optical scanner. All of these developments led the USA into the streamlined, machine scorably, standardised, multiple choice test as the testing technology of the future (Madaus, 1993).

However, no sooner had the field of educational measurement begun than did the belief that the scientific notions of measurement applied to education were in many cases inappropriate and culturally biased (Gipps & Stobart, 1993; Scates, 1943). Historically, literacy progress has been defined in terms of numerical concepts like Reading Age, Reading Levels and Spelling Stages. The original purpose of such measurements was to gauge and document what the average child at a particular age or year level could do. However, it was not long before the measurements Reading Age and Spelling Age took on new and unwarranted interpretations. What constituted what the average 8-year-old could do became what the average 8-year-old should do. A
Language for Life: Report of the Committee of Inquiry Appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science (The Bullock Report) (Bullock, 1975) made insightful criticism of this practice over 20 years ago.\(^5\) The criticism, outlined in this seminal report, regarding the artificial nature of the statistically constructed notion of a reading age is still well worth repeating in 1998.

A reading age is obtained by transposing test scores on to a scale expressed in terms of years of development. We consider it in many ways a misleading concept which can obscure more than it reveals. Its use assumes that progress in reading can be equated with certain arbitrary units of time. In other words, learning to read is looked upon as consisting of equal steps which can be placed alongside another scale of equal steps, namely months and years. But there are no grounds whatever for supposing that reading progress is a linear process of this kind, and indeed there is evidence to the contrary. Nor is it reasonable to believe that the difference between reading ages of 6.6 years and 8.6 years is the same as the difference between those of 10.6 and 12.6. Even if these facts are disregarded, the concept of reading age is of limited practical value for teachers. If a statement like "a reading age of 7.0 years" is to have any real meaning, then the characteristics of "7 year old reading" must be known and defined. This would be difficult to achieve. The average 7 year old reader exists only as a statistical abstraction, and unless one can ascribe to reading ages attributes which have real meaning the term is highly misleading. It simply cannot be assumed that children having the same reading age read in the same way, require identical teaching, and will profit from similar books and materials. (p. 33)

A similar criticism was reiterated by Cambourne in his closing plenary address at the 13th National Australian Reading Association Conference (1987, July). Speaking of the use of formal testing programmes to assess literacy, Cambourne commented:

The problem is a complex one which is difficult to reduce to its core elements. We've inherited a tradition which equates assessment with measurement, and measurement involves quantification of some kind. Part of this tradition is a rationalistic view of science which believes that value-free objectivity is not only possible, it is absolutely necessary. This tradition is implicit in most views of assessment and standards. There is a strong belief "out there" that there is a universal standard of literacy which in some way can be measured, and that the scale along which it can be measured is a continuous one along which persons can be placed relative to each other. The problem is that language doesn't conform to these assumptions. (p. 15)
2.4.2. The Influence of the Outcomes-Based Education Movement

Some 20 years ago criterion referenced learning continua began to emerge (Broadfoot, 1982; Broadfoot & Fenner, 1985). This development was partly a reaction to the entrenched measurement model of assessment and partly a response to the beginning of the outcomes-based movement in education (Hannan & Ashenden, 1996; King & Evans, 1991; Spady, 1993; Spady & Marshall, 1991; Towers, 1992, 1994). The outcomes-based education movement changed the emphasis in performance from input to output. Educational goals of teachers and schools became superseded by the performance outcomes to be obtained by the students. Terms such as Stages; Levels of Achievement (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995); or Phases and Bands (Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991) were used to describe literacy development. For example, in the Victorian Literacy Profile (Ministry of Education [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1990) there are nine bands of development. Each band contains a cluster of descriptors of behaviour representing performance in literacy. Building a literacy profile consists of itemising the task of literacy learning into a set of sequentially ordered learning outcomes. Such literacy profiles become the criterion for judging students' literacy growth. This trend is evidenced by this statement below.

Building a clear profile of student learning over a period of time requires a variety or [sic] assessment practices in which teacher judgement looms large. Certainly where there are cross curricular implications teachers need to confer with each other, and with the students and their parents, so that a wide range of perspectives are brought to bear in judging student outcomes. The development of the Profiles has provided a reporting framework for teachers based around learning outcomes typical of students at a particular stage in their education.
(Warhurst, 1994, p. 24)

Literacy profiles grew quickly in popularity in the 1980s and 1990s (Broadfoot, 1982; Brown, 1985; Constable, 1995; Fairbairn, 1986; Griffin, 1991a; Law, 1984; Mageean, 1987; Meiers, 1994b). There is a plethora of material on the market using a variety of terms to describe growth, as can be seen by the list in Table 3.

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<thead>
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<th>Table 3</th>
<th>Developmental Terms Used to Denote Growth</th>
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<td>1980s - 1990s</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Outcomes</td>
<td>• Developmental sign points</td>
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<td>• Levels</td>
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<td>• Indicators of progress</td>
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<td>• Indicators of performance</td>
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Literacy profiles provided the framework and students' literacy development was monitored against the continua, profiles, or progress maps. The assumption was that such continua "detail the nature of development or growth in a learning area. These vertical maps describe literacy knowledge, skills and understandings in the sequence in which they typically develop" (Forster, 1995, p. 1).

Some of these continua were based on research studies of what children demonstrated they could do, some were based on what professional curriculum developers decided constituted growth in literacy development, and others were based on studies of what teachers stated they believed constituted the behaviour that describes the literacy learning continuum. It is in this context that Australian Literacy Profiles took shape in the 1980s. Victoria led the way with two publications called Literacy Profiles (Ministry of Education [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1990) and English Profiles (Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991). Both the Literacy Profiles and the English Profiles consist of a series of short descriptive statements called indicators. The indicators are arranged in hierarchical order of difficulty across nine levels of achievement called bands for each of the modes of English known as reading, writing, speaking and listening. Table 5 illustrates the nine reading bands of achievement in the English Profiles (Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991).
### THE READING BANDS

(Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991, pp. 44-63)

**Reading Band and Nutshell Statements**

A: Knows how a book works, likes to look at books and have stories read. (p. 45)

**Indicators of Progress**

- **Concepts about print**
  - Holds book the right way up

- **Reading strategies**
  - Locates words, lines, spaces, letters

- **Responses**
  - Joins in familiar stories.

**Interest and Attitudes**

- Chooses books as a free-time activity. (p. 47)

| B: | ... |
| C: | ... |
| D: | ... |
| E: | ... |
| F: | ... |
| G: | ... |
| H: | ... |

I: Is skilful in analysing and interpreting a wide range of written material. (p. 45)

**Responses**

- Explains textual innuendo and undertone.
- Interprets analogy, allegory and parable in text.
- Identifies and explains deeper significances in the text.
- Defends each interpretation of text.
- Discusses and writes about the author's bias.
- Analyses the cohesiveness of text as a whole. (p. 63)
2.4.3. **National Profiles in an Australian Context**

At a meeting in Hobart, Tasmania in 1989, in an unprecedented show of solidarity, the Australian Education Council (all the federal, state and territory ministers of education) agreed to a policy document outlining '10 Common Goals of Education'.\(^6\) This paved the way for a period of significant change in curriculum development across Australia. At a national level the document known as the National English Profile (*English - A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools*) (Australian Education Council, 1994b) and the accompanying document *A Statement on English for Australian Schools* (Australian Education Council, 1994a) were produced (Adams, Barley & Wu, 1992; Dilena, Grant, Hancock, Roberts, Sandstrom, Schloith, Simpson, Tonkin & Van Every, 1993). The English Statement provides a framework for curriculum development. It defines the area, outlines the essential elements, describes the distinctive features of English and delineates a sequence for developing knowledge and skills. The English Profile contains eight levels of achievement describing the progression of learning typically achieved by students during the compulsory years of schooling in Australia (Years 1 - 10), and is divided into strands and strand organisers. Strands are the major organisers of English - Speaking and Listening; Reading and Viewing, and Writing. Strand organisers are organisers of content, process and/or conceptual understanding within English: they are known as texts, contextual understanding, linguistic structures and features and strategies. Figure 4 is a representation of the components of the content areas of *English - a curriculum profile for Australian schools* (Australian Education Council, 1994b).
strands (modes of language)

within each strand mode the profile is organised as follows:

strand organisers

Figure 4. Representation of the structure of *English - A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools* (Australian Education Council, 1994b)
The production of these two documents was surrounded by controversy (Campagna-Wildash, 1995; Collins, 1994; Dilena & van Kraayenord, 1996b; Homer, 1995). The documents were said to lack explicit theoretical orientation, were criticised for being too eclectic and for containing jargonistic impractical terminology (Collins, 1994; Donnelly, 1993). For education systems such as Victoria, school-based decision making, context dependent curriculum development, problem solving and inquiry based learning have been prevalent for nearly 20 years. For such systems, outcomes-based education (OBE), is associated with the production of the national English profile. Mandated sets of externally imposed outcomes lead to centralised assessment and centralised curriculum, which in turn lead to centralised power and control by the dominant political force.

A second significant event occurred in July 1993 at the Australian Education Council (AEC) meeting in Perth. The AEC decided to refer the Statements and Profiles back to the states and territories, each government choosing to decide independently to trial, implement, modify, or not use the documents as published (Meiers, 1995). Following the release of the material in 1994 the states and territories made independent decisions about the implementation of the documents. Because of the traditional independence of all the states and territories from Commonwealth involvement in education, the concept of a national education initiative became confused with the issue of federal interference. The English Statement and Profile have not been taken up as a national priority, nor have they been taken up as they were published. However, as Campagna-Wildash (1995) commented at the time: “the fact is that in one way or another, in whole or part, they are being used” (p. 100).

The Victorian **Curriculum and Standards Framework** (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995) document is a repackaged version of the national publication *English - a curriculum profile for Australian schools* (Australian Education Council, 1994b). The structure of the Victorian **Curriculum and Standards framework** is represented in Figure 5.
Figure 5. *Curriculum and Standards Framework* structure (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995)
Victorian teachers from 1995 onwards must use the learning continuum described in the *English - Curriculum and Standards Framework* (CSF) document (Board of Studies Victoria, 1995). Students' English achievement is assessed and reported in terms of the CSF levels.

The following Executive Memorandum from the then Directorate of School Education Victoria and the follow up support document *Implementing the CSF: Support material for school leadership teams* (Department of Education, Victoria, 1996b) indicates the extent of the compulsory nature of the use of the CSF.

**EXECUTIVE MEMORANDUM NO.96/021**

To Principals of all Government Schools  
From Acting Director of School Education  
Subject Implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Framework  
Date 24 June, 1996

*It is expected that schools by the end of 1996 will have established an appropriate CSF implementation plan which would include professional development activities for teachers.*

The assessment of student achievement against the CSF and the reporting of that achievement to parents should occur in English and Mathematics by the end of Term 2, 1997 and in the other key learning areas by the end of 1997 (p.3).

*From 1996, however, all schools are required to use the CSF for reporting levels of student achievement in English and Mathematics in their annual reports* (p.4).

*Following participation in triennial reviews it is expected that schools will frame Charter goals and priorities related to student achievement in terms of CSF levels, strands and modes.* (p.4)  
(Bold type appears in original text.)

(Appendix U contains the full text of Memo No. 96/021.)

The significance of the change occurring across the nation to the current research pertains to the array of continua that Victorian teachers had exposure to during this study. Prior to the commencement of this study Victorian teachers had literacy profiles in 1990, English profiles in 1991, national Australian English statements and profiles in 1994 and CSF documents in 1995. Teachers are constantly making judgements about students' literacy progress. Do they use a literacy learning continuum as a reference framework in order to judge their students' development? If so, which literacy learning continuum influences Victorian teachers' judgements? These
questions are important to ask in this study that is investigating the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.

Australia is not unique in the development of literacy learning continua, English profiles and outcomes-based oriented education. At the international level a number of countries have responded to the outcomes-based education movement. A number of examples are indicated below. Britain has produced curriculum documents that have the following structure.

1.8 The National Curriculum is structured in four key stages or phases of learning:
- **Key Stage 1** - pupils aged 5 to 7
- **Key Stage 2** - pupils aged 7 to 11
- **Key Stage 3** - pupils aged 11 - 14
- **Key Stage 4** - students aged 14 to 16

1.9 The curriculum for each subject is set out in statutory subject Orders which specify programmes of study (the matters, skills and processes to be taught) and attainment targets (the knowledge, skills and understanding to be acquired).

1.10 In all subjects other than art, music and physical education, each attainment target is arranged hierarchically in ten levels of achievement, known as the ten-level scale. These levels define the academic progress pupils can make between the ages of 5 and 16. Typically a pupil is expected to advance one level every two years. Only the most gifted are expected to achieve level 10 by the age of 16.

1.11 Statements of attainment seek to define what a pupil should know, understand and be able to do at each level.
(Dearing, 1993, December, p. 5)
(Bold type appears in original text.)

In Hong Kong a document called the Target Oriented Curriculum Programme of Study for English Language, Key Stage 1 (Primary 1 - 3) and Key Stage 2 (Primary 4 - 6) has been implemented (Curriculum Development Council, 1994). In Canada, The Common Curriculum is the outcomes-based curriculum document published for the Canadian education system (Ministry of Education and Training, Ontario, 1995a, 1995b).

2.4.4. **Empowering or Deskilling of the Teaching Profession**

In the current educational climate in Australia there is a political push for literacy assessment to be tied to the national English profile. For Victorian teachers literacy assessment is tied to year level based learning outcomes. There is a serious concern that teachers are not becoming multi-skilled but unskilled. The possible erosion of teachers' professional judgment is a concern expressed by several writers (Apple,
1983; Australian Reading Association, 1993; Collins, 1994; Grundy, 1994; Pearson & Valencia, 1987). The analogy of chefs, cooks and novices is an apt description of this point. Just as there are chefs, cooks and novices in the culinary workplace, there are the equivalent in the educational workplace. The excellent teachers in our respective systems are the professional chefs creating outstanding English language curricula.

Teachers need to:

- be knowledgeable and understand about students' learning
- know about the structure of the English language
- know how to construct curriculum to meet the needs of their respective students (for example, inclusive curriculum in relation to gender, social equity and cultural considerations).

Teachers who have such knowledge are empowered to create effective and efficient learning environments. An important question that needs to be addressed with reference to the profiling movement with its achievement levels and generic outcome statements is: will it turn teachers into mere cooks following a recipe? For the novice teacher who may need parameters and structured guidance the English profile can be a transition facilitator. However, will the novice become a cook or a chef? If Victorian teachers do not understand the theoretical underpinnings of the CSF; if they use the profile as a set of instructions and then only follow the directions; if the outcome statements become the lowest common denominator of a curriculum; and if teachers do not interpret the profile when planning curriculum at the school level, then we will not have advanced at all. Could we be actually deskilling our teaching force? When we increase the division between curriculum created in the classroom, and curriculum conceived outside the classroom, teachers can become mere executors of someone else's goals, plans and ideas. The skills of curriculum conception, planning, designing of content, teaching strategies and catering for the needs of the particular individuals in the classroom (for which the teacher is responsible), can easily be lost.

If the responsibility for assessment and instructional decision-making is placed with the teacher, we will produce more capable, concerned teachers. Take this away, and we create teachers who are just managers rather than educational professionals for whom professional prerogative is synonymous with teaching.
(Pearson & Valencia, 1987, p. 9)

The very things that make teaching a professional activity may be stripped away.

Luke (1993) comments that:
In Australia, Canada, the UK and USA, deteriorating teaching conditions can be attributed to state policy responses to economic contraction. (p. 46)

In response, the corporate managerial policies of many governments place a high priority on budget reduction, leading to cutbacks and reprioritisation of support for institutions like education and social welfare. (p. 47)

Luke suggests that the consequences are in terms of the possible deskilling of teachers who use curriculum packages and sequences dictated from the top down, where the use of pre-packaged or externally developed curriculum material becomes a survival strategy. This, in turn, leads to a reliance on formulaic teaching and packaged, commoditised curricula that can impede the capacity of teachers and schools to respond flexibly to students' and communities' educational needs. The growing trend for an increase of centralised performance indicators, criteria, and standardised curriculum guidelines, coupled with a state system's decline in resources, is likely to lead to the subcontracting and outsourcing of educational work to business (Luke, 1993). Pearson and Valencia (1987) comment that if "there is no room or need for teacher judgment in the assessment process, in instructional decision-making, or in the delivery of instruction" (p. 5), what is the role of the teacher? This trend needs to be examined very carefully in terms of the provision of educational opportunity for all members of the community. As Pearson (1987) also comments, "assessment schemes which fail to capitalize upon the expertise and contextual advantage of classroom teachers ignore what may be the richest source of data for making instructional decisions" (p. 10).

The issue of deskilling raises the issue of skilling. There are a number of American studies that highlight the limited nature of teacher preparation in relation to the assessment and evaluation of literacy (Hiebert & Calfee, 1989). The situation is similar for the preparation of Australian teachers. In the document commonly referred to, in Australia, as the Christie report, Teaching English Literacy: A Project of National Significance on the Preservice Preparation of Teachers for Teaching English Literacy (Christie, 1991a) there are many references to the limited preparation of teachers in the areas of English language and literacy. For instance, the report states that:

It is difficult to generalise about the proportions of teaching programs devoted to English language and literacy, .... However, we can observe that almost all staff interviewed in the course of this inquiry expressed dissatisfaction with the present proportions of programs devoted to language and literacy. (Vol 1, p. 77)
Responses from the employing authorities also commented on the total proportion of programmes devoted to language and literacy studies.

A number referred specifically to the fact that it was possible for some teachers to be prepared without undergoing any studies in language and literacy.

The Assistant Deputy Secretary (Education) in Tasmania (Mr. H. E. Price), wrote that 'given the nexus between language and learning, there is a need for a significantly greater proportion of teacher preparation time to be devoted to literacy studies. At present the time available is inadequate, denying teachers scope to achieve a sufficient depth of understanding of many aspects of literacy development'.

(Christie, 1991a, Vol. 1, pp.77–78)


The Corcoran consultancy expressed serious reservations about the lack of quality controls in the delivery by higher education institutions of literacy teacher education programs both of the preservice and professional development kind. This complemented evidence produced in the Christie Report. (p. 87)

In an individual submission to the Council, Dr. Watkins (Director - Educational Planning, Department of Education and the Arts, Tasmania) made the following suggestion: "Considerable attention needs to be given to improve teachers' skills in monitoring and assessing individual student progress in literacy" (Australian Language and Literacy Council & National Board of Employment, Education and Training, 1995, p. 73).

The Australian Language and Literacy Council endorsed the Christie Report recommendation which stated:

That as a compulsory component of their preservice education, all teachers should receive a substantial preparation in knowledge about English language and literacy, and in pedagogical principles for their teaching.

(Christie, 1991a, Recommendation 32, p. 98)

The research undertaken by the Corcoran consultancy demonstrated that in Australian university teacher education programmes, compulsory language and literacy units fell well short of Recommendation 8 from the report Teaching English Literacy: A Project

Recommendation 8: That over a four year period of study, student teachers should complete a program 20 per cent: (or about six semester units) of which is devoted to language and literacy studies.
(Christie, 1991a, Vol.1, p. 80)

There is little published evidence to support any contention that Australian teachers receive sufficient preparation in assessment, evaluation or reporting issues in their undergraduate courses. The need to improve the theoretical and practical knowledge of literacy assessment and reporting for teachers of the 21st century is evident. The need to undertake research to identify what influences teachers' acquisition of literacy related knowledge is also an important part of this process.

2.5. Teacher Judgement

2.5.1. Theories of Teacher Judgement

Within the British context, research into teachers' decision making in the classroom is well documented (Eggleston, 1979). However, published research projects investigating aspects of teachers' assessment judgements appear to be more rare. One interesting study is the National Assessment in Primary Schools (NAPS) project which was completed by a consortium of the University of London Institute of Education and King's College, London. The Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1988 in England and Wales brought about extensive changes to education. Curriculum is defined by programmes of study and attainment targets which pupils are expected to have reached at certain stages of their schooling. A similar situation developed in Australia with the National Statements and Profiles in each of the eight key learning areas. The British national assessment programme requires that pupils be assessed against all the attainment targets by a combination of their teachers and external tests. The National Assessment in Primary Schools (NAPS) project was to monitor the implementation of the new national assessment system. One focus of this project was on the development of teachers' assessment practices and this meant investigating how teacher assessment was carried out (McCallum, Gipps, McAlister & Brown, 1995). The initial project, in 1991, which attempted "to elicit detailed, explicit accounts of how teachers made their assessments", failed (McCallum, et al., 1995, p. 59). The reasons for the failure, given by the researchers, are as follows:
In the 1991 interviews we found teachers unable to describe their TA [teacher assessment - explanation added] practices in any detail. Many of the interviews yielded vague descriptions of collecting evidence and details of record keeping and planning:
I keep a folder for each child with pieces of work, a bit of this, a bit of that as you go along. I looked at my notebook, my lists, the children's books and exercise books. From that I could work out their level.

Teachers found it difficult to describe precisely what they used to determine the levels of attainment and how they reached this decision. Even where teachers claimed that they used ATs, [attainment targets - explanation added ], it was not clear how they had done so. One teacher's method of assessing English, for example, was to look at two or three exercise books from one child, 'refer to the Attainment Target' and assign a level. (McCallum, et al., 1995, p. 60)

A second study involving Year 2 teachers in each of 32 schools was mounted in 1992. A combination of techniques was used in this second study: classroom observations; a sorting activity based on the extraction of quotations about teacher assessment from the 1991 study; interviews; and a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. As a result of the second study (McCallum, et al., 1995) the research team identified three models which varied along a dimension of systematicness, integration with teaching and ideological underpinning. In relation to implementing the national assessment programme, the three models of teacher assessment which seemed to emerge from these studies were called Intuitives, Evidence Gatherers and Systematic Planners. The category Intuitives contained recognisable sub-groups named as Children's Needs Ideologists and Tried and Tested Methodologists and within the category Systematic Planners there were two sub-groups identified as Systematic Assessors and Systematic Integrators. The key characteristics of all the categories in the teacher assessment models are listed in Table 6 (McCallum, et al., 1995).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intuitives</th>
<th>Sub-group A</th>
<th>Sub-group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children's Needs Ideologists</td>
<td>Tried and Tested Methodologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reliance on memory</td>
<td>• confident</td>
<td>• less confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• rejection of systematic recording</td>
<td>• articulate</td>
<td>• resistant to ongoing recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• minimal adopters of national assessment</td>
<td>• child-centered view of curriculum, teaching and learning</td>
<td>• rely mainly on their own personal judgements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• resist criterion referencing</td>
<td>• critical of the Standard Assessment Tasks</td>
<td>• assessment tends to be summative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(external tests used in Britain in the national assessment programme to assess students against the attainment targets)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• prefer holistic approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• see teaching and assessment as simultaneous process</td>
<td>• do not believe in teaching and assessment as simultaneous process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence Gatherers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• gathers evidence which proves what has been done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• emphasis on written work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• aware of national (British) assessment procedures and willing to adapt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• systematic assessment is seen as a threat to relationships with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• assessment is accommodated within existing systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use summative assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• gather evidence in abundance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systematic Planners</th>
<th>Sub-group A</th>
<th>Sub-group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systematic Assessors</td>
<td>Systematic Integrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• planning time specifically for assessment</td>
<td>• daily concentrated time to one group of children for assessment purposes</td>
<td>• do not separate themselves from rest of class while gathering evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• embrace (British) national assessment requirements</td>
<td>• assessment is diagnostic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• assessment is diagnostic</td>
<td>• teacher interprets statements of attainments and devises assessment techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• plan for assessment on a systematic basis</td>
<td>• use multiple assessment techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use multiple assessment techniques</td>
<td>• assess children both formatively and summatively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• assess children both formatively and summatively</td>
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</table>
2.5.2. Teacher Thinking and Decision Making

Much of the research into teacher judgement is found in the literature on research on teacher thinking (Carlgren, Handal & Vaage, 1994; Clark, 1988; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990, 1993; Eggleston, 1979; Elbaz, 1981, 1991; Lyons, 1990; Marland, 1993; Munby, 1982; Russell & Munby, 1992). Teachers' thought processes, the relationship between teachers' behaviour and teachers' thinking, and the whole field of teachers' reflective thought has been an active area of research for psychologists, sociologists and educationists over the last 20 years. However, it is interesting to note that in the 1973, Second Handbook of Research on Teaching, which was at the time state-of-the-art, the topic, teachers' thinking, was not identified. The topic, teachers' thought processes, appeared for the first time in the 1986 Third Handbook of Research on Teaching (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Wittrock, 1986). Describing the mental lives of teachers (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 255), understanding complex human cognitive functioning, and explaining the interactive processes that affect teachers' decision making in the classroom are all relevant to teacher judgement.

Researchers on teachers' thinking have investigated the thinking that teachers do while interacting with students in the classroom. Some research has centred on mapping the interactive decisions of teachers and describes the influences on such decisions. Much of this research has been done in the context of resultant changes of student outcomes and teacher planning. Many of the studies reported in the considerable review of research on teachers' thought processes (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Wittrock, 1986) deal with what was going on in teachers' minds as they taught their classes. The research methodology used techniques such as laboratory studies, video taping of classes, simulated recall interviews and self reports. Teachers' responses as to what they were thinking about and responding to in each situation, were statistically analysed. The results were reported in terms of categories directly related to the teacher's task of teaching - objectives, subject matter, instructional process, the learner, materials and time.

Another major area of research in teachers' thought is concerned with teachers' interactive decision making (Clark & Peterson, 1986). The methodological problems involved with probing the unconscious have resulted in research studies that have investigated teachers' conscious decision making during classroom instruction. A third major area of research into teacher thinking is concerned with identifying the behaviours of effective teachers. Much of this research involves studies comparing expert and novice teachers' reactions to different situations. Calderhead (1981)
analysed the comments of beginning and experienced teachers to researcher
descriptions of classroom critical incidents. Calderhead concluded that there was a
marked difference in the nature and sophistication of their interpretations and
understanding of classroom events. His results demonstrate that beginning teachers
seem to either lack the conceptual structures to make sense of incidents depicted, or to
have simple undifferentiated structures. In addition, novice teachers do not seem to
extract the same kind or level of meaning from the description of the critical incident as
do the experienced teachers.

In the 1980s cognitive psychologists used the word “schema” to describe the way
knowledge is stored in memory (schematic cognitive structures). What Calderhead
had begun to consider was the significance of the development of teachers’ tacit
knowledge. The research that investigates teachers’ implicit theories of teaching and
learning attempts to make explicit, and therefore visible, the frames of reference that
teachers use to make their judgements in the classroom. Studies based on teachers’
implicit theories tend to utilise methodological techniques such as ethnographic
participant observation, clinical interviews and simulated recall. In research terms it is
a difficult task to tease out personally held belief systems, values and principles, and
encourage teachers to make these explicit descriptions of their cognitive frames of
reference. This is problematic research as the very descriptions researchers give to
another person’s reality may change the perspective being described (Bolster, 1983;
Munby, 1982).

Much of the research reported above on teachers’ thinking demonstrates a
concentration of research investigating the topic at a micro level of analysis.
Researchers have tended to focus on relatively discrete and isolated aspects of
teachers’ thoughts and actions, thought process being analysed within the context of
the individual teacher’s classroom. Research in the 1990s has taken a much broader
view of context. Studies have emerged that take into consideration concepts of context
from a psychological, a sociological and a linguistic context. Methodological
techniques sensitive to the nature of the investigations have taken a long time to
develop. Collaborative research between researcher and teacher has been one of the
new research initiatives (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Narrative inquiry, although
having a long history as a data collecting methodology in such fields as history,
psychology, anthropology and literary theory, is relatively new in studies of
educational experience. The study of narrative is the study of the ways humans
experience the world. In education the construction and reconstruction of personal and
social stories is an area of research increasingly using narrative inquiry. Connelly and
Clandinin (1990) outlined a number of research techniques used in narrative inquiry:
field notes of shared experience, interviews, journal records, story telling, letter writing and autobiographical and biographical writing. Within teacher thinking research, the collaborative nature of narrative inquiry has considerable potential to support researchers and practitioners working together to construct knowledge. In more recent times the work of the Swedish researcher Ference Marton (Marton, 1981; Marton, 1994) has opened up new ways of understanding teachers' thinking. Working from a phenomenological perspective, Marton developed a form of research methodology known as phenomenography. The word 'phenomenography' was coined in 1979 (Marton, 1981).

Marton questions the dualism between mind and world embedded in much of the research on teachers' thinking. He argues that thinking is something taking place between individuals and the world, it is not something that takes place only within a person or something that belongs to persons.

(Carlsgren, et al., 1994, p. 7).

Marton's phenomenographic technique concentrates on researching teacher awareness and intentionality. Phenomenography attempts to describe and understand teachers' ways of thinking, how people conceive, experience, perceive, how people make decisions, solve problems and understand different aspects of the world.

This is done by investigating people's conceptions. From a phenomenographic point of view a conception is a way of seeing something. Phenomenography is based on the assumption that the conceptions of a single object differ among people. Differences in conceptions are explained by the fact that different people have different experiences due to their different relations to the world. People then make different analyses and arrive at different knowledge about the object concerned. Phenomenographic research attempts to describe these differences.

(Alexandersson, 1994, p. 140)

An important assumption that research of this nature makes is that language is an expression of social interaction rather than a representation of the 'inner thought' of an individual. Alexandersson (1994) investigated the experiences of twelve primary teachers using a phenomenographic approach. The study involved describing and analysing the ways in which primary school teachers reflect on their everyday work. The research question was: towards what do teachers direct their consciousness when they teach? The collection of data took an average of half a day for each teacher, and each session comprised three stages: video-recording, limited to one lesson (between forty and sixty minutes); commentary, in which the teacher commented freely upon the documentary film; follow-up discussion, and a semi-structured interview. The video was used as a simulated recall method to remind teachers of their own thought
processes during a previous lesson. After the video viewing the teachers were asked to address the following three questions: i) What were you thinking about during the sequences you are now viewing? ii) What were you doing? iii) Why did you do what you did in that particular way? (Alexandersson, 1994, p. 142). The results of this research are extensively reported in Alexandersson's article. However, the main results can be briefly summarised as follows: teacher consciousness during the act of teaching is directed towards the activity, the aims of general character, and of a specific content.

What is particularly interesting about Alexandersson's research is the methodology used to study teachers' thinking. Basically, a phenomenographic approach was used in this study of teachers' thoughts. It is this area of research that has opened up new methodology in our understanding of what influences teachers' judgements.

2.5.3. **Teacher Judgement of Literacy Development**

In relation to teachers' judgement of students' literacy development, it would appear reasonable to state that effective, efficient and powerful teaching and learning environments rely on informed teachers who can combine the attributes of observation, intuition, analysis, interpretation, synthesis and judgement. In addition, teachers need to be personally and publicly articulate about their theoretical beliefs and practices (Eisner, 1993b; Engel, 1994; Ornstein & Berlin, 1995; Wolf, 1993). It would also seem logical to argue that accurate assessment must precede informed decision making, which will lead to improved student learning. Shepard's (1991) study of research based methodological applications and perspectives on teacher thinking suggests that teachers' classroom practices can be understood in terms of their beliefs or implicit theories about instruction and learning. However, as C. Clark (1988) points out:

> These implicit theories are not neat and complete reproductions of the educational psychology found in textbooks or lecture notes. Rather, teachers' implicit theories tend to be eclectic aggregations of cause-effect propositions from many sources, rules of thumb, generalizations drawn from personal experiences, beliefs, values, biases, and prejudices. (p. 6)

Central to the issue of teacher judgement are questions pertaining to why and how teachers make their decisions. It is interesting to read, in publications on teachers' assessment and reporting practices, statements such as the following:
Teachers have many opportunities to observe students' literacy development. In their day to day monitoring of progress they watch students using language 'naturally' in an integrated way: participating in class activities, contributing to class discussions, interacting with other students, reading aloud and drafting written work. The information teachers gain through this observation is used immediately to inform practice, to respond to students' special needs and to add to the overall picture of their progress as learners. (Forster, 1995, p. 1)

This statement raises many questions. What is it that teachers are observing? Why do teachers think that one aspect of behaviour is worth reporting yet another is not? Why does one observation constitute significant behaviour to one teacher but not another? What do teachers use as their frame of reference for interpreting their observations? (Section 2.4 described some of the literacy learning continua available to Victorian teachers.) Do teachers base their judgements on their own collective wisdom and experience, or do they use published expert documentation on what constitutes significant performances? It is to be expected that teachers find some solutions in curriculum books and curricular guides distributed by their respective state education departments. However, the key issue relevant to the present research is the influence of the teacher's personal value systems on the judgements each makes. The model of curriculum that each teacher holds, the model of assessment and evaluation, the selection of assessment techniques and the theory of organisation that each teacher uses to structure the learning environment are all reflections of personal values.

Literature searches reveal a considerable amount of research into teacher judgements and students' literacy developments over the past 20 years. Investigating the judgement of the academic achievement levels of students is particularly important because many decisions about students are based on teachers' perceptions of students' performance levels. Examples include screening and diagnostic decisions; classification and placement decisions; instructional planning and curriculum delivery; student evaluation and progress statements and program evaluation (Hoge, 1983). However, it is noteworthy that a great deal of this research includes studies into the variance between teachers' assessment of students' achievement, and the traditional notion of an objective measure of students' learning. The objective measure of learning turns out to be a norm referenced test in many cases. Accuracy of teacher judgement has been researched in this manner (Egan & Archer, 1985; Hoge & Butcher, 1984; Sharpley & Edgar, 1986). One argument forwarded in the 1980s was that commercial tests were a valuable source of objective information for teachers about their students' strengths and weaknesses. The corollary is that teachers who rate
their students' academic achievement without such information may be in error with their judgements (Egan & Archer, 1985).

Hoge and Butcher (1984) asked 12 classroom teachers to rate 322 students on four rating measures. The measures were as follows:

i) an estimate of performance on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test
ii) an estimate of confidence in that rating
iii) a rating of the student's basic intellectual ability,
iv) a rating of the student's motivation to do school work.

Two standardised tests were administered to the students: the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and the Verbal subscales of the Canadian Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test (Hoge & Butcher, 1984). The results of this study indicate a very close association between the teachers' judgement of academic achievement and the standardised achievement test scores. There was also very little evidence that student gender functions as a source of bias in the teachers' judgements. The data provides some evidence that student ability functions as a biasing factor. Some teachers overestimated the performance of high-ability students and underestimated the performance of low-ability students. The following results were reported:

The results of this study are, on the whole, encouraging.
They demonstrate that teachers are capable of making accurate judgments of the achievement levels of their pupils and that they are not overly influenced by pupil gender in making those judgments.
(Hoge & Butcher, 1984, p. 781)

An interesting issue omitted in this study, and many similar studies, is the unquestioned assumption that the standardised tests used as the reference to judge teachers' judgements are valid instruments themselves. This issue has been raised through half a century of research related to measurement and teacher judgement (Scates, 1943). The unquestioned belief inherent to Hoge's study is that the standardised reading test and the intelligence measure are in themselves valid benchmarks against which to judge teachers' judgements of students' achievement levels (Shepard, 1993). In reference to literacy, which encompasses reading and writing ability, there is a need to question the underlying assumption that it is possible to construct universal measures of such abilities that are both valid and reliable (White & Gunstone, 1992; Wolf, et al., 1991). At a 1992 UNESCO Conference entitled Adult Literacy: An International Urban Perspective, Street made the following statement that complements the situation outlined above:
The shift in what constitutes literacy as an object of study has involved a further shift in how we might study it. If literacy consists of the social practices of reading and writing—rather than of a cognitive skill, such as decoding text—then research on literacy has to be able to take account of social context and of social change. Literacy practices vary from one context and one time to another, so research methods have to be devised that are sensitive to this variation. In recent years more qualitative approaches to literacy have come to supplant the dominant quantitative paradigm that still probably rules International Agencies and popular discourses on literacy. (Street, 1994, p. 233)

Following a 10 year study of achievement in written composition that involved students, teachers and researchers in 14 countries, Purves (1992) concludes that:

A great deal of writing research refers to the constructs of writing, writing ability, or writing performance as if each were a clearly defined entity possessing some unitary character that can be quantified. (p. 109)

Logically and empirically there seems little merit in reference to a unitary construct writing. (p. 112)

In a study investigating students' writing performances Mc Kendy (1992) states:

In my mind the process of measuring writing ability was becoming a little like trying to measure a cloud: no one could quite define where the edges were, and the wind was blowing anyway. I began to suspect that my causal assumption of the existence of a measurable entity called "writing ability" exemplified the fallacy of reification, a fallacy that Stephen Jay Gould has shown in The Mismeasure of Man (1981) to be commonplace in the measurement community. (McKendy, 1992, p. 156)

Coladarci (1986) investigated the accuracy of teacher judgements of student responses to items on a standardised SRA (Science Research Associates) Achievement Series. The study involved six students from each of four third grade and four fifth grade classes. For each of their six students, teachers were asked to predict whether or not the student had responded correctly to specific items on the standardised achievement test which had previously been administered to students in the district. Coladarci reports that the results of the investigation demonstrated (i) aggregate measures of teachers' judgements of their students' responses correlated positively and substantially with aggregate measures of students' actual responses; (ii) teachers accurately judged their students' responses to individual items for approximately three quarters of the total number of test items (across all items on the four subtests, teachers correctly gauged 73.81% of the students' responses); (iii) the accuracy of
teachers' judgements varied significantly as a function of subtests; (iv) there were significant individual differences among teachers in the accuracy of their judgements; and (v) teachers were least accurate in judging low-performance students and most accurate in judging high-performance students (for all subtests, some students were judged correctly for fewer than half of the test items, whereas other students were judged correctly for nearly all of the test items) (Coladardi, 1986). This research demonstrates yet again the unquestioned assumption that the standardised test used as the reference to judge the accuracy of teachers' judgement is in itself a valid instrument. The study reports that the test used is appropriate: "the SRA Achievement Series (Science Research Associates, Inc., 1978) - a test of demonstrated content validity with respect to the district's curriculum" (Coladardi, 1986, p. 142). Is the reader to assume that the teachers teach to the test? In relation to research design issues, the question arises, is a multiple choice achievement test the most suitable technique to choose to measure and provide the benchmark on which to gauge the accuracy of teachers' judgements? Another issue not addressed in this study is the fact that there was no control of the variable 'teacher experience'.

It is worth noting that these similar results from the two studies were obtained from two quite different contextual settings. The American context is often referred to as a 'measurement-driven instructional' model whereas the UK experience is of school-based assessment and teacher assessment (Torrance, 1995).

An interesting, and recent, development in the research into teacher judgement is the work examining the concept of 'teacher as instrument'. Such research suggests that teachers are the primary assessment instrument in students' educational lives. The research has examined how teachers make sense of their students' literacy development: the beliefs, values and social context involved in that construction (Johnston, Afflerbach & Weiss, 1993). Earlier work in this field investigated teacher's knowledge and the experiential base on which it is founded (Elbaz, 1981). Reference to the practical knowledge and the cognitive style of a teacher can be found in the earlier literature. Elbaz worked with an experienced high school English teacher. Using a case study approach consisting of a series of open-ended discussions, she explored the concept of practical knowledge and documented the subject matter, curriculum, practical, personal and interactive aspects of a teacher's knowledge (Elbaz, 1981). Cambourne (1987, 1988, 1990; Cambourne & Turbill, 1994), who has written extensively on literacy teaching and literacy assessment and evaluation by Australian teachers, refers to the implicit theories of teachers as tacit knowledge. The tacit dimension of knowing is part of Polanyi's epistemology of knowledge put forward in his seminal work Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical
Philosophy (Polanyi, 1958) and expanded in later work (Polanyi, 1967). In the professional development package entitled Frameworks: Assessment and Evaluation Module Revised Edition, (Cambourne, Turbill, Butler & Langton, 1994) the authors constantly refer to the notion of 'human-as-instrument' and the 'tacit' or 'intuitive' knowledge of teachers. Human-as-instrument refers to a belief that the human mind can be thought of as an effective and valid instrument of evaluation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Tacit knowledge, in this context, refers to cumulative understandings teachers build up over years of interaction with children, curriculum delivery and development, schooling processes and the decision making involved in the assessment and evaluation of literacy. The concept of tacit knowledge and human-as-instrument are central to the Frameworks: Assessment and Evaluation module Revised Edition and are outlined below.

As experienced professionals we have developed and continue to develop a great deal of unconscious or implicit "know how" about learning, reading, writing and spelling; this includes how these are learned as well as what makes an effective reader, writer or speller. This unconscious know how is referred to as intuitive or tacit knowledge by responsive evaluators. The key instrument which orchestrates this tacit knowledge is the human mind. (Cambourne, et al., 1994, p. 14)

What is crucial to the current study is both the existence of tacit knowledge in teachers' judgement processes, and the influences on the development of such an attribute. The research presented in this dissertation was designed to investigate and attempt to describe the existence of influences such as tacit knowledge on teacher judgement. Methodologically, by working with articulate, experienced teachers, the researcher expected to be able to observe and document literacy assessment practices in the classroom and then through interactive discussion with the participating teachers tease out the influences on their internalised beliefs.

Purposefully selecting articulate experienced teachers maximised the researcher's ability to question the actions and underlying theoretical and philosophical beliefs of the teachers. The establishment of a collegiate, trusting and professional partnership between the researcher and the participating teachers was essential and achieved because of the long term association between the researcher, the schools and teachers involved. This partnership raises interesting questions related to this study: are the influences on inarticulate, inexperienced teachers different from the articulate and experienced teachers? Do inarticulate, inexperienced teachers use different reference points and different literacy assessment and evaluation processes to experienced teachers? However, for this research study, to have participating teachers who could
explicitly explain, describe their actions and attempt to analyse the underlying reasons for their literacy assessment judgements it was considered essential to systematically select the participating teachers in this study.

2.5.4. The Place of Teacher Judgement in the Assessment and Evaluation of Students' Literacy Development

In Australia, for over two decades, we have experienced the significant influence of writers and researchers such as Frank Smith, Ken Goodman and Yetta Goodman, Donald Graves and Brian Cambourne, as well as the approach to language learning and teaching known as the whole language movement. Australian teachers have also experienced the influence of the genre theorists Frances Christie, Joan Rothery, and Jim Martin. In relation to the assessment and evaluation of students’ literacy development, the educational community has witnessed the use of teacher observation as a major strategy for collecting data on which to base evaluative judgements about students' literacy progress.

Studies undertaken in America in the 1980s (Salmon-Cox, 1981; Stiggins & Bridgeford, 1985) indicate that teachers supplement test scores with observation based modes of assessment to obtain information for decision making. The research by Salmon-Cox (1981) on how teachers assess their students indicates overwhelmingly that observation was the most frequently mentioned technique. However, the research did not investigate why teachers chose the techniques.

Stiggins and Bridgeford (1985) undertook a study designed to probe assessment practices in a stratified sample of teachers selected from eight districts across the country. Each district recruited 48 teachers to complete a comprehensive questionnaire on classroom assessment. In each of the grades two, five, eight, and eleven, 12 teachers were selected to participate. "Of those 12 teachers at each grade level, 3 were asked to describe the methods they used in measuring writing skills, 3 the methods used to assess speaking skills, 3 science skills, and 3 math achievement" (p. 272). The study sought to investigate the role and relative importance of several types of measurement in the classroom: (a) teacher designed tests; (b) published tests; and (c) structured and spontaneous performance assessments. Performance assessments were defined as the "observation and rating of student behaviour and products in contexts where students actually demonstrate proficiency" (Stiggins & Bridgeford, 1985, p. 273). The questionnaire included one major set of questions probing teachers' use of each specified assessment option and a set of questions investigating teachers' concerns about each individual
type of test; the remaining items focussed specifically on structured performance assessment. Among the many results reported from the Stiggins and Bridgeford research the following are noteworthy in relation to the current study:

i) "Nearly 95% of respondents report use of spontaneous performance assessments" (p. 275) and "seventy-eight percent of the teachers completing the questionnaire reported using structured performance assessments in their classrooms" (p. 278);

ii) Teachers indicated that they used their own objective tests more frequently than other assessments for all purposes;

iii) "Across grade levels, teacher-made objective tests and structured performance tests gradually increase in importance whereas reliance on published and spontaneous performance tests declines". (p. 277)

These results are interesting and add yet another piece to the teacher judgement and assessment puzzle. However, a limitation of the Stiggins and Bridgeford (1985) study pertains to the sole use of questionnaires to ascertain teachers' assessment practices. Questionnaires may reflect what teachers say they do; however, issues such as the content of the test and action taken as a result of the information collected require more sensitive data collection techniques. The Stiggins and Bridgeford study does not address the question of why the teachers chose the assessment practices identified. Their study highlights the need for a research design more suited to ascertaining the underlying influences on the teachers' choices. In addition, the research design needs to involve prolonged engagement with participants to resolve the difference between what teachers say and what they actually do in literacy assessment practices.

In the 1980s and 1990s teacher observation became known as kid watching, a term coined by Yetta Goodman in the 1980s.

Observation is the primary method of gathering data for evaluation in a whole language classroom. Goodman stated "whole language teachers are constant kid watchers" (1986, p. 41). This observation or kid watching can take many forms. It can be as informal as watching the child play games on the playground to using a checklist while conducting an interview with the child. Regardless of the structure of the observation, using observations for assessment and evaluation should not be undervalued. Observation can be very powerful in developing a complete picture of a child's literacy development. (Cockrum & Castillo, 1993, p. 77)

This period marked a change in thinking about assessment and evaluation strategies. There was an increased use of teacher observation of students' behaviour and classroom activities indicating literacy performance. This change may be attributed to a
concern for authentic or real life assessment and evaluation situations (Blintz &
Harste, 1994; Y. Goodman, 1985; Pearson & Valencia, 1987; Scates, 1943; Valencia,
Wolf, 1992). Authentic assessment refers to selecting techniques, strategies and
situations that reflect the reality of the ability or achievement that needs to be assessed
or evaluated. In measurement terms, authentic assessment refers to the validity of the
techniques being used to assess students' performances (Shepard, 1991; Shepard,
1993). Several terms are currently used to describe alternatives to standardised tests.
Worthen (1993) reports that in the USA "the most common include direct assessment,
authentic assessment, performance assessment, and the more generic alternative
assessment" (p. 445).

However, not all writers using the same terms give them the same meaning. A reader
needs to be aware of the meanings ascribed to the same terms by the various writers in
this new field of assessment. In Australia, Forster and Masters (1996a) comment that:
"short answer questions and essays, for example, are sometimes called 'performance
assessments'. This is not what we mean. The term performance assessment is also
sometimes used to refer to 'authentic' assessments of real world, on-the-job
performances. This is not what we mean either" (p. 1).

In Britain the situation was similar to the USA.

It is now widely accepted that when multiple-choice, norm
referenced standardised tests were used as administrative
devices to implement education policies during the last two
decades, they adversely affected the system. Because of the
high stakes associated with their use, these tests drove
instruction and narrowed curriculum. Further, the tests
measured low-level knowledge and skills. Teaching to such
tests eventually corrupted their validity as indicators of
achievement, and test results gave the nation an incorrect
picture of achievement levels and progress.
(Madaus & Kellaghan, 1993, p. 458)

The decontextualised nature of norm referenced testing highlights the very issue that
became problematic as educationists searched for 'authentic' assessment and
evaluation techniques. A line of reasoning that became prevalent was that assessment
procedures must be applied to the act in process or at least applied in a realistic
manner. "Observation is one way to do this and can lead teachers to meaningful
insights about the progress and needs of individual students" (Farr, 1992, p. 31).
This belief in the importance of judgements based on teachers' observations of
students in the classroom can be found in much of the literacy assessment and
evaluation literature of the 1980s and 1990s. For example, the 1985 policy on
evaluation published by the Canadian Council of the Teachers of English makes the following statement in support of teacher observation.

... The teacher's judgement must be the main determiner of the performance of his/her students, and he/she will employ a variety of measures and observations to inform that judgement. Tests or examinations extrinsic to the classroom should play only a subordinate role in any determination of student achievement. (Anthony, et al., 1991, p. 10)

The NSW Department of School Education quite clearly supports teacher judgement based on a range of assessment gathering techniques including observation.

- Assessment of student achievement requires the professional judgement of the teacher who considers all the evidence collected over time and makes an 'on balance' judgement.

- In an outcomes and profiles approach, teachers make this 'on balance' judgement by referring to a clearly defined framework of levels, outcomes, pointers and work samples. (Curriculum Directorate, New South Wales Department of School Education, 1994a, p. 7)

These are examples of the types of comments that teachers make about their observations and judgements:

- I am planning to look at one piece of writing per child per week ...

... there will be things I "know" about each child from:
- "gut" feelings
- class observations
- anecdotal records. (Meiers, 1994a, p. 47)

During inservice we were told that assessment is part of teaching. ie. [sic] you can do most of it in the classroom while teaching. However, I do not find it possible to teach effectively while writing notes on my students as I am fully occupied with assisting individual students with their learning activities. (Eltis, 1995, p. 30)

Teachers make observations about students' behaviour (for example, ability to understand; ability to interpret a variety of texts; competence in planning, editing and reviewing own writing; articulation skills; attitude to work) and from these observations make judgements about students' progress in literacy. Teachers' judgements may be a single judgement or a combination of any number of different
ways of making decisions. A number of different ways teachers make judgements are listed below:

- **subjective** - performance assessment and evaluation
- **objective** - test formats which have a right or wrong response
- **holistic** - a single rating which reflects an overall/global impression of performance
- **intuitive** - insight based on experience
- **discipline specific** - judgements made in relation to each separate content area (key learning area)
- **analytical** - teachers may judge the piece of work, or task, from a number of different perspectives separately.

At this point it is important to reflect on the changes that have occurred in the paradigms of knowing. In what has become known as a paradigm shift, major differences of opinion developed amongst researchers as to their beliefs in how humans know what they know. In the early part of the 20th century a positivist paradigm prevailed. To prove the existence of something a researcher had to be able to measure it, to quantify the existence of the object under examination. However, in the latter part of the 20th century, in what is called the post positivist era, qualitatively different ways of knowing became valued. Personal experience, individual case studies and non random selection of research participants were but three of the many techniques that researchers used in qualitative studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For over 50 years these two paradigms competed with each other. Researchers using positivist techniques have been very critical of the qualitative methods used by researchers of the post positivist era.

The powerful influence of scientific objectivity and a concern for issues of validity and reliability have meant that teacher observation and judgement have historically been controversial topics of discussion (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Erickson, 1986). MacGinitie (1993) points out that there are many biases and errors of judgement that can influence the accuracy and reliability of a teacher's decision. These include:

- **pre-judging** - teachers who have been able to observe students for extended periods of time are in a position to develop expectations of those students. Such expectations can become a source of error in assessment if they contribute to judgements based on preconceived perceptions of students' abilities rather than actual students' performances (Masters & Forster, 1996a).
- **race or cultural stereotyping** - Landy and Farr (1980) undertook a literature review of ratee race effects. A number of studies reviewed indicated significant ratee race
effects, whereas other studies indicated no effect. Similarly, a number of studies found effects of rater race, whereas others did not. They concluded that "raters usually give higher ratings to same-race ratees ..." (p. 78). Kraiger and Ford (1985) examined research studies for ratee race effects involving both black and white raters. They reported that "both black and white raters gave significantly higher ratings to members of their own race" (p. 60).

- **gender stereotyping** - stereotyping on the basis of gender has a long established research history in teacher judgement literature.

- **the halo effect** - documented by E. L. Thorndike in 1920 (Kingsbury, 1922). Saal, Downey and Lahey (1980) state: "the halo effect is consistently conceptualized as a rater's failure to discriminate among conceptually distinct and potentially independent aspects of a ratee's behavior" (p. 415). In relation to educational assessment this means a predetermined judgement based on a subjective evaluation that this particular student is a nice or a good student, or that this particular student scored well in one area and this sheds "a luster over the other qualities as to raise the rating of them to an unwarranted degree" (Kingsbury, 1922, p. 380).

- **confusing achievement with effort** - this can have negative or positive effects on the judgement made of a student's work. Achievement can be assessed at a higher level than the actual performance would suggest based on a judgement rewarding effort rather than performance. Conversely, an assessment can be made to send a message to a student believed to be working below expectation, rather than a judgement based on the quality of the particular piece of work (Masters & Forster, 1996a).

- **negativity bias** - negative descriptors about a student have a disproportionate effect on the impressions formed.

- **category bias** - the stereotypic labels of a category influence assessments made.

- **contrast effect** - the tendency to exaggerate the difference between early evidence and later evidence.

- **assimilation bias** - the tendency to make later judgements fit earlier judgements.

- **confirmation bias** - the tendency to disregard other possibilities once a conclusion has been drawn.

- **proximity error** - the tendency for assessors to give similar assessment judgements on outcomes or criteria that are close together on an assessment form (Masters & Forster, 1996a). In 1949 Stockford and Bissell studied the factors involved in establishing a merit-rating scale for the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. While investigating the influences of leniency and severity, training and halo effects on raters' judgements, they discovered an interesting result. Similar items, close together on the rating scale, had higher inter-correlations for adjacent traits.
However, "as the distance between the various traits was increased, the size of the inter-correlations decreased" (Stockford & Bissell, 1949, p. 104).

- central tendency error - situations where raters are reluctant to make extreme judgements about other individuals (Kingsbury, 1922). The ratings given tend to cluster around the midpoint of the rating scale. Saal, et al. (1980) make a distinction between the concepts central tendency and restricted range judgements. Restricted range judgements refers to situations in which ratings are clustered about any point on the rating continuum. Judgements may be at the favourable (lenient) point, at the midpoint (central tendency) or at the unfavourable point (severe).

- leniency or severity error - "a tendency to assign a higher or lower rating to an individual than is warranted by that ratee's behavior" (Saal, et al., 1980, p. 417). Kneelend (1929) developed rating scales for ascertaining the efficiency of salespersons. The results of her study indicated the existence of a lenient tendency by raters, and that the lenient tendency may have been related to such factors as the following: pride, loyalty, fear of losing an employee, and the possibility of a benefit of the doubt tendency. Kneelend concluded that her rating scales "at best are rather unreliable measures of actual ability" (Kneeland, 1929, p. 365). However, her research did highlight the importance of recognising the tendency toward leniency when interpreting rating scale research results.

Not only is it necessary for teachers to be aware of such issues, but also they need to consider the hidden agenda that exists in any assessment process. Many researchers and writers have stated that the very choice of assessment data signals to students the cultural value placed upon their learning activities (Allard, Cooper, Hildebrand & Wealands, 1995; D. Clarke, 1988; Masters & Forster, 1996a; White & Gunstone, 1992). This point is encapsulated in D. Clarke's (1988) statement:

> It is through our assessment that we communicate to our pupils those things which we most value. We have a professional obligation to ensure that our assessment contributes constructively to the learning of our pupils and to ensure that all those skills and attributes which we most wish to foster receive the recognition of appropriate assessment. (Preface)

### 2.5.4.1. Major Issues Regarding the Reporting of Informal and Formal Teacher Judgement

Subjectivity is a vital consideration pertaining to assessment and evaluation of students' literacy. A conceptual link has been formed between the notions of informal teacher based assessment techniques and subjectivity, unreliability and a lack of scientific rigour (Forster & Masters, 1996a; Masters & Forster, 1996a;
Pearson & Valencia, 1987; Wolf, 1993). Conversely, the conceptual link associated with formal assessment techniques implies the notions of objectivity, reliability and scientific validity (Wolf, 1992). This unfortunate, and highly questionable, association has caused an unnecessary dichotomy between different assessment and evaluation strategies. Such a division has had detrimental consequences on the selection of the most appropriate assessment techniques, resulting in some techniques being chosen for the wrong reasons (Wolf, et al., 1991). For example, the following headline from The Age newspaper: "Patchy report for Victoria's schools" (1989, May 4, p. 1) refers to a study that used a 100 word spelling test as part of a literacy study involving 10-year-olds and 14-year-olds. Such a test is questionable as a valid measure of a student's spelling ability, let alone as an appropriate test of literacy.

A second example, taken from The Weekend Australian (1990, October 27–28, pp. 1 & 6), states that:

The study, entitled Literacy and Numeracy in Victorian Schools: 1988, found that between 1980 and 1988 the number of words spelt incorrectly by 10-year-olds had risen from about four words in every 100 to six words. (p. 1)

However, the two lead headlines from the articles reporting this information are as follows, first: 'SCHOOLS TEST: THE SHOCKING RESULTS FOR OUR CHILDREN. Why the state of our learning offers a sobering education', by F. Devine (p. 1). Secondly, 'Our students lack essential knowledge', by S. Moore (p. 6). (Refer to Appendix I, p. 366) These statements are made on the basis of a 25 minute, 30 question test given to Year 9 students at 36 private schools. The Weekend Australian informs the reader that the "30 questions had been devised on eminent professional advice" (The Weekend Australian, 1990, October 27–28, p. 6). Questions such as the following can be found on the test: Question 20 - It is quarter to four in the afternoon. How long do I have to wait for the train at six past 5? The intriguing issue regarding this test item pertains to what is the correct answer to this question? Is it 1 hour and 21 minutes or 13 hours and 21 minutes? It is impossible to answer this question correctly without knowing whether the train is coming at six past 5 p.m. or a.m. It is also interesting to note that of the 30 questions on this test measuring essential knowledge three could be classified as literacy related. Question 27 - Unjumble two sentences; Question 29 - Proofread five sentences and Question 30 - Match a list of books with their authors.
Table 7 contains a number of published media headline statements that report the results of literacy studies undertaken to ascertain the state of literacy development in an Australian context.

**Example of the Public Media Purportedly Reporting the Results of Literacy Studies in Australia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First formers lag 3 years. (1974, February 6). <em>Chadstone Progress.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% of pupils can't read. (1974, December 10). <em>The Herald.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About 45% of Form 1 and 2 students in Melbourne eastern suburbs Government schools are at least two years retarded in reading. (1975, April 10). <em>The Age</em>, p. 3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost half the children in the survey were more than one year retarded in reading by the time they reached Grade 6. (1975, May 21). <em>The Age.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40% in school can't read. (1976, May 18). <em>The Age.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5m Can't read or Write. An estimated 1.5 million adults in Australia are illiterate, according to the latest research. (1985, August 16). <em>Daily Mirror</em>, p. 5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One child in five has literacy trouble&quot; (1993, February 3). <em>The Age</em>, p. 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Refer to Appendix I for further illuminating newspaper articles.)

It is important to keep in mind that historically the tendency of journalists has been to report the negative rather than the positive. The following three examples spanning a 76 year period from 1917 to 1993 illustrate this point. The common theme of falling standards and a decline in the quality of education is difficult to believe over such a period of time.
"EDUCATION NOTES
ENGLISH

From our endeavor to broaden the schedule of instruction, shallowness appears to have resulted in the fundamentals. Nearly all the inspectors complained of the English which they do or do not find in the primary schools. Reading lacks fluency and expression articulation is defective. The meanings of words have been taught in a mechanical manner but comprehension of poems taught for recitation and of reading lessons is rarely displayed.

Despite the stress that has been laid upon word-building of late years spelling has not yet reached a high standard. Common difficult words do not receive the attention which was once devoted to them. Derivation does not appear to be taught in an interesting manner, nor correlated as it should be with the spelling and other lessons. Oral composition is weak, but written work has improved. The nature study lessons provide the easiest subjects, but good essays and romances are rare. Grammar is the bugbear of most teachers and children, and results are proportionate to the spirit and interest with which both take the lessons. Even writing has not reached the satisfactory stage. What can be expected from the pupils of teachers who are not wide awake enough to get their copies as per Queensland Copybooks. "Back of [sic] the R's" will be a necessary slogan if improvement does not soon show up. (p. 2)


AUSTRALIA'S EDUCATION SCANDAL:
WE'RE TURNING OUT MILLIONS OF DUNCES

THE LAST five years have seen governments in Australia of all political colors lavish unprecedented and unparalleled amounts of public money on education. Vast sums have been spent on all aspects of school from bright new buildings through extensive research and innovation activity to the most expensive cost of all - the support of a much larger and higher-paid army of teachers.

Yet this upsurge in the application of community resources in pursuit of better education has been almost precisely matched by a spreading fear that the schools are failing as education institutions and that the increase in the cost and quantity of schooling has somehow been matched by a decline in the quality of their education. (p. 30)

Primary schools failing students, report finds

Mastering the three "Rs" - reading, writing and arithmetic - is supposed to be central to the education of primary-aged pupils, but a new report has shown that an unacceptably high number are not achieving at least two of these. (p. 20)

However, an interesting report to reflect on is the Literacy and Numeracy in Victorian Schools: 1988 study (McGaw, Long, Morgan & Rosier, 1989). According to the researchers who conducted the study, there had been no change in the level of reading skills of 10-year-old students from 1975 to 1988 or from 1980 to 1988 (Laslett, 1991, p. 45). A researcher will be hard pressed to find the following results reported in the popular media.

In mathematics, standards of achievement among 10-year-olds have been maintained over the period 1975 to 1988, with some evidence of improvement in the levels of achievement of the poorer performing students in the age-group. For 14-year-olds, there was a significant improvement in achievement from 1975 to 1980.

In reading, despite an increase in numbers of students from non-English speaking backgrounds, standards of achievement among 10-year-olds and 14-year-olds have not changed over the period from 1975 to 1988. (McGaw, et al., 1989, p. 102)

The results of large scale testing programmes have often been reported by misleading and controversial journalism. The reporting, which is at best misinformed, and at the worst often biased, may cause a reader to become very cynical about the reasons for the interpretations. Green, Hodgens and Luke (1994a, 1994b, 1997), produced a very enlightening documentary history entitled Debating Literacy in Australia: A Documentary History, 1945 - 1994. The report documents the historical literacy debate and gives an insightful perspective to the changes in cultural and political influences on literacy. The work by Green et al highlights the differences between the journalistic reporting of literacy achievement and the factual documentation of the historical studies related to literacy testing.

The issue for the current study is the relationship such media headlines have to teachers' literacy assessment practices in the classroom. Are teachers' literacy judgements influenced by this accountability strategy?
The choice of assessment techniques must be governed by the purpose for which the information is needed. Choosing a strategy for the wrong reason can be a destructive experience for the student and provide incorrect and misleading information for the teacher. Decisions based on such information may not be valid, as Pearson (1987) points out:

The lure of objectivity associated with commercially published tests and the corollary taint of subjectivity associated with informal assessment pushes teachers further and further away from instructional decision-making. For some reason, teachers are taught (and apparently learn) that the data from either standardized or end-of-unit basal tests are somehow more trustworthy than the data they collect each day as part of the normal course of teaching. The price we pay for such a lesson is high since it reduces the likelihood that teachers will use data they collect themselves for decision-making within their classrooms. (p. 9)

This sentiment is also echoed by Wolf (1992) who states: "many have come to believe that the most valuable and valid information about student learning comes not from the occasional, isolated, snapshot of student performance, but from those who work closely with students on a daily basis" (p. 2). It is also worth noting that the aim of achieving objective assessment techniques that are both reliable and valid is more elusive than most stakeholders realise.

Assessment must be recognised as an 'inexact process which involves varying degrees of errors of both measurement and judgement.' Subjectivity cannot be totally removed from any assessment process: even so-called 'objective' testing requires subjective judgements to be made about which items should be included! (Allard, et al., 1995, p. 95)

An additional problem arises: when "some assessment tools become officially sanctioned, teachers tend not to rely on their own assessment skills to make important instructional decisions; ironically, of course, the data a teacher collects has the greatest potential for influencing day-to-day student learning" (Pearson & Valencia, 1987, p. 9).

The work of Cambourne and the team of researchers (Cambourne & Turbill, 1994; Cambourne, et al., 1994) who have been examining the concept of 'human-as-instrument' have argued strongly against the criticism of subjectivity levelled at teachers making literacy judgements. They argue that the human can be a sensitive, reliable, trustworthy, credible instrument of data collection, as the following statement reveals: "the human is a responsive instrument which can respond to all the personal
and environmental cues which exist in the assessment context by drawing on the tacit knowledge gained through experience in the field" (Cambourne, et al., 1994, p. 15).

The concept of tacit knowledge, to which Cambourne refers, has constantly recurred throughout historical philosophical writings. Polanyi (Gelwick, 1977; Polanyi, 1958, 1967; Polanyi & Prosch, 1975) may well have been the first writer to use the term tacit knowledge when referring to personal knowledge. Polanyi (1958, 1967) rejected the notion of scientific detachment, forwarded the idea that personal participation of the knower in all acts of understanding was essential, and defended the criticism that personal participation does not make the understanding of human beings subjective and therefore without objective merit. The human mind is capable of storing information, clarifying, processing, exploring, summarising, and cross-checking simultaneously, hence as an instrument for decision making it is a highly effective and efficient assessment technique. This point was reiterated by Cambourne (1994) in his work on responsive evaluation:

It would seem that the multifaceted nature of language behaviour would demand an instrument which can cope with such complexity. Currently, the only instrument capable of doing all these things is the human mind. Rather than avoiding the interactions which subjects and assessors are prone to, we should be exploiting them and maximising the richness and quality of data they can generate. Subjectivity as a source of bias and prejudice becomes a non-issue when rigorous and appropriate cross-checking procedures are used. (p. 16)

2.5.5. Teacher Judgement and Rater Reliability

Examination of teacher judgement must address the issue of rater reliability. Mismeasurement may arise from the idiosyncratic application of criteria by individual raters. To avoid such problems it is important to have clear and explicit evaluation criteria and rater training in relation to the criteria of literacy development (Stiggins, 1992).

Various research studies have identified the sources of variation in reliability. Griffin (1990a) noted four potential sources of error for the assessment of writing:

- within-subject individual differences
- variations in task
- between-rater variations
- within-rater variations (p. 2).
With reference to teacher judgement, both inter and intra-rater reliability must be considered (Salinger & Chittenden, 1994). The term 'reliability' is a term which is synonymous with notions of dependability, stability, consistency, predicability and accuracy (Kerlinger, 1964, p. 429). With reference to intra-rater reliability and teacher judgement, the issue of reliability refers to the same teacher consistently judging pieces of work, or students' abilities, over time. The inter-rater reliability refers to the consistency of judgements between different teachers about the same pieces of work, or judgements of the same students' abilities. Inter-rater reliability is influenced by the following factors:

- criteria the raters use to make judgements
- the rater's ability to interpret both criteria used, and the work or behaviour being evaluated
- elapsed time between judgements (raters may change their criteria under different conditions).

Nystrand, Cohen and Dowling (1993) researched reliability issues associated with portfolio assessment of the writing of college students. They acknowledged that the reliability of rating of direct measures of writing was influenced by factors such as: "genre, syntax, usage, mechanics, and handwriting, as well as reader expectations and knowledgability" (p. 54). This research involved a pilot study to collect the writing portfolios from 329 students from four courses representing the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Education, the School of Family Resources and Consumer Resources, and the School of Pharmacy at the University of Wisconsin in 1990-1991. Each writing portfolio assessed contained every piece of writing - course papers, examinations, laboratory reports, and reviews on various topics - that each student wrote as part of coursework. Three to five texts were then selected in a pseudorandom order from each portfolio for marking. In addition, a subsample of 24 portfolios was reread. The results of the pilot study were disappointing. They reflected a serious lack of consistency in the grading of texts from the portfolios.

A follow up study to the pilot study was undertaken with 313 students from four courses representing the School of Nursing, the College of Letters and Science, the Medical School, and the College of Engineering. In the second study all texts written in response to a single assignment within a given class were read and scored before a marker moved on to the next category of assignment. Furthermore, each time markers dealt with a new category of writing, they spent time calibrating or moderating with one another by comparing their ratings on a few texts. A subsample of 136 texts was reread by a second marker. The results of the second study "showed improved
inter-rater reliability estimates, greater percentage of reader agreement, and higher
generalizability coefficients" (Nystrand, Cohen & Dowling, 1993, p. 68). The
researchers concluded that their results demonstrated that adequate reliability should be
expected if texts are rated by task across portfolios within classes, rather than portfolio
by portfolio within a given class. This research also highlighted that the lack of
uniformity of texts within portfolios, which reflects the different nature of the writing
tasks required of the students, significantly affected the assessment of writing in the
portfolio. The researchers concluded that "the tempting strategy of characterizing the
contents of a portfolio with a single writing-ability score fails to reflect the
heterogeneity of variance among the texts and gives no indication of the sources of this
concluded that because writing normally varies by topic, genre, and other variables,
writing portfolios are better characterized by scores for each piece than by a single
writing-skill score (p. 53).

In an attempt to objectify subjective judgements, the notion of moderation was
introduced to the assessment process. Moderation is a method of influencing an
individual's judgement; it is a process of sharing and reaching agreement about
decisions and judgements made by individuals. In essence it is an attempt to increase
inter-rater reliability. There was a change in the curriculum focus in the late 1970s and
early 1980s, in both the United Kingdom and Australia (Dilena & van Kraayenord,
New learning skills took a priority. There was an increased emphasis on such abilities
as problem solving, gathering and analysing data, and how to apply and use
knowledge rather than just remember it. This led naturally to a change in assessment
practices. A single examination was not the best way to assess these learning
attributes. Teachers observing students at work over a period of time and in different
learning activities took precedence. However, there was concern that assessment of
student performance under such conditions is not straight forward and there was seen
to be a need for teachers' judgements to be monitored and validated. Since the late
1980s in the UK (Radnor & Shaw, 1995), and the early 1990s in Australia (Dilena &
von Kraayenord, 1996b), there has been an increase in distrust of teachers'
judgements, a concern for increased accountability as well as a return to the results of
testing and examinations as performance indicators for judging students'
achievements, and the success of schools. Internal school based teacher judgement
and external centralised testing programmes are both being used in the 1990s in
Australia. The need for the development of moderation techniques to suit the
assessment needs of all the educational stakeholders has been evident for some time.
A number of methods of moderation exist. These include:
A. Colleague Network Moderation. Teachers informally share and compare their observations and judgements with their fellow teachers or significant colleagues (Salinger & Chittenden, 1994).

B. Consensus Moderation. This is a more formal process where teachers negotiate a common agreed standard, a set of criteria or benchmarks that is the target to be obtained for a specific growth point in literacy achievement. Mackay (1986, November) summarised the consensus moderation process at the HSC (Higher School Certificate, Victoria, Australia) level as follows:

During the initial stage, the teachers in a moderation group reach a measure of agreement on the objectives to be assessed in the school-assessed component, the methods and criteria to be used in assessing those components, and the evidence to be considered during the final consensus moderation meeting in comparing work from various schools. (p. 9)

C. Statistical Moderation. This is a formal process that is governed by strict psychometric principles and involves a calibration of judgement against standardised tests or standardised performance assessment tasks.

It would seem essential for teachers to be trained in what to look for in literacy development, and what such observations suggest in terms of literacy growth. Without theoretical frameworks on which to judge the observations made, unmanageable anecdotal notes can be collected which give no clear justifiable rationale to the decision making process (Clarke, 1995; Coote & Stevens, 1990; Farr, 1992; Fehring, 1995b; Stiggins, 1992; Taylor, 1994; Winograd, et al., 1991). Coote (1990) and Stiggins (1992) comment on the importance of judges of student performance being knowledgeable of the structure, content and the key variables of the discipline area in which they are evaluating. Coote and Stevens (1990) write: "it's difficult to know what to observe if you are not sure what you are looking for " (p. 39). Stiggins (1992) comments: " it is impossible, for example, for a teacher to assess a student's level of writing proficiency if that teacher does not clearly understand the attributes of good writing" (p. 36).

2.5.6. Portfolios

A belief that no single assessment or evaluation strategy can serve all users and uses is a principle reflected internationally (Fueyo, 1994; Masters & Forster, 1996a; Paris & Ayres, 1994; Stiggins, 1992; White & Gunstone, 1992). In Australia, teachers' collections of data using a wide range of assessment techniques or procedures in

Literacy portfolios basically consist of student and teacher selected samples of work which will provide information to describe and analyse a student’s development in literacy learning. Work samples cover a variety of texts, such as drafts, concept maps, edited pieces and final versions of students' writing and book reviews. Portfolios may also contain other performance information such as self assessment comments by students. This work is used as evidence to demonstrate students' abilities (strengths and weaknesses) and progress in the combined processes of reading, spelling, writing and thinking (Abruscato, 1993; Farr, 1992; Forster, 1995; Garforth & Macintosh, 1986; Griffin, 1990b, 1991a, 1991b, 1997; Hansen, 1992; Harlin, Lipa & Phelps, 1992; Herman & Winters, 1994; Kieffer & Morrison, 1994; Maeroff, 1991; Paris & Ayres, 1994; Rivalland, 1992; Valencia, 1990; van Kraayenoord, 1994, 1995, 1996; van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1992; Wolf, 1989; Wolf, 1992). For the assessment of speaking and listening, portfolios may contain audio and video tapes, checklists of speaking attributes or anecdotal notes written in response to a verbal performance such as a play or class debate.

Some writers put an emphasis on the teacher selecting and collecting the evidence of literacy development, as is evidenced in the description given by Wolf (1992) of what constitutes a portfolio.

In theory, the portfolio process works in the following way: The teacher systematic [sic] observes students' literacy-related behaviors and work across diverse contexts and over time, and selectively documents evidence of these performances. This process provides information about student factors - background knowledge, literacy knowledge and skills, and attitudes and habits, and about context factors - instructional methods, materials, and milieu. By collecting this information, the teacher gradually builds a picture of what each student knows and can do under specific conditions, and is then able to adapt and tailor the instructional context over time to address the needs and take advantage of the strengths of each student. (p. 8)
(Underlining in original work)

Other writers put the emphasis on a collaboration between student and teacher selecting and collecting the evidence of literacy growth. For instance, Paulson, Paulson and Meyer (1991) state:
A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection. (p. 60)

Portfolios are then used in review processes with the teacher and student discussing the significance of the assembled pieces of work. Portfolios are also used in parent-teacher interviews to demonstrate examples of literacy development and changes in work patterns. However, the issues of what is collected and why are still perplexing questions to be addressed by educators. What determines the significance of one piece of work over another? Why are particular pieces of work selected? In other words, on what theoretical principle is the selection of work based? The other question that emerges is: do teachers have a theoretical base at all for the selection of portfolio items? Some interesting studies involving the development of portfolios by teachers are emerging in the current literature on literacy assessment and evaluation (Athanas, 1994; Forster & Masters, 1996b; Freedman, 1993; McClure, Walters, Bietau, Daws & Grosvenor, 1993; van Kraayenoord, 1992; Wolf, 1989, 1992).

Athanas' (1994) study involved 24 third and fourth grade teachers constructing portfolios of their literacy teaching for a school year. The Teacher Assessment Project at Stanford University set out to assemble groups of researchers and teachers to design and test alternative assessments of teachers of elementary literacy and mathematics and of secondary history and biology. During the school year teachers involved in this study documented their literacy instruction in portfolios. Teachers collected various kinds of evidence to document what they knew and could do related to literacy instruction. Documents included lesson plans, drawings of classroom environments, videotapes of teaching, student work samples, and journal entries of reflections on teaching. One teacher, Susan, recorded the range of assessments she put in her portfolio as follows: "sample word lists and remarks on each student's reading of isolated words and words in context; completed parent questionnaires on their children's literacy needs and abilities" ... "samples of unedited student writing; and assessment of progress in the writing process from writers' workshops" (p. 428). In her individual student folders (student portfolios) Susan included such items as "multiple drafts of writing, literature log entries, poems, notes for biography book reports or for oral book reports, story maps, and letters" (p. 428). In addition, Susan included her annotated explanations of what each document demonstrated to her about both the student's progress and the student's learning approaches. Trained examiners then scored these portfolios and follow up exercises. Project researchers studied the
results to assess what they could about teachers from these portfolios and to analyse the feasibility of using such alternative assessments more widely. The teachers in Athanases's study (1994) reported using more varied strategies for assessing student progress than prior to using portfolio assessment; material was kept more regularly and with a greater degree of detail; and the material was more carefully organised for better access, for example, by topic. Teachers reported improvement in curriculum planning; increased self-confidence; a heightened awareness of their teaching and learning practices; and an enhanced reflection about their own teaching that formed the basis for their professional growth. This study contributes to the research base of knowledge about portfolios by moving beyond the issues of assessment to an analysis of the pedagogical and non pedagogical effects of portfolio construction on teachers.

Wolf (1992) undertook a year-long study in which four elementary school teachers in grades two to four targeted one student each to focus on, and collaborated with the researcher to design and implement a classroom portfolio for assessing students' literacy performance. In this study a classroom portfolio referred to the process of assessing student performance using multiple sources of literacy data and to the products that the teachers collected as evidence of students' literacy learning. The research question investigated was: "In what ways does a classroom portfolio inform (or not inform) teachers' assessment and instruction of their students in elementary literacy?" (p. v).

The classroom portfolio consisted of two main components:

i) Student work - writing folder, literature log, story frames, maths journal, science observation log, reading log, audiotapes of oral reading, projects, and student self-assessment (p. 24).

ii) Teacher records - whole class and individual student records produced by the teacher - documented observations, student surveys, information from parents, reports from other teachers and specialists, whole class checklists, matrices and grouping maps (p. 24). The research investigated strengths and weaknesses encountered by the case study teachers in setting up and using portfolios for literacy assessment. The data from the research project provided a rich source of information about how to establish effective and efficient portfolios. Some of the key findings from the Wolf (1992) study were in terms of the necessity for portfolio assessment to:

i) Involve ongoing observations of students' work;

ii) Include "multiple methods and materials in diverse contexts over time" (p. 158) to ensure breadth and depth of students' literacy performance;
iii) Systematically document students' work samples and teachers' comments to facilitate the capacity to revisit and reflect on students' performances;

iv) Reflect instructional goals and assessment purposes to ensure that relevant and meaningful material is collected.

However, a number of researchers have raised concerned about teachers' use of portfolios as an assessment and evaluation technique. Wolf (1992) and Johnson (1992) have both commented on the need for teachers to be professionally knowledgeable about literacy curriculum, learning theory and assessment practices:

The most powerful assessment for students' learning occurs in the classroom, moment-to-moment among teacher and students. Even developing turbo-charged portfolios will accomplish nothing unless teachers understand reading, writing and learning in more complex ways. (Johnston, 1992, p. 60)

In practice, however, the classroom portfolio is vulnerable to all sorts of everyday pressures, such as the lack of time by teachers or problems with the logistics of storage, as well as susceptible to a variety of pedagogical oversights and misapplications, such as teachers' failure to collect critical information or their inability to meaningfully interpret the information that was collected. (Wolf, 1992, p. 8)

Issues regarding the validity and reliability of the decisions that teachers make have traditionally been questioned. This trend is not only restricted to Australian teachers, but also American (Madaus, 1993) and United Kingdom teachers, as is evidenced by this statement by Filer (1995) in her paper "Teacher Assessment: Social Process and Social Product". "It is generally recognised that Conservative governments since 1988 have had little faith in the reliability of teacher assessment compared with the supposed reliability and validity of national standardised tests" (p. 23). Afflerbach and Johnston (1993) make the following similar comment in relation to American teachers:

These teachers also faced conflicts related to the ability of the information required by the report cards to portray students' achievement to their satisfaction, and to having their personal knowledge of students not valued. The second-grade teacher in district 3 reported: "One of the hardest things is ... if it isn't the hardest ... is what I want to include and what I have to include are not the same types of information ... writing development ... you know John is writing more than ever he has before ... his characters and their talk ... he is wanting to write ... and what is his writing? a 4.5."

... the district and some parents did not value the types of evaluative knowledge the teachers had. (p. 81)
In a similar vein, this more scathing comment is made by the American educator Stiggins (1991).

Decision makers must know when they have sound data in hand and when they do not. This is where we come face to face with a critical problem: most decision makers - educators and noneducators alike - are not sufficiently literate in the basics of assessment to know whether their achievement data are sound or unsound. We are a nation of assessment illiterates. (p. 535)

The conflict between the value of subjective and objective judgements regarding issues related to accountability has existed for decades. The proponents of the scientific paradigm that explicitly promotes the objectivity of measurement have traditionally been critical of the subjectivity of teacher judgement, an interesting phenomenon in the light of the following statement:

**Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts.**

This statement was reported to have been hanging on the wall of Albert Einstein's office (Herman, Aschbacher & Winters, 1992, foreword).

The issues that are crucial to the credibility, reliability and therefore trustworthiness of teachers' judgements of students' literacy development are:

i) the ability of teachers to document the evidence on which they make their judgements;

ii) the ability of teachers to articulate their theoretical or philosophical beliefs about the development of literacy;

iii) the validity of the procedures teachers use to gather data in relation to students' literacy development.

The research undertaken by Wolf (1992, 1993) has drawn these issues together into a model of informed assessment. Wolf (1993) refers to informed assessment as "the process that knowledgeable teachers engage in when they systematically observe and selectively document their students' performance through multiple methods, across diverse contexts, and over time as students participate in meaningful learning activities" (p. 519). Figure 6 is an adaptation of Wolf's (1993) model of informed assessment.
Socio-cultural context

professionally knowledgeable teacher

systematically observes and interacts with students about their work

using across over

multiple techniques and methods diverse contexts time

achieving

accumulated, formative and selective information of literacy assessment

Figure 6. Adaptation of Wolf's (1993) model of informed assessment
Wolf (1993) raises interesting issues that pertain to what teachers do with these observations, how teachers know which observations are important, and what teachers use as their benchmarks (standards, criteria). A teacher can collect an enormous amount of information through anecdotal recordings but interpretation of the data gathered into evaluative judgements about a student's progress or growth in literacy is a much more complex decision making process. A number of questions emerge:

- Do teachers have an internalised set of growth descriptors (markers, growth points, benchmarks, pointers, indicators) which they use to make their comparative judgements against?
- Can teachers explicitly articulate their beliefs and values?
- When and from where do teachers gain this literacy learning continuum?
- What are their internalised criteria based on?
- Are there significant changes in a teacher's beliefs over time?

Teachers may use a frame of reference that either influences their observation gathering, or which assists them in interpreting the observations they have gathered. For example, teachers may select any number of learning continua such as: *English - A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools* (Australian Education Council, 1994b) or *Curriculum and Standards Framework: English* (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995) and use the set of outcomes in either of the following two ways:

i) Teachers collect only assessment information that indicates the achievement of each outcome in the profile/s;

ii) Teachers collect assessment information that they believe is valuable and worth knowing about a student's literacy growth, and then match the information to specific outcomes in the profile/s.

The distinction between these two methods of using the profiles is a very important one and will have profound implications on teachers' knowledge and judgement of literacy over the next decade. In the first instance, teachers may well become technicians following the instructions of a procedural text. In the second instance, teachers need to have a greater involvement in the assessment process. They need to be able to justify their judgements to the educational community. There is a marked difference in the professionalism required of teachers in these two situations. This theme has already been taken up in section 2.4.4 'Empowering or Deskilling of the Teaching Profession'.
2.6. **Summary: Study in Context**

The research involved in the current dissertation investigates many of the issues raised in the previous sections by examining the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development. By establishing the study within the paradigm of constructivist inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and utilising qualitative methods of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), the study seeks to describe through constructive, interpretative analysis the influences on teachers' literacy judgement. By utilising the strengths of ethnographic participant and non-participant observation (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) and purposefully selecting case study schools and teachers (Patton, 1990), the researcher anticipates being able to inductively identify the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.

The literature review provides a foundation upon which to establish possible influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development. The field work consolidates and extends this knowledge and provides the ground work for an emergent theoretical model of explanation. The review of literature raises the contention that the influences on teachers' judgements are not simple linear relationships between a student's literacy ability and the assessment of that ability. There is a complex interaction of political, economic, contextual, personal and professional factors that influence the judgements made by teachers.

The following chapter outlines the research design and the methodological procedures undertaken in this study. Included in chapter three is a detailed description of the research methods used to gather data, a contextual analysis of the three research sites, a comprehensive time frame under which all aspects of the study were completed and an explanation of the preliminary data analysis.
NOTES

1. All the figures and diagrams in this thesis are original and have been designed by the researcher.

2. Y. Goodman (1989) acknowledges the work of a number of educators and writers whose work influenced the development of the whole language philosophy. She writes of the significant contribution of the educator John Amos Comenius and the philosopher John Dewey. However, it is also important to acknowledge the founding work of Edmund Burke Huey who wrote the work entitled The psychology and pedagogy of reading in 1908. Huey raised many issues in 1908 that underlie the psycholinguistic principles of the whole language movement that still predominate today. Huey (1908/1968) made 13 practical pedagogical recommendations from his work (pp. 379–383) among those suggestions are the following:
   • that "the home is the natural place for learning to read" (p. 379)
   • reading and writing should serve a purpose
   • reading should be for meaning, it should never be "done or thought of as 'an exercise'. Word-pronouncing will therefore always be secondary to getting whole sentence-meanings, and this from the very first" (p. 380).
   • "there should therefore be much more practice in silent reading than reading aloud" (p. 380).
   • rather than an intense analytical study of a few texts, adolescents "should be given as wide a range of choice as is possible" (p. 382).

3. "The arrival of Michael Halliday to take up the chair of Linguistics at the University of Sydney in early 1976 ensured that the Linguistics Department offered courses at the postgraduate level that focussed directly on the role of language in education. Not long after Halliday's arrival Jim Martin also took up an appointment at the university and he began to explore the application of Halliday's systemic linguistics to educational settings. His association with Joan Rothery and Frances Christie began at that time when both were employed in the Department of Education at the same university and were undertaking courses with Halliday and Martin. Martin and Rothery (1980, 1981) began enquiring into the texts produced by children in schools in the late 1970s and a series of reports was issued by the Department of Linguistics beginning in 1980. Thus began the development of the genre-based writing approach founded upon Halliday's functional approach to language" (Richardson, 1991, p. 174).

4. "Selection testing is thought to have begun in China around 2200 B.C. with proficiency testing to determine qualifications for government service (DuBois, 1965).

   Ironically, the Chinese abandoned their civil service examination system in 1905" (Glaser & Silver, 1994, p. 395).

5. The Bullock Report is commonly referenced under (Bullock, 1975) and under (Department of Education and Science, London, 1975).

6. The AEC - Australian Council of Education consisted of the Ministers of Education from the six Australian states - (Queensland [Qld], New South Wales [NSW], Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia [SA], Western Australia [WA]) and the two territories (Northern Territory [NT], Australian Capital Territory [ACT]).
CHAPTER 3.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design in Context

The following chapter deals with an explanation of the research paradigm or the theoretical base; the process of the inquiry; the methods employed to collect the data and trustworthiness. A paradigm, as defined by (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), is the "basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (p. 105). The purpose of this research was to investigate the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development in a Victorian context. Underpinning such an investigation are a number of important epistemological and methodological decisions. There are decisions that pertain to the nature of reality; the researcher-participant relationship; the data collection methods chosen; the research setting; and trustworthiness criteria (namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability). These issues will be addressed in this chapter through an explication of the constructivist research paradigm and qualitative methods chosen in this investigation.

Figure 7 is a diagrammatic representation of the main research design features. It provides the framework of this research, and gives an overview of the constructivist paradigm, the process of inquiry and the qualitative methods chosen in this study.
The main research question of this study is what are the influences on teachers’ judgements of students’ literacy development?

**Constructivist Paradigm**

To investigate, describe and construct an interpretation of the influences on teachers’ judgements of students’ literacy development.

**Constructivist (Naturalistic) Inquiry**

The Naturalistic and Ethnographic design incorporates:
- Analysis of the teacher’s voice
- Prolonged Engagement
- Fieldwork observations
- Immersion in the school and classroom culture
- Persistent Observations
- Trustworthiness procedures including
  - Member checking - involving an independent observer for verification
  - Peer Reviewers
  - External Auditor

**Qualitative Methods**

The qualitative techniques incorporated in the research design include:
- Indepth interviews with the teacher participants
- Key informant interviews
- Participant and non-participant observations
- Content analysis of school policies, charters and curriculum documents
- Analysis of artefacts
- Use of KWALITAN and ISYS programmes

*Figure 7. Diagram of the main research design features*
3.2. **Research Paradigm: The Theoretical Base**

Investigations involving research related to teaching and teachers seek to analyse the teaching act, teachers' attitudes, values and belief systems and assist us to understand the underlying rationale of what is a complex form of human behaviour. The current research centres on constructing a description of, and inductively analysing an interpretation of, the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development. Therefore, the selection of a constructivist paradigm was chosen (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).\(^{(1)}\)

This study draws upon the more recent work of Guba and Lincoln in which the research paradigm is termed constructivist inquiry, as well as their earlier publications where the research paradigm was termed naturalistic inquiry (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 1997; Lincoln, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 1989). The change in terminology reflects a diversity of meanings given to the word naturalism. Lincoln (1993) states that:

> Constructivism is one of a set of emergent paradigms which can be rightfully considered either poststructuralist or postmodern, or both. It rejects modernism's Grand Narratives, and focuses on the re-creation and representation of multiple, socially enacted realities, created by multiple stakeholders and participants. (p. iii)

The literature review examined some of the studies using quantitative methods that sought to isolate and measure causal variables affecting teacher judgement. Such research has added a dimension to our knowledge and understanding of teachers, teaching and the interaction of these two components. There has, however, been criticism levelled at the use of the positivist research paradigm and the use of quantitative methods in the past. Questions have been raised from a perspective of inadequate and inappropriate methodology in relation to the research questions (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993).

The reductionist methodology (the concern to identify variables and then to isolate, measure, control and manipulate so as to determine causal variations) and the decontextualised nature of such research, where "science is concerned with abstracting a specific element out of a complex - with isolating a character that is common to a group of objects, and freeing the character from restrictions of immediate circumstance" (Scates, 1943, p. 3) have left many questions unanswered and many results questioned as to their relevance and significance (Bolster, 1983). Quantitative
methods deal with prediction and control, scientific objectivity, large samples, group-based statistical analysis, hypothesis testing and generalisable results. The objective is to seek 'the truth' which is conceived of as being stripped of all complicating variables. The concern for uniformity has meant that observation procedures need to be carefully defined in advance, are unvarying in application, are impersonal and exclude human factors and recognise only objectively evident facts (Scates, 1943). Such methodological approaches have become increasingly questioned as to whether they are the most appropriate research design for dealing with studies investigating teachers' experiences and teachers' thinking (Eisner, 1993a; Elbaz, 1991; Erickson, 1986; Jacob, 1988; Michell, 1986; Ornstein, 1995; Ornstein & Berlin, 1995; Peshkin, 1993; Rizo, 1991; Scates, 1943; Stiggins & Conklin, 1992). As Baird (1992) points out, there is a need to increase the attention being paid to the importance of "the interdependence of an individual's thoughts and actions" and "the importance of the teaching-learning context in influencing these thoughts and actions" (p. 33).

The historical concern that what is not measurable is left unresearched in a product-oriented teaching model is still an issue in the 1990s (Ornstein & Berlin, 1995; Wittrock, 1986). But the constructivist (naturalistic) inquiry paradigm of knowing has taken fifty years to establish methodological practices that have become accepted in the research community as valid ways of knowing (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Higgs, 1997; Keeves, 1997; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Mays & Pope, 1995; Richardson, 1996; Scott & Usher, 1996; Smith & Heshusius, 1986).

A theory of knowledge or epistemology should underpin any research paradigm (Eisner, 1993a; Kurzman, 1994). Polanyi, scientist and philosopher, has written extensively about the significance of personal knowledge in the understanding of scientific knowledge (Anderson, 1989; Gelwick, 1977; Polanyi, 1958, 1967; Polanyi & Prosch, 1975). In naturalistic research there has been an increasing acceptance of such qualitative techniques as field-based methods, discourse analysis of conversations and interviews, case studies involving single subjects, and the utilisation of ethnographic and phenomenographic methods of analysis (Alexandersson, 1994; Bowden & Walsh, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Elliott, 1996; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Hubbard & Power, 1993; Hustler, Cassidy & Cuff, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marton, 1994; Mishler, 1986).

The choice of a number of research techniques from within ethnographic methodology (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982) was a logical one because of the intention to have prolonged engagement with case study participants. Many educational investigations have utilised the research methodology of ethnography:
intensive investigations of individuals, small groups, communities and workplaces through the use of participant and non-participant observations (Athanasas & Brice Heath, 1995). Dillon (1989) conducted an interesting study into what makes a teacher effective. The purpose of her study was to determine the nature of the social organisation of a rural secondary low-track English-reading classroom in the USA by working closely with the teacher and students. Wolf (1992) set out to examine the effects of classroom portfolios on teachers' assessment and instruction of their students. He worked intensively with four elementary school teachers who had been identified as excellent teachers in elementary language arts.

To put educational ethnography into perspective, Goetz and LeCompte (1984) outline four dimensions of how social scientists attempt to understand and explain reality:

i) **Inductive - Deductive dimension**

ii) **Subjective - Objective dimension**

iii) **Generative - Verificative dimension**

iv) **Constructive - Enumerative dimension.**

Educational ethnography is situated closer to the inductive, subjective, generative, constructive ends of these continua (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

i) **Inductive - Deductive Dimension**

Research that uses a deductive rationale typically begins with a theoretical stance, develops operational definitions of the propositions and concepts of the theory, and tests them empirically against some collection of data. Deductive researchers hope to find data to substantiate a theory. Inductive researchers, on the other hand, begin by collecting data - empirical observations, artefacts, interview data - and construct theoretical explanations of relationships in the data. Inductive researchers hope to find a theory that explains their data; they start with an examination of the phenomenon they want to be able to explain and build a theoretical model of the contributing factors (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

ii) **Subjective - Objective Dimension**

Ethnographers frequently describe cultural and behavioural patterns in order to reconstruct participants' conceptualisation of their experiences of the world. In this sense the data is subjective. The objective view of the world demands that the phenomenon under investigation be measured and that the researchers be external to the situation.
The nature of this investigation did not lend itself to a theory driven by variable control, a priori hypothesis testing, statistical probability and a generalisation production perspective. Cost and time constraints restricted the number of case studies that could be involved in this study. With the emphasis on describing and understanding teacher judgement it was more appropriate to design the investigation choosing from qualitative procedures encompassed by a constructivist research paradigm. However, it is timely to remember Warwick's (1973) words: "Every method of data collection is only an approximation to knowledge. Each provides a different and usually valid glimpse of reality, and all are limited when used alone" (p. 190).

iii) Generative - Verificative Dimension
Research studies using the verificative rationale are concerned with testing propositions developed elsewhere; such research studies attempt to prove that the research hypotheses are valid in explaining several data sets. The purpose is not only to prove the existence of a relationship, but also to provide evidence of the generalisability of the result to other situations. Verificative research design frequently uses deductive logic. Generative research is more concerned with discovering constructs, relationships and propositions in one or more data bases (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The pre-existence of a theoretical framework is not an essential component of research studies using the generative rationale. This does not mean the researcher works from a theoretical vacuum, but it does mean that the researcher has a mind set of describing, understanding, observing and then trying to explain the situation under examination. Generative research studies frequently use inductive logic to build explanations.

iv) Constructive - Enumerative Dimension
Constructivist research deals with abstraction aimed at discovering the relationships and categories that explain a phenomenon. Enumeration is a process by which previously derived units of analysis are subjected to systematic counting or enumeration (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 5–6). It is not unusual to find constructivist methodology being used to precede the formulation of a theoretical stance and then being followed by theoretical verification by enumeration.

No research paradigm has an exclusive patent on the conception and generation of knowledge. However, many writers have raised the issue of the importance of remembering that there are appropriate and inappropriate research design accountability issues that must be addressed at the time of selecting the research

3.3. **The Constructivist Inquiry Process**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influences on teachers’ judgements of students’ literacy development. To understand the influences on a teacher, a teacher’s perspective was essential to the research design. This introduces the concept of effectively investigating the notion of the teacher’s voice. Probing and analysing teachers’ thinking, reasoning and judgement making processes requires detailed, reiterative interviewing of teachers. In addition, classroom and school document and artefact analysis will facilitate in the triangulation of information and assist the researcher to tease out what teachers say and what they do in literacy assessment. To investigate the phenomenon in question the constructivist paradigm of inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) using naturalistic, analytical, and interpretive research methodology was chosen. Consequently, the research design involved selecting from qualitative research methods and educational ethnographic methodology, a case study approach and multiple forms of analysis to enhance the trustworthiness of the data. Figure 7 is a diagrammatic representation of the main research design features of this study.

To understand teacher judgement there is a need to rely on language and dialogue: conversations, reflections, interviews and the ‘voice’ of teachers. In attempting to understand teachers and their actions, investigations of the personal and practical knowledge of teachers, the culture of teaching, and the inner workings of teacher thought are essential. Ornstein (1995) describes teachers’ voice in the following manner:

> The notion of voice embodies the new quantitative and linguistic tools used to describe what teachers do, how they do it, and how they react to their teaching. Voice corresponds with such terms as "teacher's perspective," "teacher's frame of reference," and "getting into the teacher's head". (p. 127)

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) and Sumson (1996) take psychological and sociological perspectives and refer to voice in terms of empowerment of participants. In research studies the voice is so often the voice of the researcher or expert. The voice of theory is more often found in the literature, than the voice of the practitioner. In recent years a number of research studies in teacher
education have taken a researcher–teacher partnership perspective. This approach adds a valuable dimension to the notion of voice in research studies (Patterson, Santa, Short & Smith, 1993; Potter, 1997).

According to Peshkin (1993), qualitative research has various categories of analysis: description, interpretation, verification, evaluation. Within the current study, description and interpretation are essential research categories. The emergent construction of the influences underpinning teachers' judgements needs to be grounded in the complex interactions within the school setting. To interpret and understand observational data in relation to the influences on teachers' judgements, it is important to be able to describe settings and situations, and contextual relationships (Gilbert, 1992). It is also important to be able to describe and examine processes. Understanding what influences teachers' judgemental processes should precede and then facilitate change of any kind. Identifying and describing influences on teacher judgement should be the groundwork for identifying teachers' knowledge of their teaching practices (Lyons, 1990; Stiggins & Conklin, 1992). It should provide detailed descriptions of teachers' articulation of their underlying education philosophies, classroom practices and assessment methodology. Accurate, sensitive and comprehensive descriptive data are the foundation of informed understanding of the research question under investigation (Shavelson & Stern, 1981).

Conducting research that involves teachers' conversations, interview schedules, and teacher observations can so easily be influenced by the researcher's own personal prejudices that may or may not be covert (Soltis, 1990; Taft, 1997). Inadvertent researcher bias needs to be acknowledged, understood and minimised. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) in an article exploring the role of teachers as researchers, raise various issues about the relationship of the researcher and the teacher informant. They comment that traditional interpretive research "often constructs and predetermines teachers' roles in the research process, thereby framing and mediating teachers' perspectives through researchers' perspectives" (p. 3). Constructivist inquiry involves rigorous research techniques in an attempt to check and minimise researcher bias. Terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability replace the rationalists' terms of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1997).

Trustworthiness is the generic term used in constructivist research to cover these attributes of the research design. Section 3.9. deals with a detailed description of the
trustworthiness features incorporated in the current research. Within the constructivist research paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), it is important at the outset not to confuse the issue of attempting to achieve scientific rigour with the issue that "research is not a neutral scientific practice but an interpretative, social and ideological process" (Street 1992 as quoted in Barton, 1995, p. 461).

Investigating the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development within the constructivist paradigm and employing qualitative research methods requires considerable time: time to establish links and rapport with participants, time to obtain the various levels of permission to enter the appropriate institutions, time to ensure that informed consent has been obtained from all participants, and most importantly of all, time to work with the chosen case studies in the field to collect the data. The essential nature of this phase, for any research study, should not be underestimated (Soltis, 1990; Zaharlick & Green, 1991). Section 3.4.1. and Appendix J outlines the time frame for the official approval procedures, and section 3.9.5.1. details the data collection involved in this study.

3.3.1. Case Study Component

Using a case study approach has been a long established tradition in research design involving anthropology, sociology, psychology, medicine (case histories) and more recently education (Birnbaum & Emig, 1991; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hamel, Dufour & Fortin, 1993; Hammersley, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Sturman, 1997; Yin, 1989). Significant names in the development of case study research methodology include Bronislaw Malinowski, Frederic Le Play (French) and members of the Chicago School (USA). It was Malinowski's field work in the 1920s that initiated participant observation as a research technique in qualitative research (Hamel, et al., 1993). There are various approaches to case study research, but basically, the following definition from Yin (1989) contains the main parameters of this approach. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that:

• investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when
• the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which
• multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 23).

Merriam (1988) succinctly defines a qualitative case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon" (p. xiv). Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider that the case studies are ideal for providing 'thick description' of:

i) situational contexts
ii) complex interactions between participants and participants and researcher
iii) the multiple realities of the phenomenon under investigation
iv) the inquiry process which in turn facilitates the reader applying his/her tacit
    knowledge to the setting.

In addition, "the case study provides the 'thick description' so necessary for
judgments of transferability" (p. 359).

Stake (1994) identified three types of case studies:
A) The Intrinsic Case Study - a case study chosen to understand specifically one
   particular case. "It is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other
cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem. ... The purpose is not
to come to understand some abstract construct or generic phenomenon" (p.
237). The investigation is undertaken because of an intrinsic interest in the
particular person, a social group, an organisation, a programme or discipline
area. Merriam (1988) uses the term 'bounded system' to refer to this
characteristic of a case study.
B) The Instrumental Case Study - a case is chosen in order to provide insight into
   an issue or refinement of theory. The case "plays a supportive role, facilitating
our understanding of something else" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). The case is
examined in some detail, "because this helps us pursue the external interest"
(p. 237).
C) The Collective Case Study - an investigation studying a number of cases jointly
   in order to understand a phenomenon.

    It is not the study of a collective but instrumental study
    extended to several cases. Individual cases in the collection
    may or may not be known in advance to manifest the
    common characteristic. They may be similar or dissimilar,
    redundancy and variety each having voice.
    (Stake, 1994, p. 237)

The collective case study is chosen in the belief "that understanding them will lead to
better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases"
(Stake, 1994, p. 237). Sturman (1997) uses the term "multisite case study" (p. 64)
research to refer to a similar situation.

Merriam (1988) prefers to categorise case studies in terms of the nature of the final
report. "The end product of a case study can be primarily descriptive, interpretative, or
evaluative. A descriptive case study in education is one that presents a detailed account
of the phenomenon under study. ... Interpretative case studies, too, contain rich,
thick description. These descriptive data, however, are used to develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering. ... *Evaluative* case studies involve description, explanation, and judgment" (p. 27–28).

The case studies in this thesis represent Stake's collective case study categorisation and a combination of Merriam's descriptive and 'interpretative' case study classifications. The units of analysis, or the cases in this thesis, are the three individual teachers. The contextual settings, or the case study sites, are the classrooms, the schools and the education system in which each of the three teachers works.

In many cases field studies are an essential component in case study research. A field study frequently involves "on-site observations, open-ended interviews, and the collection of various documents" (Hamel, et al., 1993, p. 16), and is a common approach to data collection involving a qualitative research design (Dillon, 1989; Wolf, 1992). In addition, another salient feature of field work within case study research is the ability to reflect both an emic and an etic perspective. Fetterman (1991) discusses how the emic perspective, which refers to the insider's perspective, is instrumental to understanding and accurately describing the phenomenon under examination. The etic perspective is the external, or outsider's social scientific perspective often gleaned from the theoretical analysis (Fetterman, 1991). Field work techniques such as those mentioned above are compatible with the system of inductive analysis.

The field work in the present study involved one-on-one extended interactive interviews with a small number of individual case studies. The school sites, as well as the three teachers, were chosen in a purposeful manner (Patton, 1990). Berliner (1986) comments that: "we need to find and study expert and experienced teachers .... They can, more than most teachers, provide us with the cases - the richly detailed descriptions of instructional events - that should form a part of teacher education programs" (pp. 5–6).

### 3.3.2. Sampling

Purposeful sampling is a technique used in qualitative studies that focusses in depth on relatively small samples of participants. "The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich* cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research ..." (Patton, 1990, p. 169). He identifies 15 different criteria regarding purposeful sampling.
The three case study teachers and schools in this research were chosen on the basis of homogeneous and typical purposeful sampling. To understand the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development it was essential to have a sample of highly articulate professionals. The three key participant teachers are female, over 30 thirty years of age, all have educational qualifications equivalent to at least four years of training, and all have more than ten years teaching experience. The three teachers selected represent a homogeneous subset of the much larger teaching workforce. Each also represents a qualitatively typical teacher within the teaching profession. The three case study schools also represent typical primary schools in Victoria. The selection of the case study schools and participants was based on a long standing knowledge of the schools, teachers and principals. It could be argued that School C, the P - 12 complex, is not a typical school organisation within the Victorian school system. However, the primary and secondary schools are run as independent schools within the physical environment of a P - 12 complex. This means that all the organisational structures are similar to the other two schools in this study. Table 8 summarises the criteria for the selection of the case study schools and participating teachers. Chapter 4 contains profile descriptions of each case study that illustrate the commonality of the three schools.
### Table 8  Criteria for Selection of the Case Study Teachers and Schools in this Study

**Teacher**
- Four year qualified teacher (Victoria, Australia)
- Experienced (defined as having more than five years teaching experience)
- Considered to reflect regularly on own teaching (self assessment)
- Expressed interest in the research study and a willingness to be involved
- Considered to be professionally articulate about own teaching practices (principal assessment)
- Able to organise time to be regularly interviewed during the observation periods
- Researcher well known to teacher, therefore, rapport and trust were already well established.

**Class**
- Composite Year 5/6 class or straight Year 6 class
- Academically heterogeneous students (class based on mixed ability grouping)
- Class size typical for Victorian government schools in the mid 1990s (Range 20 - 30 students)
- Students were aware of the research study and were prepared to have the researcher in the classroom.

**School**
- Government primary school
- Urban school
- Accessible to single researcher
- History of professional working relationship with principal
- Researcher credibility already established within school
- Researcher had long term working knowledge of the context of each school site in terms of the culture of school population, the socio-economic status of each area and the organisational structure within each school
- Curriculum for a multicultural student population
- Researcher had long term working knowledge of the literacy curriculum in each school
- English curriculum policy well established
- School Council permission to undertake study in school.
The key informants were chosen because they represented opportunistic sampling (Patton, 1990). During the ongoing observation periods that involved participant and non-participant observation in the classroom it became evident that some of the students were very knowledgeable about their teacher's literacy assessment and evaluation practices. By informally talking with the students it was obvious that they were quite articulate about the reasons why their teachers collected the data that they did to make literacy judgements. A small sample of students was used to collect data relevant to the research question.

Accessibility and prior knowledge of the schools and teachers meant that the trusting teacher-researcher collaborative relationship needed for qualitative research involving classroom participation was already established. During Term 4 1995 I became an observer and a participant observer in three classrooms in three separate schools. I spent half a day in each classroom each week. During this time I spoke with the students, observed literacy assessment, evaluation and reporting practices taking place, read language curriculum documentation and policy statements that governed the organisation of the school's curriculum and frequently discussed with each teacher the literacy assessment and evaluation practices observed. To maintain confidentiality of the participants' identity, pseudonyms have been used for each person interviewed in the study (Table 9). The three case study teachers have been called Teacher A - Alexandra Adler, who worked in a composite Year 5/6 class; Teacher B - Veronica Robins, who worked in a straight Year 6 classroom; and Teacher C - Georgina Whyte, who also worked in a straight Year 6 class (the term straight refers to a single year level).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher A</th>
<th>Teacher B</th>
<th>Teacher C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra Adler</td>
<td>Veronica Robins</td>
<td>Georgina Whyte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westlands P. S.</td>
<td>Eastlands P. S.</td>
<td>Northlands P. S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5/6</td>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>Year 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal: Colleen</td>
<td>Principal: Mary</td>
<td>Principal: Michael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hicks</td>
<td>Chivas</td>
<td>Wall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A meta-analysis of the discourse recorded in each interview undertaken assisted in the isolation of key influences on the assessment and evaluation judgements of the case study teachers. To assist in the analysis of the interview data the program
KWALITAN was utilised (Peters & Wester, 1990, 1993). Research practices based on grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and using ethnographic methods and procedures (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) have for a long time utilised the processing capabilities of the computer.

Programs have been designed to facilitate text content analysis. THE ETHNOGRAPH (Seidel & Clark, 1984) is a program designed to be used with interview and text data analysis, assisting the researcher to identify, code, compare segments and develop themes and propositions. KWIC - Key Word In Context - is also used for text content analysis. A widely used Apple Macintosh program is NUD·IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing). It is a computer programme designed specifically to handle non-numeric and unstructured data in qualitative analysis. NUD·IST uses supporting processes of indexing, searching and theorizing (Replee P/L, 1993, October). A similar program, but more suitable for an MS DOS operating system, is KWALITAN. KWALITAN was chosen because it operates under the MS DOS system available on the researcher's computer system. A more detailed explanation of the KWALITAN programme is given in section 3.6.1.

3.4. The Processes of the Inquiry

The following section details the sequence of activities undertaken to establish the research project, obtain official approval to conduct the research, develop rapport in the case study sites, undertake the data collection and trustworthiness process, analyse data and write up the research study. (Refer to Appendix J: Timeline of Official Approval and Data Collection)

3.4.1. Process of Gaining Access to Research Data

The process of gaining access to the research data was multifaceted and occurred at a number of levels. Figure 8 depicts the various levels within the research process at which access had to be sought (Bibby, 1997; Zaharlick & Green, 1991).
The Process of Gaining Access to Research Data

University
RMIT Faculty of Education and Training Higher Degree Standing Committee approval of research project, 1993; University Higher Degree Committee approval of research project; Faculty Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee approval; University Human Research Ethics Committee approval 1992/Reaccreditation 1996. Issues of data confidentiality and security approved.
Full documentation of the Ethics Policy and Procedures of the RMIT, Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services, Human Research and Ethics Sub-Committee can be found on the following WWW site:
http://www.eu.rmit.edu.au/committees/ethics/

Parents/Students
Permission sought and consent forms signed to interview minors and audio tape conversations. Consent to discuss with, and audio tape conversations.

Classroom Teachers
Consent to work with teachers and students observing classroom routines. Permission to interview teacher and students and to audio tape conversations, and agreement to the collection of artefacts from the classroom - 1994.

Principal

School
Principal and School Council approval to work in each school obtained 1994. Issues of contact, time demands, confidentiality of participants' identity approved. Consent to interview and audio tape Principals. Reciprocity: Consultancy commitments to staff.

Directorate of School Education Victoria (DSE)*
*DSE became the DoE, Department of Education Victoria in 1996.

North West Metropolitan Regional Office Victoria
Permission to approach Principals and School Councils approved 1993/1996. Reciprocity: Copy of research findings when completed.

Figure 8. The process of gaining access to research data
3.4.2. Time and Duration of Data Collection

Table 10 summarises the amount of time and duration of the various phases involved in data collection, transcription, preparation of data, coding, analytical interpretation, participant member checking of data, peer review of coded data and the external auditing of the research process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10 Data Collection and Analytical Interpretation Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Collection</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School A School B School C Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1995........... December 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 Hrs 40 Hrs 40 Hrs 120 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: 10 weeks x 4 Hrs a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribing audio tapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Hrs 19.5 Hrs 25 Hrs 59.5 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1996.............. November 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) For KWALITAN programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Hrs 21.5 Hrs 15.5 Hrs 63 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) Policy and curriculum documents for ISYS programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation and coding of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 Hrs 80 Hrs 80 Hrs 240 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Member Checking and Peer Review Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant member checking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1996 ............December 1996 3 Hrs 3 Hrs 3 Hrs 9 Hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer review process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1997......... January 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefing peer reviewers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Hrs 3 Hrs - 6 Hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer review analysing reports and debriefing with peer reviewers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Hrs 4 Hrs - 8 Hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 March 1997...........April 1997 25 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2 May 1998.............May 1998 15 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation of data and writing up of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1997..............December 1997 900 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalise thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1998..............July 1998 1120 Hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5. **Research Methods**

The following section outlines the various qualitative methods used in the data collection process. The intention of this study was to investigate the influences on teachers' judgements. Therefore the techniques selected needed not only to capture the teacher's voice, but also the context of each research site. The influences on teachers' judgements were investigated through interviews as well as through the researcher's participant and non-participant observation in the classrooms of the case study schools. Triangulation of multiple data sources, such as key informant interviews, field notes, curriculum document analysis and the collection of artefacts for analysis, were important contributors to the researcher's interpretations and to the establishment of the contextual situation of the study.

3.5.1. **Key to Data Base**

Multiple types of data were collected for this study. For reporting purposes abbreviated notations referring to the data sources were used. Table 11 contains the abbreviations used throughout the reporting process. However, an illustration of how the data sources are referred to will clarify the reporting system used in the body of this thesis. An interview referred to from the KWALITAN programme is cited in this form: (K.18.26). This notation means KWALITAN, interview 18, segment 26. This is a unique reference located in the KWALITAN programme.
Table 11  Key to Data Source Referencing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K.18.26</td>
<td>KWALITAN. Interview 18 Segment 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN(23.10.1995)</td>
<td>Field Notes (date referencing system used 23rd of October 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITQ</td>
<td>Initial Teacher Questionnaire - Written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITQ - PA - Q1</td>
<td>Part A, Question 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITQ - PB Q4</td>
<td>Part B, Question 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Interview Schedule - revised teacher questionnaire used in oral discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Artefact Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCDC</td>
<td>School Curriculum Document Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.8.46. KII</td>
<td>KWALITAN Notation Key Informant Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMCI (25.11.1996)</td>
<td>Participant Member Checking Interview (date referencing system used 25th of November 1996)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following section describes the various types of data collected during this study.

3.5.2. Direct Non-Participant and Participant Observation

Case study and field work research almost demand that on-site direct non-participant observation and participation observation be part of the empirical data collected. Non-participant observational techniques can range from formal category counting observational sessions to casual data collection observational sessions describing contextual situations. Single or multiple observers may record on site accounts. Multiple observers recording the same situation can facilitate the reliability of
observational data collected. Participant observation is a special case of observation. In this situation the researcher is not merely a passive observer but may become actively involved in site activities (Yin, 1989). However, even though participant observation combines participation and involvement in the contextual setting the researcher needs to maintain a professional distance that ensures accurate observation and recording of data (Fetterman, 1991).

The advantage of such a technique is that the participant observer has the ability to ascertain the reality of the study phenomenon from the viewpoint of an insider, and to manipulate events and record the consequences of the changes on the study group. The disadvantage is that the participant by his or her very existence in the situation may actually change the group dynamics or the observed interactions and what is observed is not the reality of the phenomenon under investigation (Birnbaum & Emig, 1991; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hamel, et al., 1993). Being both a participant and non-participant observer at different times in the current study the researcher was conscious of the possible effects of such an influence. Several factors contributed to the minimisation of any observer influences:

i) The level of familiarity between the researcher and the case study teachers. All three schools, principals and teachers knew the researcher from years of professional collegiate interaction. In this respect the development of a trusting, non-judgemental relationship during the observational periods was easily established.

ii) The number and extended length of the observational periods (prolonged engagement). This helped develop confidence and integrity in the interpersonal relationship between the researcher and the participants thus enhancing the reality of the situation under investigation.

iii) Triangulation of observations, interview data, artefact analysis, document analysis and constant comparative analysis add to the internal 'trustworthiness' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the constructivist and interpretive process.

iv) The process of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or respondent verification/participant verification (Ball, 1997; Sharpe, 1997) the teacher and principal data following the initial coding of the interview. This procedure not only gave the participants a chance to reflect on their interview transcripts, but also the opportunity to add or delete information they considered relevant or inappropriate. This procedure itself added to the trustworthiness of the data (Ball, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1989).
3.5.2.1. Classroom Observations

Half a day each week in Term 4 1995 (October–December) was spent in each of the classrooms of the three case study teachers. This interaction involved reading the classroom curriculum documents and the school policy papers, and then discussing observations with each teacher; observing classroom routines; participating in the daily routines and talking and interacting informally with the students in the classrooms; and analysing both the folios of work and the students' evaluation portfolios.

The distinction between these two artefacts is as follows: the folios of work were kept by the students themselves, while the student evaluation portfolios were collected and retained by the teacher for assessment and evaluation purposes. Throughout this period, regular taped interviews were held with each teacher and a number of key informants. These interviews were semi-structured in nature and used to discuss observations made during the interaction periods. For example, the following extract is from a student in Ms Alexandra Adler's class. I had been examining the contents of the student evaluation folios that Alexandra keeps on each pupil. This observation raised the question: do the students have a perception of why their teacher collects the information that she does? In an interview with one of the Year 5/6 students this issue is raised and his reply, recorded below, indicates that he is aware of why his teacher carried out such assessments.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 14, 1995
OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEW WITH STEPHAN

HF: Well Stephan, Alexandra also has a little folio in there, [indicating filing cabinet] a little folder with some of your work, so periodically, every now and then she collects a bit of your work, it might be tests, it might be a piece of writing, it might be..., and she puts it all in the folder and when she comes to write up your report she looks at all of those things

S: she looks at it

HF: Do you think that's a good idea?

S: Um, Yeah, to see how you have improved through the year and stuff like that.

HF: Would you do that if you were a teacher?

S: Um It depends really. Um Yeah I probably would because it would be a simple way of assessing your students and it would be very fast as well because you would just need to take out their folder and flick through their pages and see how their... yes stuff like that.

(K.7.25–K.7.27 KII)
3.5.3. **Interview Data**

The current research sought to document the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development. The research methodology involved analysing teacher's voice, which means teachers expressing their 'inner' thinking (Elbaz, 1991). Much of the research on teacher thinking has been undertaken over the past 20 years (Carlgren, Handal & Vaage, 1994; Eggleston, 1979; Marland, 1993; Munby, 1982). Initially the studies concentrated on the substance and form of teachers' thought processes, the kinds of information processed, the types of cognitive processes used and the appropriateness of teachers' judgements. It soon became evident that a macro level analysis of teachers' thinking was necessary. Contextual influences on teachers' thinking became important issues to address in research studies. Context was defined in a narrow sense and termed by Clark and Peterson (1986) "the psychological context of teaching" ... and referred to as the "mental lives of teachers" (p. 255 ). It included teachers' values, beliefs, motives, goals, and their perceptions of the school and class in which they worked.

Subsequent to this phase a second phase of research into teacher thinking developed. Questions of a more epistemological nature were raised. What is the nature of teachers' knowledge? How is such knowledge used? How is such knowledge retained? (Marland, 1993).

Such research required investigatory procedures other than those that produced quantification of knowledge (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Russell & Munby, 1992). Researching what teachers know depends on analysing what they say. This assumes that what teachers say is representative of what they think, and in turn, is a reflection of their actions. The underlying assumption is that what teachers think will be evident in the discourse resulting from oral interviews, in the written documentation produced in the school community and in the language generated through other data-gathering procedures (Clark & Peterson, 1986). However, the problem that can arise is that in the research process the teacher's knowledge is changed into the researcher's knowledge and thus the teacher's voice is lost. The notion of teachers' tacit knowledge being nonlinear, having holistic and integrated qualities, and being embedded with personal knowledge (Elbaz, 1991) makes the researching of teachers' voice problematic. It is important when analysing and reporting teachers' voice that the data are embedded within the culture of the particular school, school system, and the society in which the teacher lives and works. The use of language data in studies of teachers' knowledge has been common practice for many years and has been termed the representational view (Freeman, 1994). A representational perspective adopts the
view that "language data is taken as isomorphic to participants' thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, and feelings" (Freeman, 1994, p. 77).

In the late 1980s another dimension was added to the methodology of analysing teachers' discourse. The presentational approach to language data analysis adds a linguistic influence and an explicit awareness of context. It takes into consideration the intra-linguistic and inter-linguistic relationships: the choice of words or the expression that relates what is said and how it is said; the interlocutors linked by those words (what is said to whom and therefore how it may be heard and understood); and the source (what is said and where it comes from) (Freeman, 1994). "Thus in presentational analysis the teachers' words are examined for where they come from and how they relate to one another on the levels of form, function, and reference" (Freeman, 1994, p. 78). The representational and presentational approaches to language data analysis complement one another and the trustworthiness of the meaning of the interpretation can be enhanced by the dual consideration of the two approaches.

The choice of interview data was an essential component of the research design of this study. Interviews were a combination of semi-structured and open questions, and were conducted each week in the three case study schools. Although the interviews followed very similar procedures the same sequences of questions were not always possible nor desirable. The research design involved encouraging teachers to explore issues from their own perspective and talk about issues in their own terms. The researcher structured questions arising out of curriculum and policy documents to begin each interview then allowed the interview to follow a natural sequence of questions unique to each of the teachers and key informants interviewed.

Interviews may take several forms (Bowden & Walsh, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Foddy, 1993; Hycner, 1985; Keats, 1988; Mishler, 1986, Moser & Kalton, 1971). The following types were used in the current study:

i) **Open-ended Interviews**

Open-ended interviews usually take the form whereby an investigator asks the interviewees for their interpretation, opinion, point of view, or insights in relation to the phenomenon under investigation. During the periods of observation and interaction that took place in 1995, many of the discussions that occurred between the researcher and the three key teachers took the form of open-ended conversations about assessment techniques, theories of assessment and learning and insights into how teachers obtain their assessment and evaluation knowledge (Mishler, 1986).
ii) *A Focussed Interview*

A focussed interview, as the name implies, is an interview concentrating on a particular issue that may be only part of the larger issue under investigation. A focussed interview may only require a short time period where the interview centres on a set of questions derived from a previous interview, or information obtained from a document or artefact analysis. During the present study focussed interviews occurred regularly with all the participants. Some of the focussed interviews were informal and occurred as part of the weekly interaction with the interviewer. For example, the extract below is part of a focussed interview dealing with techniques or strategies that Georgina uses to assess her students' literacy.

**OCTOBER 30, 1995**
**INTERVIEW: GEORGINA WHYTE, NORTHLANDS P. S.**

HF: But when you say you observe, Georgina, um what do you observe?

GW: I'm watching what they're doing. Like if we're writing procedural text, I'll go around and help out the ones who need help and I know that initially when we started procedural text no-one could do it and we did lots of modelling and lots of group activities on that and, now I can say that all 27 of the kids can write a procedural text without even thinking about it. They know this is what we need. If I want to make a kite, these are all the materials I need to collect, this is how I go about making it step by step and they know that they can do that.

HF: So when you say you observe, you observe in your mind you have got ..

GW: The outcomes.

...

GW: A focus. (K.18.26–K.18.28)

Some of the focussed interviews were more formal and involved predetermined questions in response to an identified issue. The following extract from an interview with Veronica at Eastlands P. S. is specifically directed at finding out what assessment techniques she uses in the classroom to collect literacy data.

**NOVEMBER 6, 1995**
**INTERVIEW: VERONICA ROBINS, EASTLANDS P. S.**

VR: That is quite good because sometimes you don't just think of it off the top of you head, but things like their writing samples. Um

HF: Do you collect their writing samples, do you have a folder with those in it or do the children do that?

VR: From time to time I collect them, otherwise they've got their language book and it's easy to see the progression they are making. Um Speaking and listening. Um. You making, you're making I'd say making observations
while they are presenting work, so you are collecting data there. You’re watching the audience, whether they are listening, whether they’re giving feedback, whether they are answering questions. (K.12.18–K.12.19)

...  

HF: You have a checklist  
VR: You need a checklist and it might be for each specific time, or it might an oral language one, or you are looking and building up a picture through several presentations. (K.12.20)

...  

VR: Um say for reading you would have your reading circles where you’re discussing, you’d have reading conferences where you’re talking individually with kids about their reading, having them reading out orally, have them give different responses literature responses to books they have read, through different forms whether it’s drama or music or art or literature. Um So you’d be looking at those responses in context with um the sort of things you are looking for in their reading from CSF. (K.12.22)

Single interviewees, pairs of key informants and on one occasion a whole class of students were interviewed. Three group focussed interviews were used with students in this study - two interviews with two students and one interview with a whole class. All teacher and principal interviews were conducted individually. (Refer to Appendix C and Appendix F for sample questions) Table 12 contains the details of all the interviews conducted.

**Table 12 Interviews Conducted**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>Teacher C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Informants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Whole class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal A</td>
<td>Principal B</td>
<td>Principal C</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Member Checking Phase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>Teacher C</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal A</td>
<td>Principal B</td>
<td>Principal C</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>
All interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. In accordance with RMIT ethics regulations all participants signed consent forms (Appendix D) and in the case of the minors, parental consent was obtained. When the data were transcribed, participants' interviews were coded to maintain confidentiality of identity.\(^6\) Transcripts of all the interviews were analysed and 'influence' codes identified. The programme KWALITAN (Peters & Wester, 1990, 1993) was used to assist in the processing of the interview data. (Refer to section 3.6.1. for full detail of this programme.)

### 3.5.3.1. Inductive Data Analysis

Guba and Lincoln (1985) define inductive data analysis as "a process of 'making sense' of the field data" (p. 202). Data collected in the field is analysed inductively, often simultaneously with the data collection process (Tesch, 1990), and reiterative as categories of meaning emerge. Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed the method of 'constant comparison' (p. 102) in their seminal work *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* and this has become an important consideration in constructivist research as has the notion of 'human as instrument' (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 250). The discovery of theory from data which Glaser and Strauss called 'grounded theory' (1967) and which is built upon a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of the multiple complex possibilities of understanding a given situation has become a fundamental principle in constructivism. "The on going nature of analysis informs the research which is in keeping with emergent design and grounded theory" (Green & Caulley, 1996, p. 154). In addition, the belief in human as instrument is central to inductive analysis. The researcher is an integral part of the data collection and is needs to be aware, not only of the holistic components of the research setting, but also of his or her responsibilities to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Interpretive, critical analytical induction was used in this study. An illustration of inductive analysis is described in the next section.

The following extract was taken from an interview with Veronica at Eastlands Primary School. The situation was one in which I was exploring Veronica's knowledge of the reasons for the school's policies and practices. These segments have been coded 'articulation' - a code used to identify teachers who were able to explain why they do what they do. Articulation relates to the metacognitive ability to be able to give reasons for thoughts, ideas, philosophies or actions. The segments illustrate Veronica's knowledge of learning theory, individual differences, her ability to analyse change agents, her knowledge of the structure of the English language and its relationship to the development of literacy. Therefore, through inductive analysis and constant comparison with other information the code articulation emerged to describe this data.
A full description of the codes that emerged from the data is documented in Appendix P and S, and explained in chapter 4, Teachers' Judgement and Literacy Assessment: Case Studies and chapter 5, Teachers' Judgement and Literacy Assessment: Analysis of Main Findings.

NOVEMBER 22, 1995
INTERVIEW: VERONICA ROBINS, EASTLANDS P. S.

HF: Does education change because we know more or does education change because it's political to change?

VR: I think we know more, but I think also we have to temper it with not changing just for the sake of change and that you don't just 'Oh here is something new I'll encompass that' and then throw out all the other, because going back to the phonics you still have to look at words and the way they are made up but you don't do it in isolation, you are now doing it for a reason (K.13.5).

... 

VR: Well I think for kids to learn it has to be interesting. You've got to have their interest so that they want to learn and it's pretty hard for kids to focus, especially kids having problems, if it is boring, or they don't know what it is about. Bright kids learnt with phonics because they had that focus and that interest and they are educationally inclined. I still don't think they learnt as well and I still think that you have to be careful these days to make sure you don't just do writing without looking at all the different elements about it. You know you have to keep up with - it has to be everything. (K.13.7)

The issue of audio taping interviews is one that needs to be addressed in research of this nature. Audio taping participants' conversations involves ethical, practical and considerations regarding the validity of the data collected. The following section addresses some of the main concerns regarding the practice of audio taping interview data.

3.5.3.2. Audio Records

In qualitative research requiring reiterative interpretation and the situational flexibility to allow emergent coding categories to surface, the decision to audio tape interviews needs to be addressed. In this study I decided to tape record all interviews for the purposes of accuracy of reporting and to maintain the ability to revisit the original discourse and the context in which conversations were situated. Qualitative methodologists differ in their opinion about the merits of audio taping or writing field notes of conversations (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Mishler, 1986; Patton, 1990; Stringer, 1996). Merriam (1988) argues that in much qualitative research the researcher cannot know what discourse will become relevant or crucial to the investigation at a later stage of analysis. Note taking may miss the most important discourse or may produce excessive amounts of irrelevant material. But audio taping enables the researcher to refer to the exact discourse of the participant and to describe
the exact conversational context in which the statements were situated (Mishler, 1986). Audio tapes increase the fidelity of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 240) by allowing the researcher to revisit, reflect, reappraise and reproduce the exact interview conversation many times. Audio taping, however, is costly and time consuming in terms of transcription. Once transcribed the data can be manipulated, cross checked, cross referenced, and key words, phrases and comments can be accessed by the use of current computer programmes. In this study the programme KWALITAN was chosen for this purpose. Lincoln and Guba (1985) take an alternate viewpoint and argue that audio taping is intrusive and can be threatening to the interviewees. They comment that taking field notes keeps the researcher alert, responsive and on task.

In the current study the researcher chose to audio tape interviews because of the need to be able to maintain a free flow to the discussions, and to be able to return to the original conversations multiple times during the interpretative process. Full consent of all participants was obtained before any audio taping proceeded. (Refer to section 3.4.1. The Process of Gaining Access to Research Data; Appendix D and J.) In structured interview situations where the questions may be the same for all participants the analysis of the answers may be straightforward. However, in an unstructured interview where a researcher is analysing the underlying meaning of a situation, and inferring meaning, the ability to reproduce the exact discourse to which the researcher's interpretation is attributed is important. In the beginning of this study the researcher took considerable care to lay the groundwork of professional trust and rapport. Initial meetings with the principals and the participating teachers were arranged to informally discuss the project. The research design and the reasons for audio taping were explained, and the inbuilt member checking phase (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) gave participants opportunities to see their interview discourse and to withdraw any material they considered inappropriate or out of context.

Following the transcription of the interview data, participants’ names were coded to maintain confidentiality of identity. All data will be kept for five years which is in accordance with RMIT policy on data retention. The issue of fidelity outweighed the issue of intrusiveness in the research design of this study. Therefore, to ensure accuracy of interview data, all interviews were audio taped, and following some of the observation periods the researcher's observations were taped. All audio taped material was transcribed verbatim. The following extract is part of a researcher non-participant observation period undertaken at Westlands P. S.
OCTOBER 25, 1995
OBSERVATION: WESTLANDS P. S.

HF: It was not possible to actually interview Alexandra today because of the curriculum which was going on in the classroom so my observation period today was to sit and read carefully Alexandra’s pupil assessment book. It is her courses of study, where she keeps all her rough notes on her students, what she writes about them, so my observations were a detailed analysis like an artefact analysis of the material which she collects .... (K.1.1)

In addition, a preliminary questionnaire was sent to the teachers to indicate the types of questions and areas of interest that the study was investigating.

3.5.4. Teacher Questionnaire

Interviews can be conducted using more structured questions, much like a formal survey or questionnaire (Keats, 1988). In this study an initial questionnaire (Appendix C) was designed to open up discussion on a wide range of issues relevant to the research question. Some of the questions were open ended and some were of a closed nature requiring only yes or no, or an indication of frequency of usage, in the case of literacy assessment strategies.

The major areas of investigation covered by the initial questionnaire were as follows:
A. Teacher's educational qualifications
B. Teacher's philosophical beliefs about the nature of literacy
C. Teacher's beliefs about literacy assessment and evaluation
D. Classroom assessment and evaluation practices.

The initial questionnaire was constructed to reflect many of the main issues related to the theoretical framework of teacher judgement and students' literacy assessment and evaluation (Appendix C). The questionnaire was used to canvass broad concerns and set the context of the study for the three participating case study teachers. The questionnaire responses were analysed, after which some of the questions were refined or redesigned. A number of these questions were then used in semi-structured interview situations throughout the observation periods. The following two questions are taken from the preliminary questionnaire given to teachers (Appendix C). The first question (Q.12) is of an open-ended nature and the second question (Q.24) is of a structured nature to ascertain specific use of assessment techniques.

• Questionnaire Part B: Issues in Relation to Assessment and Evaluation of Literacy

I am interested in finding out how teachers make their literacy assessment and evaluation judgements. I am also interested in what are the most
important influences on teachers' judgements in relation to assessing and evaluating students' literacy development.

**Q.12.** When you use the term literacy, what do you mean?

**Questionnaire Part C: Strategies for Making Literacy Assessment and Evaluation Judgements**

**Q.24.** Do you use any of the following strategies / techniques / procedures to assess (collect data on) literacy development?

Please circle the strategies you use or have used, and indicate the frequency of your usage on the scale provided.

i) Anecdotal notes

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<td>Once a week</td>
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ii) Checklists

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v) Cloze

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ix) Miscue Analysis/Running Records

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<td>Once a week</td>
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xiii) Self Assessment

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<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
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xv) Tests - Commercially produced

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
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xvi) Portfolios - Work samples

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<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
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xvii) Other, please describe

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<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
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(Refer to Appendix C)
3.5.5. **Field Notes**

On-site notes were regularly made and recorded during each observation period. These notes consisted of descriptions of the context of the classroom, the curriculum that the students were participating in during the observation periods, and comments on any targeted focussed observations set for each observation period. For example, the following extract is from field notes written on the 25.10.1995 during an observation period in Alexandra Adler's classroom at Westlands P. S. In her teacher's file she keeps a Pupil Assessment Book in which she keeps assessment information on each student. On this day I observed the following entries:

i) A spelling test of 78 words plus the teacher's comments. The test covered words that the class had been working on over the previous five week period.

ii) An Observation by Parents Form. This form asked parents to comment on various aspects of their children's schooling:
   - Comment on your child's attitude towards school and/or learning
   - Comment on your child's behaviour
   - Comment on your child's special needs (environment, rules, learning styles)
   - Comment on your child's physical development.

iii) A number of recording sheets covering several aspects of English development - debating, process writing - letter writing, process writing - report writing, oral reading, novels read, book reviews and reading comprehension. Each recording sheet consisted of a single page with all the students' names down one side and then evaluative comments next to each name on the particular aspect of English being recorded.

**Process writing - letter writing**
The comments were in relation to sentence structure and spelling.

**Oral Reading**
Comments were made in terms of fluency, expression, understanding, the type of book being read (fiction or non-fiction).

**Book Reviews**
Comments were made about characterisation, setting, plot and personal response.

These observations prompted me to reflect on the basis on which Alexandra made such comments. Did she use the Curriculum and Standards Framework (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995), the old English Profiles (Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991) that was current in Victoria until 1994, or the Western Australian First Steps programme that I had noticed referred to in some
of the school's curriculum material, or some other literacy continuum? This question was then followed up in a later interview session.

3.5.6. **Curriculum and Policy Document Analysis**

Reading and analysing school policy documents and the English language curriculum policies within each school and within each of the individual classrooms was an integral part of the preparation for each observation session and for the many interview situations. In qualitative interpretive research of this nature the cyclic and iterative process is guided by continual reflection, observation and analysis. Curriculum document analysis formed part of this iterative process. Content analysis of the documents was also undertaken by utilising the computer programme ISYS (ISYS, 1988a, 1988b; Odyssey, 1994). ISYS is a full text retrieval software package which allows the user to index complete documents and search the text for relevant key words, phrases and concepts. The School Charter, a report form and the language policy for the school were collected from each case study site. Two schools had an assessment and reporting policy, the third school did not have a separate policy document but had a policy statement incorporated into the school charter. Two additional teaching and learning philosophy statements and one English as a Second Language document were collected from Westlands P. S. New annual report formats had been requested by the DSE of some schools in 1995, but not all. In 1996, one principal involved in the first round of new annual reports volunteered a copy of the report to complement my document collection from his school.

3.5.6.1. **Curriculum and Policy Documents Collected**

**Westlands P. S.**
2. Alexandra Adler's Teaching and Learning Approach Year 5/6B 1995
5. English as a Second Language Policy - 1992

**Eastlands P. S.**
2. Assessment and Reporting Policy
3. 'Language Program' Statement
Northlands P. S.
1. Student Assessment Policy
2. Student Reporting Policy
3. Language Curriculum Policy
5. Student Report Form

All these documents were subsequently loaded into the ISYS software computer programme. ISYS was used to assist in processing the large quantities of text data.

3.5.7. Classroom Artefacts Analysis

The classroom artefacts collected consisted of recording the items in both the students' assessment and evaluation portfolios as well as their individual folios of work. In addition, a sample of school report forms and individual record sheets was collected. These documents were critically read in terms of the research question. The information was then used in the interview situations with the classroom teachers and the key informants to provide verification and development questions. For example: How do you select each piece of work for the evaluation portfolios? Why is one piece of work more significant than another?

3.6. Computer Software Programmes

To facilitate the time intensive process of analysing the data two computer software programmes were utilised in this study. The two programmes chosen were KWALITAN and ISYS.

3.6.1. KWALITAN

KWALITAN is a computer programme designed by Peters and Wester at the University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands (Peters & Wester, 1990, 1993). The program executes under a Microsoft - Disk Operating System (MS-DOS, Version 6.22) and is designed specifically to be used by research studies employing qualitative methods. Computer programmes such as KWALITAN have facilitated researchers undertaking research involving iterative processes by the sheer speed and amount of data that can be manipulated (Seidel & Clark, 1984; Tesch, 1990).
The programme KWALITAN was used in this study to facilitate analysis of the large amounts of interview data collected. Use of KWALITAN is compatible with constructivist inquiry in which theory is grounded in the data. The programme KWALITAN (Peters & Wester, 1990, 1993) is flexible enough to handle the shifts and changes in the emergent coding process that occur in qualitative research inquiry. The programme facilitates the researcher in the retrieval of data from multiple interview sites. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) report that computers not only "save time and relieve the drudgery" (p. 141) of manual analysis, but also enable issues to be explored in greater depth. Computer assisted analysis may also "demystify qualitative analysis and contribute to its accountability" (p. 142).

3.6.2. **ISYS**

To assist in the document analysis process of the study a programme called ISYS was chosen. The need to be able to cross check interview data with information across multiple documents from a number of case studies necessitated an efficient and quick system of text retrieval. The ISYS computer programme provided such a system.

ISYS is an unstructured, full text system which can be used to search a document, or any text-based files, for any nominated words or combinations of words. The location of the document which satisfies the search criteria will be identified and then the section or document containing the nominated word/s can be viewed (ISYS, 1988a; 1988b). The ISYS data base indexes every word in a document and therefore contains a list of the words which can be retrieved. One of the main advantages of ISYS is the speed with which the indexing system operates.

3.7. **Data Processing and Reporting**

3.7.1. **Theoretical Framework**

Since the seminal work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) established the notion of grounded theory developed through qualitative research there has been extensive growth in qualitative research methodology (Anderson, 1989; Bowden & Walsh, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Eisner, 1993a; Erickson, 1986; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Kidder, 1981; Kurzman, 1994; Mathison, 1988; Mishler, 1986; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Wittrock, 1986). A number of qualitative analytical frameworks for data interpretation exist. Miles and Huberman (1994) define analysis "as consisting of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification" (p. 10). Merriam (1988) writes about the dimensions of data
analysis in terms of data collection, the formation of categories and the building of theory.

The program KWALITAN (Peters & Webster, 1990) was written to support a qualitative procedure that follows four phases of data analysis:

1. The Exploration Phase
2. The Specification Phase
3. The Reduction Phase
4. The Integration Phase.

Given that not every researcher aims to formulate a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon under investigation, procedural phases are designed to be entered at various levels of analysis. The current study aims to describe and understand the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development, thus it concentrates on the exploration and specification phases of the analytical process.

The Exploration Phase
This initial phase is for the researcher to become acquainted with the relevant research material in order to be able to construct an analytical framework of the research design. To process the empirical observational data using KWALITAN the data must first of all be transcribed. The material must then be divided into text units or 'segments' which constitute the units of the analysis. In this research the segments consisted of units of interaction, the parameters of which were defined by a question and a response, or a short sequence of conversation involving a question or a comment and a number of explanatory responses. Following these preliminary preparation activities the data is loaded into KWALITAN and is ready for analysis. This part of the phase is often called open coding. Analysis consists of interpreting each segment and ascribing a code that reflects the known theoretical framework relating to influences on teachers' judgements and which creates new conceptual descriptors to reflect and explain the data. The process is an iterative one until the researcher feels that the data has been accurately interpreted in terms of concepts, features and characteristics.

During this process, the researcher attempts to assign as many key words [version 4.0 calls these key words codes - added explanation] as possible to the research material which could be relevant as preliminary concepts in the research questions. Hence open coding is aimed at the formulation of as many as possible field-related concepts, in order that the researcher obtains an analytical framework that corresponds with the material. The process of asking questions (observing), applying concepts (analyzing) and
reflecting (ordering the concepts) is continued up to the time that no more new concepts relating to the central research questions can be found in the material. (Peters & Wester, 1990, p. 13)

The Specification Phase
The emphasis in this phase is the development and clarification of concepts relevant to the specific investigation. The aim of this phase is to define and refine concepts, to undertake comparative analysis of select cases in order to adjust interpretations, test concepts and formulate new concepts if necessary. The program KWALITAN has two options that assist the researcher to order codes. The first is a 'Hierarchical Tree Structure' of the created codes; the second is a matrix of the frequency of code occurrence in every segment and document being processed (Peters & Wester, 1990, 1993). During the initial phases of a qualitative analysis a researcher creates many codes. This phase, in which the activity of the researcher is described as open coding, may result in an excessive number of seemingly unrelated codes. In the specification phase the researcher attempts to connect and relate codes to each other, searching for relationships between codes, and an underlying structure to the codes. KWALITAN provides a processing tool to facilitate the development of a hierarchical structure of main codes and several levels of sub codes.

The Reduction Phase
This phase deals with the development of a theory. The main aims of studies undertaking the reductionist phase are to structure concepts and identified variables coherently together and to identify key concepts and concepts that occupy a central position in the study.

The Integration Phase
As the name suggests, this phase of the procedure deals with integrating the theory with the identified key concept/s. A systematic literature review is carried out to discover any new or possibly conflicting information and the conceptual framework is tested in relation to the key research question guiding the study.

In this study the data were analysed using a modification of the Peters and Webster (1990) process. Five phases of analysis were used in this investigation:

A. Data Preparation
B. Data Exploration
C. Data Specification
D. Data Reduction
E. Data Explanation and Reporting.
The components of the five phases of analysis are outlined in Figure 9. The process of analysis was recursive and iterative by nature. The multiple phases of analysis were not undertaken sequentially. The data preparation was an ongoing phase until all the data had been prepared for the KWALITAN programme. The data exploration phase began with one set of case study interviews and moved into a concurrent stage when the data specification commenced and the data exploration of the second and third sets of case study interviews began.

Figure 9. Five phases of analysis
3.8. **Data Analysis**

The five stages of data analysis are described in the following sections. The descriptions demonstrate how the major influences affecting teachers' judgements emerged and crystallised during the data analysis process.

3.8.1. **Phase A. Data Preparation**

All the interview data were transcribed. The school curriculum documents that had been collected were scanned as word processing documents and individually checked by the researcher.

Initial preparation of the interview data was undertaken to nominate the textual units or segments for the computer programme KWALITAN. A segment constitutes the units of the analysis (Peters & Wester, 1990, p. 9). In this research study a segment generally consists of the researcher's question or comment and a participant's response, or an extended piece of related discourse constituting discussion related to an issue.

Once the interview data were installed into the KWALITAN programme three months of interpretive analysis took place. The curriculum documents were converted into files and installed in the ISYS programme.

3.8.2. **Phase B. Data Exploration**

Each segment of discourse was then analysed for the explicit and implicit inferences that could be drawn in relation to the research question: What are the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development? This open coding phase (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) involves interpretation and reflection by the researcher. Each segment needed to be examined closely for the explicitly stated and implicit influences upon the teachers' judgement making processes. During this analysis multiple codes emerged from the data.

The initial exploration phase (Peters & Wester, 1990) of analysis began with the data from both the Eastlands P. S. and the Westlands P. S. interviews. In what Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to as the data reduction phase of analysis of the discourse, 66 codes identifying influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development emerged. As each influence emerged from the interview data a code label was assigned and the beginning of a 'concept memo' established. Concept memos are used to
elaborate the meaning, or itemise the main characteristics, of each code. A useful function of concept memos is to cross reference to related concept memos and to include references to segments where illustrative examples of the code can be found. (Refer to Appendix P for the initial code identification and concept memo specification.)

3.8.3. **Phase C. Data Specification**

As the researcher analysed the data at the exploratory level, preliminary code specifications began to be built up. As code labels were given to the influences on teachers’ judgements that emerged, working definitions were recorded in concept memos and refined as the reiterative and analytical interpretation continued. In addition, as the sets of interviews were processed and analysed the definitions of each code grew in conceptual complexity, clarity and accuracy. The meaning of each code was refined and the concept memos revised. The explanatory definitions or concept memos for the original 66 codes are contained in Appendix P. Two examples of the types of codes that emerged from the initial analysis are presented below.

**Artefacts** - refer to any reference a participant made to objects or artefacts used to assist in the judgement making process. In response to a question about what information she used to assist her to write the students’ reports, Alexandra commented: "but I will go to their tub to get their draft book and their English book, well projects they don't keep, but whatever else, maths book" "like that single sheet of story writing, that they've done, the draft and their final I would put that in". (K.2.27)

**Observation** - any explicit statement, or implicit reference, to the use of observation as a strategy for collecting information about student learning. The following conversation with Veronica exemplifies the code observation.

VR: Yep, yeah I’d rather than just take up a piece of work when they have finished I tend to sort of always be moving around, rather than sit at the table, being with the kids and seeing what they are doing, and where they are having trouble and getting them to talk about it and talk through the steps of what they are doing  (K.14.23).
VR: Everything you do you are looking at how they are going and I guess you are weighing up all the time and you're seeing this is what the picture you build up of who's confident, and who's having trouble in what areas and planning from there on what you need to workshop on with what group and you can say to the kids, and they are quite open if you don't put pressure or make a big deal or belittle them or anything, ok some kids when we did this yesterday um there was a few problems, some of you might have missed out when this was taught, let's get together and do it, so um. (K.14.24)

3.8.3.1. Code Clusters

From the beginning of the analysis the emerging codes nominated to represent influences on teachers' judgements began to cluster into meaning related themes. There were fine differences between some codes, but it became apparent that many codes reflected common themes. In this initial analysis of the data specification phase of the codes and themes there were nine tiers to the emerging structure. For a detailed description of each initial code refer to Appendix P. The tiers are not hierarchical in order of importance. However, future research may investigate a weighting system to each level of the structure. The typology for classifying the influences centred on a number of features. The nine tiers and the key characteristics of each tier are listed below.
1. The first tier clustered around features that were personal or internal to each individual.

tacit knowledge
teacher judgement
intuition
profess competence
common sense
context
experience
articulation
reflection
literacy compet
computer literacy
define literacy
learning theory
know base
proximity
change
personality

techniques
efficiency
inaccessible
authenticity
curriculum
rural

critical
observation
portfolios
tests
artefacts
formative assess
formative knowledge
collaboration

2. The second tier was external to the individual but still involved personal decision making.

external demands
parental influence
principal infl
csf
policy doc
central policy
dse courses
english profile
wa-first steps
pd
expert reference
profess programme
profess reading
external reference
lap
trans-judgement
trans-tests

3. The third tier of influences was imposed upon the teacher from external decision making bodies.

4. The fourth tier were all influences that relate to the requirements of reporting student achievement to the various interested stakeholders.

5. The fifth theme of influence centred around influential peers.

6. The sixth cluster of influences specifically related to the teachers' knowledge of students' learning and how this was involved in the judgemental process.

7. The seventh cluster referred to issues of standards and judgements related to expectation criteria. However, these expectations are related to the individual teacher's values.

8. The eighth tier was not directly related to the individual teachers. This cluster emerged from the students' comments.

9. The ninth tier consisted of observations and interpretive analysis from the researcher's field notes.
Seventy-three codes emerged at the completion of the exploratory phase of the analysis. The following section briefly outlines the seven new codes that emerged at the completion of the data specification phases of analysis. Figure 10 is a diagram representing the emerging clusters of codes related by common underlying theme at the completion of the exploratory and specification phases of analysis.

The seven new codes that were identified and then appeared to exhaust the data coding were as follows: i) an external demand for **accountability**; ii) an influence that emerged from the teachers' discourse that many influences are a **complex interaction** of features that are difficult to separate into component units; iii) an issue that encompassed the teacher being influenced by the monetary **expense** of an assessment technique and the **cost** in time to administer the strategy; iv) an influence that was initially labelled **isolation** and was interpreted to mean the influence on a primary teacher who is isolated in her/his classroom for five hours a day; v) an influence that emerged as a result of the students' demands that literacy assessment made by teachers must be **justifiable** in any given circumstance; vi) an influence nominated by a principal participant that a teacher's judgements are influenced by her/his **personal situation** at any given time. (Refer to Appendix Q for a description of the seven new codes.)

Figure 10 is a diagrammatic representation of the threads of meaning that began to emerge to describe the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.
Figure 10. Representation of the emerging threads of meaning at the initial data specification phase of analysis
3.9. **Trustworthiness**

Within a constructivist paradigm the inquirer analyses the data collected using the process of induction. A researcher constructs, or reconstructs, meaning in relation to the research question. This is in sharp contrast to the deductive approach underlying positivist research that begins with a priori hypotheses and theory that are confirmed or disconfirmed by the data collected (Green & Caulley, 1996). It is important in constructivist inquiry to address the criterion of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The research data in the current study are the interviews (teacher participants, principals and the key informants), the field notes recorded, the artefacts and the policy documents collected. A researcher needs to check that her/his interpretations or reconstructions of reality reflect those of the participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the term negotiated outcomes (p. 211) to describe this process. "If we take seriously the proposition that context is all important in assigning meaning to data, it is useful to carry that assigned meaning back into the context for verification" (p. 212). They add: "a major trustworthiness criterion is *credibility* in the eyes of the information sources, for without such credibility the findings and conclusions as a whole cannot be found credible by the consumer of the inquiry report" (p. 213).

In the current study the following credibility techniques were used as part of the constructivist inquiry process: prolonged engagement and persistent observation, the triangulation of multiple data sources, member checking, peer review, and external auditing (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990).

3.9.1. **Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation**

Prolonged engagement "requires that the investigator be involved with a site sufficiently long to detect and take account of distortions that might otherwise creep into the data" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 302). A researcher needs to take the time to build trust and rapport with participants; to establish confidence in the data collected; to overcome the effects of "misinformation" and "distortion" (p. 302); to overcome the possibility of intended "deceptions that may be practiced by informants" (p. 303) and to give a researcher time to rise above "his or her own preconceptions" (p. 303). This study used the technique of prolonged engagement. The researcher had substantial contact inside and outside the classroom with the teachers. Informal and
formal contact at the school site facilitated a bond of trust and rapport with the students, participating teachers and principals. The strength of this professional relationship facilitated, not only, frank exchanges in the months of discussions that occurred, but also, an acceptance of the iterative questioning that is a part of the process of triangulation of data. Section 3.9.5.1. provides full details of the data collection process.

In conjunction with the technique of prolonged engagement is the technique of persistent observation.

The technique of persistent observation adds the dimension of salience to what might otherwise appear to be little more than a mindless immersion. ... the purpose of persistent observation is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail. If prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304)

In this research persistent observation occurred by examining and reexamining the emerging themes pertaining to the research focus. The researcher constantly revisited the data and field seeking confirming and disconfirming evidence in light of the emergent patterns. The researcher was aware of Patton's (1990) warning of the dangers of coming too close to the data. The researcher must "negotiate and adopt that degree of participation that will yield the most meaningful data" (Patton, 1990, p. 209).

3.9.2. Triangulation of Data

Triangulation is an established research practice that "is essentially a strategy that will aid in the elimination of bias and allow the dismissal of plausible rival explanations such that a truthful proposition about some social phenomenon can be made" (Mathison, 1988, p. 13). There are multiple types of triangulation which can be utilised: data, investigator, theory, and methodological. In the current investigation two types of triangulation were used:

a) Data triangulation - which refers simply to using several data sources. In this study the inclusion of more than one individual as a data source was a key element in the research design. Another important aspect of data triangulation is the consideration of time. Understanding a complex human social phenomenon
such as teacher judgement requires the examination of the phenomenon under a variety of conditions.

b) Methodological triangulation - which refers to the use of multiple sources of data in the examination of a social phenomenon. It is important to emphasise that, although a similar process, the technique of triangulation in educational research does not fulfil the same purpose as triangulation in navigation. A navigator uses three different sources of data to plot an exact point on a chart. An educational researcher triangulates data in order to check the trustworthiness of the different sources of data collected and to build up a rich description of a situation, rather than to expect convergence upon a single conclusion or unitary explanation of a social phenomenon under investigation.

The triangulation of analyses in this study was planned for by using the following techniques:

- qualitative analysis of case study interview data
- content analysis of classroom artefacts
- analysis of case study respondents’ questionnaires
- qualitative analysis of key informant interviews
- interpretive analysis of indepth observations of classroom interactions
- content analysis of key policy and curriculum documents from the school of each case study respondent.

3.9.3. Participant Member Checking Process

One part of the process to enhance trustworthiness in this study was to revisit the case study schools with the transcripts of all the interview data and the initial coded interpretation of the interviews for the teacher and principal participants to reflect upon. Member Checking is an established procedure to test for factual and interpretive accuracy within an investigation using qualitative case studies as a research technique (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This research design technique was used in this study to assist in the provision of credibility - the trustworthiness criterion essential to all research design methodology (Guba, 1981). There were two review panels for each school site consisting of:

Panel 1 - the researcher, the participating teacher and an external independent observer.

Panel 2 - the researcher, the principal and an external independent observer.

Once all the interviews were transcribed, checked by the researcher, prepared for the KWALITAN programme, and initially coded, the participant member checking phase
of the research process began. Follow up appointments were made with the three case study teachers and the three principals of each school. The six people were asked to participate in a discussion involving themselves, the researcher and an impartial and independent observer. These meetings were arranged in December 1996. The original audio tapes, the transcripts of interviews, the lists of codes designated as influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development, and a list of the defining qualities of each code were taken to each interview. The object of each discussion session was to establish the credibility of the interview data collected. By allowing the interviewees to reflect on the researcher's interpretation and the coding of the taped conversations the criterion of trustworthiness can be facilitated.

The member checking process gives the interviewees an opportunity to:
- revisit their original conversations and reflect on the researcher's interpretations
- correct errors of fact
- challenge what are perceived to be wrong interpretations
- volunteer additional information not provided in the initial period of engagement
- affirm for the record the accuracy of the documented information and that the interpretation is a true and factual reconstruction of their statements (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

An independent observer, Mr. Garth Brown from RMIT University, consented to undertake the task of verifying the participant member checking process. The independent observer's role was to ensure that participants were given every opportunity to clarify the researcher's interpretation, add comments, offer different interpretations to the researcher's, disagree, offer additional material, and note if any participants requested that specific material not be used. The independent observer had the task of recording if there were any variations or inconsistencies in the analysis. His task was to bring this to the attention of the researcher and facilitate negotiated discussions so that misrepresentation of any data could be avoided where possible. This process not only addresses issues of verification and credibility of the data collected, but also the ethical issue concerning the potentially damaging consequences of misrepresented findings. The choice of the independent observer was a crucial one. Mr. Garth Brown was chosen because of his professional standing in the educational community, having worked in an academic educational institution for over 25 years. Mr. Brown has extensive knowledge of the processes involved in qualitative research, has a personality to maximise participant rapport and, as a long standing senior colleague of the researcher's, has the ability to command respect and facilitate any negotiated intervention where necessary.
All three schools were contacted and interviews with the three teachers and the three principals were arranged. The Year 6 students who had been key informants in this study were not included in the member checking phase of the research process. All students had left their primary schools and in 1996 were attending many different secondary schools in Victoria.

Separate interviews were conducted with each teacher and each principal. This procedure maximised the circumstances under which a participant could request clarification of the researcher's interpretation and verify their own intended meaning.

The participant member checking process followed the same procedure each time. A phone call was made to arrange a time schedule for all the interviews and a letter was sent confirming the arrangements and explaining the principles of the member checking process (Appendix K). The researcher arranged a quiet room at each school for the discussions to occur in a relaxed environment. Each participant received a booklet that contained a copy of the codes that the researcher had constructed to that point in time, a copy of a draft document outlining preliminary explanations of the codes listed, a copy of her/his own transcribed interview tapes and the students' transcribed interview tapes. A chart, in the form of a tree structure, with all the codes nominated as influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development, was displayed on a pin board. The tree structure chart was to facilitate the discussion by attempting to give an overall perspective to the current state of the research analysis. Each session followed the same format. The independent observer was introduced, a request to audio tape the session was sought and obtained, and the purpose of the session was explained. The explanation of the purpose of the participant member checking session was described as follows:

- "to show you the transcripts of the audio tapes
- to show you the codes I have developed to explain my interpretation of the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development
- to check with you my interpretations
- to have you verify transcripts as a true record of our conversations".

(Refer to Appendix K)

Each participant was requested to feel free to:

- make any comments they chose
- ask for clarification of any interpretation
There was one significant difference between the first member checking session (PMCI 25.11.1996) and the subsequent second (PMCI 5.12.1996) and third (PMCI 10.12.1996) sessions. In the first member checking session the code summary contained 66 codes (Appendix P). In the second and third member checking sessions the code summary had 73 codes (Appendix Q). School B contained the first case study interviews that had been coded. The member checking process was started before all the interview coding had been finished. The reason for doing this was to commence the trustworthiness process of checking the credibility of the researcher’s coding of influences on teachers’ judgements of students’ literacy development. The generative nature (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of the qualitative research design requires that a researcher provide credibility checks of the inductive process. Member checking is one of the procedures that assists the researcher to challenge her/his own inductive logic. Following the first member checking session there had been a few issues raised which required a broadening of the code classifications. In line with the emergent principle of qualitative research new codes were added for the final two member checking sessions to reflect this refinement of the process.

For example: Case Study School B did not have a code nominated as ‘Accountability’. There was a code identified as ‘External Demands’, referring to a reference made by participants to requirements requested of them by external sources to the school. However, as the coding of the discourse of the interviews continued, and the member checking process began, a new code emerged, identified as Accountability. Accountability was not the same as the External Demands code identified in the initial case study school transcripts. There were seven such new codes that emerged as the coding of case study two and three and the first member checking phase of the research process was completed. The seven new codes were:

- **Accountability**: a specific reference to an awareness of the pressure of accountability issues on the literacy judgement making processes of teachers.
• **Complex Interaction**: a reference to the complexity of any situation involving literacy judgement assessments.

• **Cost**: a reference to cost in terms of teacher time, or technique efficiency and expediency.

• **Expense**: a reference to the monetary expense of a particular literacy assessment technique.

• **Isolation**: an initial reference to the confining nature of a primary school teacher's classroom. The implication appeared to be in terms of restricted access to information.

• **Justifiable**: this code refers to a belief that judgements, and decisions made as a consequence of such judgements, must be justifiable in terms of the evidence collected.

• **Personal Situation**: a code referring to the personal situation of the teacher making literacy judgements. A personal crisis in a teacher's life may influence her/his teaching ability at a specific point in time. (Appendix Q)

Each session was closed with the offer that if any further thoughts came to the interviewees they were free to contact the researcher at any time. If they wished to take home a copy of their own transcripts they could; however, they were requested to ensure that the material would not be photocopied at this stage of the research. The material was to be returned to the researcher until the thesis was finished (this is to protect original material as is a requirement of PhD submissions). All three teachers and the three principals accepted the offer to take home their individual transcripts to read in more detail than the scheduled interview permitted. All transcripts were returned by the end of December 1996. During the member checking session at School C the principal commented that he thought the researcher would be interested to read the annual review of the school's activities for 1995. The annual report includes curriculum and financial information for the school community and the Directorate of School Education 1995 (which became the Department of Education Victoria in 1996). The principal supplied a copy of the document which then became part of the policy document collection.
Comments made in the member checking sessions were taken into consideration in the analyses that occurred in the following 10 - 11 months, February–December 1997. (Appendix L contains the independent observer's report regarding the member checking sessions.)

The independent observer, Mr. Garth Brown, submitted a report attesting to the participant member checking process (Appendix L). All member checking interviews were transcribed so that accurate records of the discussions could be consulted if needed at a later stage in the research process.

3.9.4. Peer Reviewer Checking Process

Ongoing peer review checking occurred with each consultation with the senior supervisor. However, in a more formal capacity, two PhD candidates were selected to act as external peer reviewers for the credibility of the coding categories that began to emerge from the interview transcripts and to check for the reliability of the consistency of the assignment of codes by the researcher. Both peers were specifically chosen for their knowledge of the qualitative research process. One researcher is working in the field of hermeneutics and the other is working in the field of phenomenological research (Giorgi, 1993; Marton, 1994). The common underlying paradigm of inquiry gave these two researchers particular relevance to be the peer reviewers. "The hermeneutic approach seeks to elucidate and make explicit our practical understanding of human actions by providing an interpretation of them" (Packer, 1985, p. 1088). Phenomenology is a field of enquiry that attempts to understand and describe human phenomena from an experiential perspective. "Phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld - the world as we immediately experience it rather than as we conceptualize, categorize or theorize about it. Phenomenology aims to come to a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (van Manen, 1984, p. 37). According to Packer (1985), hermeneutics, like phenomenology, attempts "to describe and study meaningful human phenomena in a careful and detailed manner as free as possible from prior theoretical assumptions" (pp. 1081–1082) and aims at "progressive uncovering and explication" (p. 1089).

The peer reviewer process followed the procedure as outlined below. Two PhD researchers were contacted and agreed to be peer reviewers - Mr. Paul Sharkey and Ms. Gloria Latham. A preliminary discussion was held with each peer reviewer to inform them of the process and expectations. A time was negotiated when both peer reviewers and the senior supervisor could be present for a briefing session. The senior supervisor's presence was requested for two reasons: i) to observe the information
given to the peer reviewers so that in subsequent discussion about any peer reviewers' comments the supervisor would be familiar with the initial briefing discussions; ii) to intervene actively during the briefing session to ensure that the peer reviewers were clear about the process and the task expectations.

Mr. Paul Sharkey received School B interview transcripts, a booklet containing a copy of the initial codes, a copy of the preliminary explanations of the codes listed pertaining to School B, a copy of the code list and explanations of the codes relevant to School A and C and a copy of the current (to 1.1.1997) revised code list and revised explanation of the codes that the researcher was working on at the time. Ms. Gloria Latham received School A interview transcripts, a booklet containing a copy of the revised codes, a copy of the draft explanations of the revised codes pertaining to School A, a copy of the code list and explanations of the codes relevant to School B and C, a copy of the current (to 1.1.1997) refined code list and revised explanation of the codes that the researcher was working on at the time. The chart of the emerging tree structure, with all the codes nominated as influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development, was presented at the briefing session. The tree structure chart was to facilitate the discussion by attempting to give an overall perspective to the current state of the research analysis and to illustrate the changes that were emerging in the coding structure as each member checking session was completed.

The Peer Reviewers were asked to undertake the following tasks:

- familiarise themselves with the codes and the working explanations of the codes used for the school which they had been given to check
- spot check the transcripts for credibility and dependability of the coding used
- discuss with the researcher in the week beginning February 24, 1997 (that is, six weeks' later) their findings related to the code checking
- write a short report attesting to their checking process and their assessment.

It is important to note the following issue in relation to the peer review process. School C interview transcripts were not used with an external peer reviewer. The reason for this is twofold. First, during the member checking phase, teacher C - Georgina Whyte - had requested that I not use any of the material where specific students had been identified by name. There had been particularly sensitive conversations recorded about two students in her class. Although in the official consent form it is stated that no participant will be identified by name, as a researcher I had told participants I would not use any material they did not wish me to use. Therefore, I decided not to give School C transcripts to an external peer reviewer.
This raises the interesting issue that is always part of the constructivist paradigm of research using the interpretive approach, and that is of the credibility of data and the right of the participants to exclude any part of the data. Lincoln and Guba (1989) firmly advocate the right of the respondent/participant to "shape that information's use and to assist in formulating the purposes to which they will lend their names and information. To do less is to violate, to intrude and to condemn to indignity" (p. 236).

Alternatively, the issue of credibility of the data is raised if participants have the choice to exclude particular aspects of the data (Sabar, 1994). The second reason for not using a peer reviewer with the School C data was that my senior supervisor and I would be discussing all the interview transcripts over the course of the year. I felt that following the peer reviews and debriefing sessions, through constant discussion with my supervisor and through the iterative process of coding, refining and code reduction, any inconsistencies in School C coding would be detected.

The two peer reviewers completed their analysis and submitted their reports on January 28, 1997. (Refer to Appendix N for the peer reviewers' reports.) Each peer reviewer's report was reviewed and comments and suggestions were considered in the light of the research question. A debriefing session with Mr. Paul Sharkey occurred on April 4, 1997 and with Ms. Gloria Latham on April 18, 1997. As a result of constructive comments by Mr. Paul Sharkey a new code called 'political climate' was introduced to the analysis. Comments made in the peer reviewers' reports were also taken into consideration in the iterative analysis that lead into the data reduction phase of this research process.

The following section describes the changes that were made as a result of reflecting on discussions held during the member checking and peer review processes. One code was deleted. Two codes were split into two, the resulting four codes described the influences on the teachers' judgements more appropriately. Two codes were renamed to reflect more precisely the meaning of the underlying influence that each represented. One new code was added. (Refer to Appendix R and S for detailed concept memo descriptions.)

3.9.4.1. Code Modifications Reflecting Participant Members and Peer Reviewers' Comments

i) The code isolation was deleted at the request of a principal. It became clear in the member checking interviews that the explanation of the code isolation was not what the principal had intended to imply. Isolation was characterised by the confining nature of a primary school teacher's classroom and work schedule. The implication appeared to be in terms of restricted access to information.
ii) The principal infl code was split into two codes, principal–leader and principal–respon (principal responsibility). The original meaning of the code principal infl, principal influence, was used to designate a specific mention of the power or influence of the principal over what assessment policies and assessment strategies were used in the school. During the member checking phase of the research the three teachers commented that they felt that there was a need for two codes to reflect two distinct components of the meaning of principal influence.
The new code principal-leader refers to the influence of a principal that is in a sense earned by right of being a recognised and acknowledged curriculum leader, a senior administrator and, as such, holding the respect of the educational community.

NOVEMBER 25, 1996
EASTLANDS P. S.
PARTICIPANT MEMBER CHECKING INTERVIEW
(p. 11, LINE 28 - p. 14, LINE 8)

Veronica Robins = VR (Teacher Participant)
Garth Brown = GB (Independent Observer)
Heather Fehring = HF (Researcher)

HF: ... you've said 'well I have to do this because the principal has asked me to'. (p. 11, Line 28)
VR: Right.
HF: And I'll tell you specifically the grading A, B, C of the children at the end of the year so that you mix the children up. (The situation to which I was referring)
VR: That's right, yeah.
HF: Because it's not a policy of the school.
VR: No, we probably would think it's a good idea any way to mix them up and that might be something that we do because even if we doubt that but this is a policy of the way we do it so that's why but I mean, you know, in a different situation we'd probably say look, you know, we've got to do it somehow, we've got to mix them up and there has to be a spread of ability in grades. But yeah that is what we do here.
HF: ... I've put it as a separate one because you know how the CASES program, it requires you to put A, B, C on the children ...
HF: ... and the principal has to submit the CASES program to the, what is it now DoE, ...
VR: Mmm. She had to put what levels they're at in CSF. (p. 12, Line 13)

HF: I would say that Eastlands P. S. doesn't support a policy of competitive grading of children. (p. 12, Line 22)
VR: No actually.
HF: And so you see I've put that at the moment as a principal influence. You have to do that.
HF: The principal has asked you do it because the DoE has asked her do it.
VR: Yeah, that's right. (p. 12, Line 29)
GB: So that might be better described some way, in some other way Heather. (p. 13, Line 7)
GB: It's not really necessarily that you're going to check with Mary. It's not necessarily her idea either.
GB: Is that right Veronica?
VR: ... that's right.
GB: It's coming from elsewhere. (p. 13, line 16)

HF: ... it may be a good one to explain the difference between something that is a principal's influence saying you will do this Veronica because I want you do it. (p. 14, line 1–2)
HF: And one which is a principal saying Veronica you will do this because the DoE is making me do it.
VR: Because I've been asked to do it.
HF: And you've got to do it. (p. 14, line 8)

The teachers felt that the code, principal - respon, referring to principal responsibility, was a necessary distinction to make in light of the fact that there were some duties that
a principal must impose upon them as a requirement of the DSE (DoE). An example of this difference was the imposition of the LAP testing programme. Although many principals in Victoria did not agree with the LAP testing, and in many cases over the last two years teachers have refused to administer the LAP tests in their classrooms (Cazaly, 1995; Heaney & Coslovich, 1995; Messina, 1995), principals are required to ensure teachers give the LAP, or administer the LAP themselves by order of the employing authority the DSE/DoE.

iii) The code expert reference was split into expert reference and internal mentor. The code expert reference originally referred to the influences on teachers' judgements implied from comments teachers made about books they had read or about people who had been influential on their thinking. Expert reference referred to experts outside the school environment who were influential in the teacher's thinking. Internal mentor was the new code used to distinguish the influence of experts or respected curriculum leaders within the school. Such a person could be a peer or senior staff personnel.

DECEMBER 5, 1996
NORTHLANDS P. S.
PARTICIPANT MEMBER CHECKING INTERVIEW
(p. 8, LINE 23 - p. 9, LINE 11)

Georgina Whyte = GW Teacher Participant
Garth Brown = GB Independent Observer,
Heather Fehring = HF Researcher

HF: Now expert reference. At the moment I've got that defined as a reference to an expert outside of you, like a lot of the teachers there, and they've obviously mentioned Brian Cambourne. But Michael gave me an insight before, there are internal experts that could be considered to be expert references. (p. 8, 23–26)

GW: Within the school? Oh absolutely.

HF: ... But I, I think that this is painfully obvious now, that there is an internal expert which is actually an expert reference. ... an external demand, or an external pressure, or an external influence on a teacher. (p. 9, Line 2–4)

HF: Like, for example, you. You would have been an expert, an external demand to some teachers.

GW: Oh yeah.

HF: As an expert because of your knowledge of literacy but you would be an internal expert to this school.

GW: Mmm. (p. 9, Line 11)

iv) Two codes were renamed at the suggestion of the teachers involved in the study. Both of the original codes were considered to be too theoretical or formal. The code, learning theory, became teach & Inq practice (teaching and learning practice) and the code, external demands, became external require (external requirements). Teaching and learning practice appeared to reflect more accurately
the connection between the understanding teachers hold of how students learn and the relationship such beliefs have to assessment judgements. The code external demands was felt to be too strong. External require (external requirements) was felt to reflect the reality of the classroom. For example, all three teachers were requested to provide assessment information regarding the Year 6 students on forms provided by the secondary schools the students were intending to enrol in the following year (1996). The teachers could have just provided a copy of the students' school report form and sent it to the secondary schools. However, they complied with the requests from the secondary schools.

v) A new code, political climate, emerged following a comment from a peer reviewer (Appendix N: Peer Reviewers' Reports). The reviewer suggested a global code referring to the effects of the nature of political policies on literacy in Victoria. The codes already identified in the analysis refer to the micro level of political influences - central policy, dse courses, english profile, kidmap, lap, pd, and wa-first steps.

The following comments were taken from the initial interview with the principal at Eastlands P. S. The context of this discussion, by implication, centred on the educational macro level changes occurring because of the change of government. Victoria changed from a Labor to a Liberal government in 1992 (5); the economic climate became one of economic rationalisation, thousands of teaching jobs were shed, funding was cut to schools and contract teaching positions were introduced for the first time in Victoria (Graham, 1997, May). The following discussion with Mary Chivas (Principal Eastlands P. S.) highlights the cultural changes occurring in schools and the resulting effects on school policies and curriculum.

MC: They (teachers) need to be challenged and they need to take risks.
That, I guess, gets back to what we were talking about the culture change.
HF: Yes, yes.
MC: If your culture becomes so stultifying, you used the example of contracts, I don't agree with, ...
MC: ... but if you put it into a climate of control ...
MC: ... then we're in real trouble. (K.24.21)

HF: Professional development [PD]. How influential is professional development on teachers' decision making? School level, professional organisations, DSE or whatever?

MC: Well I think the way we look at PD is changed and I certainly wouldn't talk about it in those categories at all. If this Government has done one good thing, it gave us a little bag of money for Pd and said you come up with a school PD plan, you document it, you send it to us, I mean they're probably sitting in the rubbish bin over at the
Rialto. But the fact we have to do and think about it and plan and make it reflective of the School Charter or the direction of the school, I think was very, very positive and I have made that the most positive thing in this school. (K.24.22)

The code political climate was introduced and in the following months iterative analysis was used in the refined specification and reduction phases of the interpretive process.

Figure 11 is a diagrammatic representation of the emerging structure of the refined threads of meaning that distinguishes the code clusters. At this stage of the analysis it was possible to give preliminary super categories to label the code clusters. (Refer to Appendix R and S for detailed concept memo descriptions at completion of the data specification phase of analysis.)
Influences on Teachers' Judgements of Students' Literacy Development

Figure 11. Representation of the refined threads of meaning at completion of the data specification phase of analysis
3.9.5. **External Audit Process**

To enhance the dependability and confirmability of the research an external audit process was undertaken by an independent professional. The inquiry auditor examined both the process and the product of the research.

On January 3, 1997 Dr. David Forrest from RMIT, Bundoora, was approached and agreed to undertake an external audit of this PhD study (February 8, 1997). Dr. Forrest began the external audit on March 3, 1997. The first phase was to examine the audit trail for authenticity. The initial task was to verify the existence of all the data sources. The second task was to spot check the audio taped interviews, the transcripts and the coded transcripts for accuracy and authenticity of transcription. This was a lengthy process that commenced on March 14, 1997 and was carried out over a number of weeks. The inquiry audit also examined the coding process for credibility and consistency of interpretation. The audit was completed by April 22, 1997. The second phase of the audit process commenced in May 1998. Dr. Forrest checked the data reported in the thesis to verify the validity of the material used with the original data collected. The final report was completed on May 29 1998. (Refer to Appendix O for the External Auditor's detailed report.)

### 3.9.5.1. **Data Collection Audit**

**Interviews and Observations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Northlands P. S.</td>
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<td>25.10.1995 - AM</td>
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<td>- pupil assessment books</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- student artefacts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25.10.1995 - PM</td>
<td>observation - curriculum programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- evaluation books</td>
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<td>30.10.1995 - AM</td>
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<td>- report forms</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Date and Time</td>
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<td>School B</td>
<td>School C</td>
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<td>Eastland P. S.</td>
<td>Northlands P. S.</td>
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<td>Interview - teacher B</td>
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<td>21.11.1995 - PM</td>
<td>interview - teacher C</td>
<td></td>
<td>interview - two key informants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>interview - teacher B</td>
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<td>27.11.1995 - PM</td>
<td>interviews - two key informants</td>
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<td>observation - reports</td>
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<td>5.12.1995 - PM</td>
<td>observation</td>
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</tr>
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<td>8.12.1995 - AM &amp; PM</td>
<td></td>
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<td>whole day</td>
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<td>12.12.1995 - PM</td>
<td>interview - teacher B</td>
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<td>16.12.1995 - PM</td>
<td>interview - teacher C</td>
<td></td>
<td>interview - teacher C (Saturday)</td>
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<td>observation - wind-up</td>
<td></td>
<td>interview - key informant (principal)</td>
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</table>
Date and Time | School A      | School B      | School C      |
-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
20.12.1995 - 11AM | observation wind up |
01.01.1996 - 01.06.1996 | transcribing and preparation of interview data |
12.06.1996 - AM  | interview - key informant (principal) |
17.07.1996 - AM  | interview - key informant (principal) |
20.07.1996 - 01.08.1996 | transcribing and preparation of remaining interview data |
01.08.1996 - 20.11.1996 | coding of interviews and setting up of KWALITAN programme |

Participant Member Checking Phase

Date and Time | School A      | School B      | School C      |
-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
               | (Refer to Appendix L for Independent Observer's Report.) |

Peer Review Phase

09.01.1997 - AM  | briefing session with Dr. Pam Green - Senior Supervisor |
                 | Ms. Gloria Latham - Peer Reviewer |
                 | Mr. Paul Sharkey - Peer Reviewer |
28.01.1997 - PM  | peer reviewer reports received from Ms. Gloria Latham and Mr. Paul Sharkey |
                 | (Refer to Appendix N for Peer Reviewers' Reports.) |
04.04.1997 - PM  | debriefing session with Mr. Paul Sharkey |
18.04.1997 - PM  | debriefing session with Ms. Gloria Latham |

External Audit Phase

03.01.1997  | Dr. David Forrest approached to act as an External Auditor to this PhD study |
10.02.1997  | briefing correspondence sent to Dr. David Forrest |
03.03.1997 audit process commenced - Dr. Forrest began verifying the existence of the research data: the audio tapes, transcripts, coded transcripts, artefacts, school policy documents and field notes

14.03.1997 - 22.04.1997 Dr. Forrest verified the authenticity of the content of the audio tapes and the transcripts. This phase of the research process was completed by April 22, 1997

15.05.1998 second phase of the audit process commenced. Dr. Forrest checked the data reported in the thesis to verify the validity of the material used with the original data collected.

(Refer to Appendix O for External Auditor's Report.)

The fourth phase of the research process in this study is called data reduction (Figure 9). The following section outlines the main essence and purpose of this phase in the inquiry process.

3.10. **Phase D: Data Reduction**

In the reduction phase (Phase D) of the analytical process the purpose is to examine the data for general patterns to explain the phenomenon under investigation. Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to first level coding as the process of working out a set of codes that describe the phenomenon under investigation. However, at a second level of analysis pattern coding needs to occur to facilitate the development of explanatory or inferential codes. In this process of regrouping, a smaller number of sets or themes emerge to explain more adequately the data. The result is that large amounts of data are reduced into more meaningful and comprehensive analytic units.

At this second major stage of the data analysis the researcher revisited all the original interview data and the coding categories. All the original codes were re-examined for similarities and differences in meaning, code definitions were refined and in some instances expanded for clarity of meaning, codes were reclustered into major themes and theme codes were added to the data in the KWALITAN programme. As a result of this process a small number of codes were considered not to be central to the investigation. For this reason these codes were neither processed nor reported any further. The three codes considered to be in this category were as follows:

i) **Student judgement - coded stud judgement**

   This code was used to identify student conversation where students were making evaluative comments about the assessment techniques their teacher used and about how their own ability was gauged by such techniques.

ii) **Evidence - coded evidence**
This code was used to mark students' conversation where the students commented that teachers should be able to provide evidence for their decisions or judgements.

iii) Teacher responsibility - coded teacher respon
This code was used to mark student conversation interpreted to mean that the students felt it was the teacher's responsibility to know about each student. The data and codes remain in the data base for reference; however, no further analysis was made of this data. In addition, the amalgamation of some codes occurred and a regrouping of some codes within themes was required as the major influences on teachers' judgements were elucidated. The resulting structure of refined and regrouped code clusters is contained in Figure 12 (on the following page).

The typological classification of the influences now centred on seven main features:

- The powerful influence of internalised reflective knowledge consisting of many features distinguished by being personalised to each individual teacher. This influence encompasses the teacher's accumulated professional experiences, incorporating the internalisation of experiences previously described as intuition, common sense and tacit knowledge; content knowledge of curriculum development and student learning patterns; and the ability to articulate and reflect on new experiences taking into account the differential nature of each experience.

- The assessment strategy selection influence incorporating practical techniques with theoretical philosophies, and the complex integration of features requiring the teacher to chose practices that are authentic and cost efficient.

- The powerful influence that external considerations have on a teacher's literacy judgements. This influence consists of a number of features that are imposed upon a teacher's decision making.

- The context bound dissemination practices within a school and an education system was another powerful influence that emerged to describe how teachers made their judgements.

- Peer power was another identifiable influence upon teachers' literacy judgement practices.

- The teachers' expectations, or internalised 'standards', for the students in their care influenced teachers' decision making processes.

- The macro political climate of the educational environment had a powerful influence on teachers' decision making practices.
3.11. **Phase E: Data Explanation and Reporting**

The reporting of data when case studies have been used to investigate a phenomenon can be a complex and sometimes controversial issue. In this thesis the collective case study as described by Stake (1994) has been used, a situation that Merriam (1998) refers to as cross-case or cross-site studies and Sturman (1997) refers to as multi-site analysis. Yin (1989) also distinguishes between single case (classic) and multiple case design in case study research. He outlines a possibility that each site can be the subject of an individual case study, but that the study as a whole can be considered as a multiple case design. For this reason the context of each site in this study is important to the interpretation of each teacher's interview data. However, for the overall analysis, the data were amalgamated and the emergent themes were dealt with as a combined data base. Chapters 4 and 5 give a detailed description and interpretation of the data in this study.

3.12. **Summary: Thesis Methodology**

The research process in this study took a constructivist interpretive approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 1989) seeking to understand and interpret through description and analysis. The pivotal focus of the study was around the experiences of three teachers. The research sites comprised three schools located within metropolitan Melbourne.

Qualitative methods of data collection were the main sources of information in this study. Techniques such as on-site field observations, participant and non-participant observation, interviews involving the three teachers and key informants, content analysis of school curriculum and policy documents, and artefact analysis were the main sources of data. Ethnographic procedures such as prolonged engagement and persistent observation were also an integral part of the research design.

The data analysis process was managed using two computer programmes: KWALITAN (Peters & Wester, 1990, 1993) and ISYS (ISYS, 1988a, 1988b; Odyssey, 1994). As a result of the analysis seven key themes emerged to explain the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.

The next chapter contextualises the study by describing in detail the three case study sites. In addition, profiles of the three teachers, who are the main participants in this research, are documented.
NOTES

1. It is worth noting that Lincoln and Guba (1985) originally used the words naturalistic inquiry but in 1994 changed and began using the word constructivism (Beld, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The term constructivist inquiry will be used in this dissertation unless referring to historical references.

2. Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the term purposive sampling. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) use the term criterion-based sampling. "The researcher create[s] a recipe of the attributes essential to the selected unit and proceed[s] to find or locate a unit that matches the recipe" (p. 77).

3. Patton (1990) identifies the following 15 different strategies regarding purposeful sampling:

   i) Extreme or deviant case sampling - cases are chosen because they are unusual or special.
   ii) Intensity sampling - cases are selected on the basis that they are excellent or rich examples of the phenomenon under investigation.
   iii) Maximum variation sampling - cases are selected on the basis that they cut across a great deal of variation under investigation.
   iv) Homogeneous samples - cases are selected on the basis that they are a homogeneous subset of a larger group.
   v) Typical case sampling - cases are selected on the basis that they represent a qualitative profile of a typical case within the larger group.
   vi) Stratified purposeful sampling - captures major variations rather than the identification of a common core. Each case selected constitutes a fairly homogeneous sample.
   vii) Critical case sampling - cases are selected on the basis that they exhibit dramatic points of interest in the study.
   viii) Snowball or chain sampling - refers to a process of case selection. Nomination for cases to study begins with recommendations from well situated persons.
   ix) Criterion sampling - cases are selected on the basis that they meet some predetermined criterion of importance. This approach is common in quality assurance efforts.
   x) Theory-based or operational construct sampling - cases are selected on the basis of their potential representation of important theoretical constructs. The sample is by definition representative of the phenomenon.
   xi) Confirming and disconfirming cases - a procedural strategy whereby the researcher identifies confirming and disconfirming cases as the patterns develop in the investigation. Disconfirming cases are exceptional or sources of alternative interpretations. Such cases can be an important part of some research studies.
   xii) Opportunistic sampling - cases may be selected as the study evolves. Qualitative inquiry designs allow for new sampling decisions to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities during the field work phase.
   xiii) Purposeful random sampling - small sample research studies may sometimes use systematic random sampling. Purposeful random samples are not chosen for representativeness but to increase credibility.
   xiv) Sampling politically important cases - a variation of the critical case sampling strategy. Decisions are made to involve, or avoid, politically sensitive sites or participants as units of analysis.
   xv) Convenience sampling - the least defensible of all the purposeful sampling strategies. Decisions to sample based on convenience, ease of access, or cost, for example, although these may be of real concern to researchers, are the least desirable in research design methodology (Patton, 1990, pp. 169–181).

4. Having chosen this program for its Microsoft Disk Operating System (MS-DOS) compatibility I was to discover that I was one of the first people in Melbourne to have obtained Version 4.0. The manual for version 4.0 had not been written and so I was using the manuals for Version 2.0 and Version 3.0 and adapting both to Version 4.0. This would not have been such a problem if I had been able to work with an experienced KWALITAN user. However, such a person could not be found in Melbourne at this time. The KWALITAN consultant in Sydney became the source of assistance and so the process of learning and understanding the KWALITAN programme was laborious and very time


6. All data are to be kept in accordance with the RMIT policy on data retention.
In 1998 the policy requirements were modified and now state that data should be retained for five years. The internet site for the RMIT, Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services (FELCS) Ethics regulations can be found at the following address:
http://www.eu.rmit.edu.au/committees/ethics/
CHAPTER 4.

TEACHERS' JUDGEMENT AND LITERACY ASSESSMENT: CASE STUDIES

4.1. Introduction

What influences teachers' judgement of students' literacy assessment is a complex question that needs to be investigated in terms of both explicitly stated and implicit influences. The need for, and the benefits of, such research have been identified and elucidated in chapter 2. The previous chapter, chapter 3, explained in detail the theoretical and methodological paradigm of the process of inquiry involved in this thesis. This chapter describes the context of the study and presents data from the three case studies. The case studies report the data from the three main teachers in this study. However, the case studies also include data from key informant interviews (KII), the artefact collection (AC), and the school curriculum document collection (SCDC). Such data were analysed in the process of discovering an understanding of the influences upon teachers' judgements of students' literacy assessment.

4.2. The School Context

As discussed in chapter 3 purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) was employed in this study. Such sampling refers to the purposeful selection of research participants. Access to articulate teachers willing to participate in this study and give up considerable amounts of their time was also a factor in the choice of teacher participant. In addition, 'typical case sampling' (Patton, 1990) was a criterion used to select school sites. The primary schools that were the research sites were specifically selected because they were "not in any major way atypical, extreme, deviant, or intensely unusual" (Patton, 1990, p. 173). A working knowledge of the schools in the region, personal contacts within the schools and professional credibility of the researcher with all three principals influenced the final choice of school sites based on the criterion of purposeful and typical case sampling. Ethnographic type case study research of this nature requires not only extended, but also regular, periods of observation. Therefore, accessibility became an additional factor in the choice of school locations. All schools were within the geographic area nominated as metropolitan Melbourne. Two of the schools are within the inner Melbourne metropolitan area. The third school site is in the outer North-Western metropolitan region in Victoria. The third site is classified as a satellite suburb of Melbourne.
For the purposes of this thesis the school sites are referred to as School A - Westlands P. S. (Primary School), School B - Eastlands P. S. and School C - Northlands P. S. As described in chapter 3 individual pseudonyms have been assigned to the teachers, principals and students interviewed in this study.

The two inner metropolitan schools have a P - 6 structure. Northlands P. S. is part of a P - 12 complex. The organisational structure consists of a multi-site campus containing a primary school component P - 6 and a secondary school component Year 7 - 12. There is a primary school principal and a secondary school principal. However, the total complex is called a P - 12 school.

In relation to the socioeconomic context of the school sites, and using census data classification criteria, they would be classified as upper lower to middle class. The two inner metropolitan schools are very old established schools. Traditionally, both schools have served diverse populations but mainly from middle class socioeconomic backgrounds. The third school, in a satellite suburb of Melbourne, is a newer school serving a lower socioeconomic population who have moved to buy into bigger housing estates (FN. 12.06.1996). All of the schools involved in this study cater for students from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. Although the students are predominantly first generation Australian, the parents are from a wide cultural mix: Europeans from Greece, Italy, and Turkey, and Asians from Vietnam and China.

4.3. The Three Case Studies: Site Profiles

4.3.1. School A: Westlands Primary School

Westlands Primary School is a Preparatory - Year 6 government school with 16 teachers and an enrolment of 320 students in 1995. The principal of Westlands P. S. is Ms Colleen Hicks. She is a relatively new principal to this school having taken up her appointment in 1994. The organisational structure of the school is based around composite classes and multi-aged grouping. The school documentation described Westlands P. S. as having:

- a diverse socioeconomic and multicultural base
- a strong community involvement and spirit
- a cohesive and positive local community
- an innovative six-day teaching timetable offering a comprehensive curriculum that encompasses the eight key learning areas (mathematics, English, science, technology, studies of society and the environment, health and physical education, LOTE [Italian] and the arts).
The school has spacious grounds with trees and grassed areas, and ample well spaced buildings that are assets in an inner city school in Melbourne.

In relation to the Key Learning Area - English, the current teaching and learning policy of the school is based on:

- implementing an integrated curriculum approach through an inquiry learning philosophy
- establishing a whole language classroom (where learning about language involves listening, reading, talking and writing)
- utilising models of learning which promote thinking skills, independent learning, and reflective learning through self evaluation.

The language programme outlines the principles of language learning as being based on the following eight conditions of learning: immersion, demonstration, expectation, responsibility, approximation, practice, response and engagement (Westlands P. S. Teaching and Learning Philosophy, 1995). Although not referenced as such, these are the eight conditions of learning described by Brian Cambourne in a number of his early publications (Butler & Turbill, 1984; Cambourne, 1988b; Cambourne & Turbill, 1987).

The assessment and reporting policy of the school involves a parent information evening early in the year, interviews and a written report in June and December, and the option of interviews at any time by request.

4.3.2. School B: Eastlands Primary School

Eastlands Primary School is an attractive well established inner suburban school in Melbourne. The principal of Eastlands P. S. is Ms Mary Chivas. She was appointed as Principal in 1986. Eastlands is a P - 6 state school with approximately 400 students and 22 staff members in 1995. The school population reflects extensive cultural diversity. The school has well appointed facilities (separate library, computer and art rooms, landscaped playgrounds) and is adjacent to a large garden area that provides additional space for outdoor activities. A comprehensive curriculum covering the eight Key Learning Areas and an extensive array of specialist subjects is offered by the school. However, literacy and numeracy form the core of the programmes and an integrated approach to curriculum delivery is used throughout the school. The School Charter states that:
The school functions with the involvement and support of students, parents, community members and teachers. Parents participate in classrooms, curriculum committees, policy curriculum development and review. Strong cooperation between parents and teachers exists at the school. Students play an integral part in decision making via participation in Junior School Council (JSC). The school is committed to social justice and equal opportunity principles which are reflected in all aspects of democratic decision making and a systematic approach to whole school planning and evaluation are key factors of the school. (Eastlands Primary School, School Charter 1995 - 1998, p. 2)

The school goals for curriculum are as follows:

1. To provide a comprehensive and sequential program for all students in the eight key learning areas as defined by the Board of Studies in the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF), (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995).

2. To promote a challenging learning environment by providing a range of teaching strategies in which all students take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

One of the measures the school fosters to achieve this goal is student self-evaluation. In relation to accountability the stated school goal is as follows:

1. To develop and maintain effective public monitoring and reporting procedures to parents, School Council, the DSE (Department of School Education)(3) and relevant funding authorities.

To help achieve this goal the school has developed student cumulative records and twice-yearly written reports.

4.3.3. School C: Northlands Primary School

Northlands Primary School is part of a Preparatory to Year 12 complex with Northlands Secondary College. Northlands is on a 8.4 ha site 25 kms north west of central Melbourne. The total enrolment of the Year P - 12 complex in 1995 consisted of 1,179 students: 605 students in the primary school sector and 574 students enrolled in the secondary school. In 1995, 30 primary teachers and 48 secondary teachers worked in the school complex. The principal of Northlands is Mr. Michael Wall. He was appointed in 1986.

The Northlands P. S. '1995 -1997 School Charter' states:
Our curriculum provides a comprehensive seven year course in the eight key learning areas: English, Maths, Arts, Science, Health & Physical Education, Languages Other Than English, Studies of Society and Environment and Technology. While our emphasis is on literacy and numeracy, we offer a range of enrichment programs including Reading Recovery, ESL, Bike Education, Health and Human Relations, Parent Activities, Swimming, Languages Other Than English (Italian), Camps and Life Education. Specialist programs are provided in Art, Library, Music and Physical Education. A feature of our effective curriculum implementation is the teacher team planning on a regular basis. (Northlands Primary School, 1995, p. 2)

The primary school has adopted the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) documents (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995), a whole language philosophy of language and literacy education, and an integrated curriculum approach in the teaching and learning themes or units of work designed for the students. The language P - 6 program emphasises that children learn language through being immersed in and surrounded by language, having language demonstrated in meaningful contexts, being expected to use language flexibly, being responsible for their own learning and by receiving feedback in positive, non-threatening ways. Teachers are encouraged to use an ongoing evaluation process through observation, informal notes, long term sample collections of work and year level discussion or moderation sessions. For assessing and reporting on student progress the school uses the CSF - English (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995), the school's own assessment and reporting policy documents, and Directorate of School Education, Victoria (1995a, 1995d) requirements.

4.4. **Influences on the Judgement Making Process: Three Teacher Case Studies**

4.4.1. **Alexandra**

"What is already striking me about Alexandra's classroom is her 'inner peace' with the children" (K.1.4.).

"She is constantly interacting with the children, she is constantly internally assessing and evaluating, in Brian Cambourne's terms, she is adding to her intuitive data pool of knowledge" (K.1.5.).

"... she is constantly collecting data - she doesn't do it just as a one-off affair" (K1.6.).

"... she doesn't have any concerns about the English language, although she is quite open about wanting to learn more - she feels confident in her knowledge about how children learn language, and what children need to know about the English language and she feels confident in her assessment because she is constantly gauging and constantly roving and finding information and adding to her data pool". (K.1.7.)
This observation recorded in October 1995 sums up the teacher Alexandra. She is one of the Year 5/6 class teachers at Westlands P. S. She holds a Diploma of Teaching, a Bachelor of Education and is ELIC (Early Literacy Inservice Course) trained. She is a very experienced teacher with 19 years of teaching in her professional teaching career. As an Assistant Class Teacher 1 Alexandra also holds an SRP1 (School Responsibility Position - Level 1). She has taught in four different schools within the Victorian education system and has also taught in an overseas school (England). Her teaching experience spans different year levels and she has been a specialist - librarian during her teaching career.

Alexandra is an articulate, quietly confident, well informed and committed professional teacher. Her commitment to her profession is evidenced in part by her post initial training qualifications and her senior level of responsibility. Alexandra has undertaken a post initial training degree and a special programme in literacy development (ITQ - PA). She holds the respect of her students and her colleagues. The principal Colleen Hicks and I were discussing the influence of teacher leadership and personality related to professional development (PD) at the school level and the principal acknowledged Alexandra as a treasure (K.8.22.).

Alexandra works with the students in an almost partnership like mode. She responds to the students as mature individuals responsible for their own actions. Negotiation and student-centred curriculum is a fundamental part of the classroom organisation. Negotiated learning refers to the belief that students should be involved in the decision making processes of their own learning. With regard to assessment and reporting, negotiated evaluation refers to a principle whereby students are not only capable of evaluating themselves, but also that they have a right to know what is expected of them. Negotiated learning involves teachers negotiating with children what they will learn and what they know and understand. This principle can be extended to parents' involvement in the learning process of their children (Woodward, 1993). Child centred curriculum is a philosophical belief that states that the curriculum should be centred on the needs, interests and achievements of the individual child. The curriculum should not be driven by text book criteria of lowest common denominator, centralised content and norm based expectations.

The learning environment of Alexandra's room is characterised by the following observation. In the entire observation period I did not hear Alexandra raise her voice to a student. However, I did witness her discipline students on a number of occasions. The procedure followed the same pattern each time: the student acknowledged the
inappropriate behaviour, the student accepted responsibility for his/her actions and a solution was negotiated between Alexandra and the student.

4.4.1.1. Alexandra's Classroom: Literacy Curriculum Policy and Practice

Westlands Primary School has published curriculum policy documents that indicate that integrated curriculum, inquiry or problem solving learning and whole language curriculum are official curriculum policies of the school (SCDC). *The Teaching and Learning Philosophy - Revised Draft 1995* states that the policy will be implemented by:

1. providing an Integrated Curriculum (where learning in one subject is coordinated with the others);
2. establishing a Whole Language Classroom (where learning about language involves listening, reading, talking and reading). (p. 2)

The 'Westlands Primary School Language Program' (SCDC) specifically states that:

The Language Curriculum is based on the 'whole language' approach to learning. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are all equally important and each can be a means for developing the other. Children are encouraged to experiment with language, use it in a variety of ways, and use their own forms of expression when they are describing their ideas and experiences.

(*Westlands Primary School Language Program*, "n.d.", p. 3)

The writing programme is fully integrated with other areas of the language programme. Although not specifically stated the description of the writing activities in the language programme clearly reflects a 'process writing' approach (Graves, 1983). A process writing approach can be seen as one that encourages students to research and plan, draft, edit, conference with a peer and teacher and produce a polished final product. The process involves a child centred approach whereby students are involved in decision making, independent learning, and writing in a variety of genres for a variety of audiences. Given this information it not surprising that in the initial teacher questionnaire Alexandra commented that she felt that Brian Cambourne and Donald Graves were two significant people who had influenced her views about students' literacy development (ITQ - PB - Q4). Both Graves and Cambourne were mentioned again by Alexandra in the participant member checking phase of this research (PMCI - 10.12.1996, p. 54, Line 9).
The Westlands School Charter 1995 - 1998 states that the school has the following principles:

- teaching strategies are designed to foster teamwork and collaborative learning (p. 1)
- a well planned, integrated curriculum, from Prep to Grade 6, that encompasses the eight key learning areas - Mathematics, English, Science, Technology, Studies of Society and the Environment, Health and Physical Education, L.O.T.E. and the Arts (p. 2).

Alexandra has a personal statement called her "Teaching and Learning Approach - Year 5/6B 1995". In this two paged document she outlines her strategies for implementing the teaching and learning policy of the school. Alexandra writes that in her classroom "activities are presented through integrated units of work based on real life situations. ... Curriculum is negotiated through use of the inquiry approach to learning, formal class meetings and open whole class discussions ... students engage in self assessment activities"... (p. 1).

4.4.1.2. Alexandra's Classroom: The Physical Layout

Westlands Primary School was originally founded in 1889. However, the Junior School was established at the current site in 1924 and became an independent Primary School in 1959 (SCDC). The architectural structure of the upper school (Years 3 - 6) building consists of a long corridor with individual classrooms on each side.

- Alexandra's classroom is an open planned room with free standing tables and chairs for the students. The arrangement of the furniture is to maximise student group work and movement around the classroom. Alexandra's table and filing cabinets are unobtrusively placed in the far back corner of the room. The walls are adorned with students' integrated project work and there is a reference library in one corner for student use. The library contains an assortment of resources to facilitate independent learning and group project work. A variety of dictionaries, thesauri and reference material can be found in the library. There is no teacher nor student computer in the classroom as all computers are in one common computer room half way down the corridor. There is always a quiet hum of working students in the room. A visitor cannot help feeling that this is a place where children enjoy being, and that productive work is being accomplished.

4.4.1.3. Alexandra the Data Gatherer: Literacy Assessment Strategies in the Classroom

Alexandra uses a wide range of assessment strategies to gather data about her students' literacy development. In the initial field work, leading up to the prolonged observation periods in Alexandra's class, I asked her to nominate assessment strategies that she uses in the classroom. Alexandra listed the following:
• checklists for skills and participation in class discussions
• anecdotal records
• listening to students orally read
• conferencing students' writing
• written comments about published works and monitoring individual files of collected student work samples (ITQ - PB - Q12).

In addition, Alexandra commented that she uses student self assessment to gauge how students' perceive they have improved and what they still need to work on (ITQ - PB - Q20). In the months of prolonged engagement with Alexandra in her classroom context we discussed, and I observed in use, other assessment strategies. Read and retell, and cloze activities are used to ascertain understanding of material read. (The read and retell technique is a simple procedure whereby a child first reads a text, and then either orally or in writing, retells a personal version. Content of the retelling is assessed for meaning. The cloze procedure involves deleting a word in a text and the reader is required to insert a word for each deletion; assessments are then made regarding the retention of meaning and the use of particular linguistic structures and features). In Alexandra's classroom the assessment technique is often the teaching and learning procedure. What is undertaken as a class activity is gathered as an assessment device. I observed the students doing a follow up activity on a text called "Hostilities - The Dam" that entailed completing a cloze activity (FN 14.11.95, AC). Alexandra comments that she uses the cloze procedure "for a specific purpose, maybe for reading on or coming back, or for concentrating on a particular kind of work or something because it is relevant to what I want to check out, in terms of their reading strategies ...") (K.2.40).

Running records, in preference to miscue analysis, were reportedly used but not observed. (4) Teacher constructed tests were used but not commercially produced tests, other than the Year 6 private school scholarship tests.

AA: ... but I don't think I have used a set published test for a long time. The only exception is when some of the grade 6s go for scholarships for secondary school and the parents might ask for them to have a copy of that test. If it is relevant and it fits in with what we are doing we might all do it, um in the class setting just to see how we go and it is put to them that way. It is put to them to do it individually to see where you are at and. It is interesting but I think the kids quite enjoy trying something against an objective situation, especially if there is a chance later in the year to do it again and to measure the difference. It is a very satisfying experience for them to see that at this stage they got that and at that stage they got that, and yes I have improved because I think they find it hard to see the improvement. (K.2.40.)
Alexandra summed up her use of miscue analysis in this way: "no, no, too time consuming for what you get out of it. Kids who are struggling yes, maybe, to try and hone in specifically. If I can't see what they are doing wrong I would do that" (K.2.43.).

Alexandra uses her professional observation skills to inform her judgement making. She observes not only the students' work, but also the students at work. I observed a number of sessions where Alexandra conferenced the students' process writing (FN. 11.10.1995). In one discussion related to the technique of conferencing, Alexandra summed up her approach as follows:

AA: ... I was doing the conferencing with her [reference to a female student in Alexandra's class] I noticed that she would read something through and I would say "ok now what do you need to edit about it" and she would look at it again and she'd say "Oh I probably need a comma in there and I need to do an apostrophe here and this needs this and that needs that". But until I said to her what do you need to do she had presumably been through it herself and done everything she could, so my observation of her would be that ok she knows a lot of the things she needs to do, a lot of the structural and word spelling rules or whatever, but she still needs an outside prompt to address it. (K.2.26.)

Figure 13 is an example of a piece of student work following a conferencing session with Alexandra. The formation of paragraphs and the redrafting of sentences for grammatical structure and meaning are evident in this illustration. However, this graphic illustration does not do justice to the powerful impact the conferencing session had on the author of this piece of work. The positive encouragement given by Alexandra to the student to build up the student's self esteem, and the discussion of writing strategies that would enhance the piece, needs to be observed by first hand experience.
The Platypus and The Wombat

First Page

A long time ago the platypus had no bill just a flat snout and it was told to the Platypus which
the Wombat. "Come on let's go for a swim"

"But it's said, so they turned around
in their pond.

The next day the Wombat was bored. So he said to the Platypus today instead of
"Let's do something different. Swimming"

"Oh then what would the Platypus

"Well let's try to break that rock

The Wombat went and broke

"Ok" said the Platypus. "But let's start tomorrow"

The next day the Wombat and the Platypus

started working until a big half of the

rock cracked and fell. It fell on the

platypus's nose and the platypus got stuck

while the Wombat pulled and pulled the

rock. The Wombat pulled and pulled the

rock until the Platypus came up with

Wombat, the Platypus was very happy

and eventully Wass cut up the grass

and really big it stopped the swimming

and that's how the Platypus got its bill.
Checklists and pupil assessment books are two of the methods Alexandra uses to record her observations. She has a very simple, but interesting, way of recording the data that she collects on the students. On separate sheets of paper she lists each pupil's name, then she allocates one sheet for every teaching activity. For example, Alexandra had a sheet for debating, a sheet for process writing when they did letter writing, a sheet for report writing; for each activity she records a comment regarding each student's abilities. All of this information goes into her pupil assessment book.

Alexandra also uses a parental observation form to gather assessment information. The form is sent home for parents to make comments on questions such as - 'What is your child's attitude towards school?' and 'Does your child have any special needs I should know about?' This information is added to the pupil assessment book. When Alexandra writes student report forms, or conducts parent-teacher interviews, she has a wealth of information on which to base her assessment judgements (FN. 25.10.1995).

During the time I spent at the primary school I spoke with many of the students in Alexandra's class. I informally interviewed one student (a key informant) called Stephan. Stephan and I discussed his knowledge of Alexandra's assessment strategies. Stephan's awareness of Alexandra's use of checklists to record assessment data was evidenced by his comment that "people read to her and she ticks them off and assesses off that and stuff" (K.7.7. KII). When asked why the teacher kept such records, he explained, "Because she can listen to your skills and see how they are developing through the year" (K.7.11. KII).

Teacher constructed tests was another assessment strategy that Alexandra chose to use in her classroom. Stephan was aware of Alexandra's use of tests to gather data.

S: We get homework sheets and we have spelling to do on them but if you read the words you don't have to spell them, but if you don't you don't bother, but they put them on the sheets because you um get tested on them every now and then, like you have ten words I think per homework sheet after about ten sheets you get tested or something like that.

HF: So are these words taken from stuff that you write in class or from readers that you have or story books or library books?

S: I am not sure where they are taken from, they are just words like with funny endings and spelt like really weird like drawer, and stuff like that and you get all confused like. (K.7.22. KII)

Stephan and I talked about the importance of Alexandra's collection of assessment data and Stephan was aware of the reason why Alexandra collected this information.

HF: Do you think that's a good idea?

S: Um, Yeah, to see how you have improved through the year and stuff like that. (K.7.26. KII)
In summary, Alexandra constantly collects assessment data of a formal and informal nature; she uses a variety of strategies to inform her literacy judgements; she has created an atmosphere in her classroom whereby the students are aware of the assessment techniques she uses to make her decisions and she involves the students in their own assessment.

4.4.1.4. Alexandra the Decision Maker: Literacy Judgement Criteria Used in the Classroom

HF: When you get the Year 5 and 6s do you read the Year 4 reports?...
AA: ... they are in the files. Not until I've got a first impression myself because I want to see what I think first. I don't want to be coloured by what has gone on before. (K.2.32.)

In order to understand the development of students' literacy achievements a teacher needs some frame of reference: a criterion, a standard, or an expectation to judge achievement against. For Alexandra, and all the teachers in this study, as well as most Victorian teachers in 1995, a transition situation existed. Prior to 1994 Victorian teachers and schools have been using The English Language Framework P - 10 (Ministry of Education, Victoria, 1988) in conjunction with the Literacy Profile Handbook (Ministry of Education [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1990) and the English Profiles Handbook (Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991). The English Language Framework P - 10 is a document outlining a developmental continuum for English from Preparatory class to Year 10. The Literacy Profile Handbook is a continuum of descriptors grouped into bands of development. Bands A - I outline growth in English writing and reading attributes. The English Profile Handbook contains descriptors grouped in the same 9 bands of development, but for all the modes - writing, reading, listening and speaking.

However, in 1994 the draft Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) document was released (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c). In 1995 schools were becoming familiar with the CSF (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995) and had commenced implementation of the document. "The Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) provides the basis for curriculum planning in Victorian schools for Years Prep - 10 and for reporting on student achievement. It sets out the major areas of learning to be covered and describes learning outcomes to be achieved by students" (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995, p. 1). There are seven levels in the CSF - Level 1 is to be achieved by the end of the Preparatory year, Level 2 encompasses Year 1 and 2, Level 3 covers Year 3 and 4, Level 4 covers Year 5 and 6, Level 5 covers Year 7 and 8, Level 6 covers Year 9 and 10, and level 7 is an enrichment level. "The seven levels provide a basis for reporting on student achievement within schools and across the
State" (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995, p. 4). (Appendix B contains a comparative analysis of the Levels of the CSF and the Bands of the English Profile.)

Alexandra reported that she uses several sources of information to facilitate her literacy decision making. She uses the school's own language policy, the English Profile descriptors, the CSF outcomes and a programme known as the Western Australian First Steps (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d). *Eastlands Primary School Language Program* documents the stages of development as - "Beginning Stage, Early Achievement, Growth Stage, Extension Stage" (p. 9). These stages are the stages originally published in *Reading R - 7 Language Arts* (Education Department of South Australia, 1982). They are also used as a basis of the publication called *The English Language Framework P - 10* (Ministry of Education, Victoria, 1988).

Alexandra commented that she felt she was in transition from the English Profile to the CSF in relation to the criteria she used to judge the literacy achievements of her students. However, she also commented that "if I was in a different environmental setting and the expectations were different and that would relate probably to the children's ability, so the expectations of the child in Year 6 somewhere else maybe very different" (K.3.52.). The influence of contextual setting upon Alexandra's judgements is evident in this remark. The need to take into consideration the individual differences of students in relation to their personal achievement is related to many factors such as family expectations and ability to support literacy achievement, and English fluency. Alexandra spoke openly of her teaching experiences with different communities and her knowledge of the factors that affected differential literacy achievement.

To document the achievement of her students Alexandra uses a Student Folio/Portfolio and a Teacher File called a 'Pupil Assessment Book'. The Student Folio contains a draft book and samples of student work. Alexandra's 'Pupil Assessment Book' contains copies of the following:

1. Relevant bands from the *English Profiles* (Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991) (Bands D to G).
2. Copies of the *Western Australia First Steps* continua (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d).
3. Samples of teacher constructed tests, for example, spelling tests completed.
4. Class recording sheets - these consisted of a page with each student's name listed and then comments recorded on specific topics. Alexandra recorded a page on debating skills; process writing pages recording letter writing, and report writing; oral reading skills with comments in terms of fluency, expression, understanding demonstrated, type of book read; novels read; book reviews completed; and English reading comprehension with comments recorded in terms of literal comprehension, inferential and prediction skills demonstrated.

5. An 'Observation by Parents Form' is included documenting the parents' judgements in terms of child's attitudes and special needs (FN 25.10.1995).

The Student Folio/Portfolio is a collection of student work samples. In this file can be found items such as the following:

1. A self assessment sheet for each integrated project completed by a student. This self assessment exercise asks questions in three broad areas - Knowledge ("Three things I learned"); Skills ("Two things that I still need to improve on are") and Participation ("Please give an overall rating for this unit of work")

2. The two biannual reports from the previous year 1994

3. A reading analysis

4. Student's term review of specialist subjects

5. Term 2 topic review

6. Teacher constructed tests

7. Draft items

8. Reading and writing reviews


The inclusion of the cumulative file is an interesting addition to a student's folio/portfolio. When I asked Alexandra about this practice she commented: "good idea but I only refer to previous assessment reports and work samples when I am unsure, otherwise I do not use previous reports" (FN 9.11.1995).

The school has a well defined assessment and reporting process. Student performance and progress is monitored and reported to parents across the eight curriculum areas. "Parents are invited to a parent information evening early in the year, and are offered interviews and a written report in June and December" (Westlands School Charter 1995 - 1998, p. 2). An example of the English section of the June/December 1995 Student Progress Report Form is contained in Appendix T.
The biannual report has one page allocated for the teacher to record judgements about the student's English achievement. Within that one page comments are recorded about Reading - in terms of comprehension, expression, fluency and interest in books; Writing - in terms of interest in writing, organisation of ideas, punctuation, sentence formation and spelling; Speaking - in terms of formal skills, informal skills, and Listening (FN 5.12.1995). Alexandra must write explanatory comments for each of these categories and does so with succinct clarity. The following illustration is an clear example of the nature of Alexandra's judgements and report writing style.

READING COMPREHENSION
"Jane reads in a steady and expressive manner portraying good meaning of the text. Written comprehension activities indicate good literal comprehension, with the abilities to infer and predict still developing". (FN 5.12.1995)

### 4.4.1.5. Alexandra in Summary

In summary, Alexandra is a very experienced and professionally confident teacher. She had made a conscious decision to integrate assessment into the routine teaching and learning activities in her classroom. Alexandra draws on a wide range of assessment techniques to facilitate her literacy judgements and involves her students in their own assessment. In 1995 she was in a transition phase of changing to the Curriculum and Standards Framework system of assessment and reporting required by the Department of Education, Victoria.

### 4.4.2. Veronica

The strength and character of Veronica as a professional teacher is illustrated in this extract relating to a discussion on the use of tests as an assessment technique. Her comments illustrate her self-confidence and insightful teaching and learning knowledge.

Well you would have to convince me that you being a stranger to the kids, knew more about them than I did after working with them, because I am really, you're judging them on one test that you have given them and I am judging it on a cumulative look at their work and the knowledge of them from the year, maybe two years some I have had. (K.14.11.)

Veronica Robins is one of the three Year 6 class teachers at Eastlands P. S. Veronica holds a Trained Infant Teacher's Certificate, a Graduate Diploma in Special Education and is ELIC (Early Literacy Inservice Course) trained. Veronica is a very experienced teacher with some 22 years of teaching in her professional career. As an Assistant
Teacher Class 1 she also holds an SRPI (School Responsibility Position - Level 1). Veronica has taught in three different schools within the Victorian education system and at every year level within the primary school structure. She conducts herself in a professional and authoritative manner with the students. However, at the same time she has a warm and considerate personality. She deals with each student as an individual and responds to the needs of her class in a diversity of ways that demonstrates a great deal of teaching experience. During the length of the contact time with Veronica I never heard her raise her voice to discipline the class or an individual student. Her discipline strategies are to discuss the situation with the student, determine the cause of the misbehaviour, reason with the offender and then negotiate a solution. The students have a high regard for Veronica as a teacher. In Veronica's classroom there is always the feeling that productive and constructive learning is taking place. The children work independently and cooperatively together. She has established techniques like remaining silent for an extended period of time until the students realise she is waiting for their attention.

4.4.2.1. Veronica's Classroom: Literacy Curriculum Policy and Practice

Eastlands P. S. has an official 'Language Program' that was written towards the end of the 1980s (SCDC). The programme reflects the philosophy of an holistic approach to language learning. The integration of speaking, listening, reading and writing is a feature of the document. The school operates on the 'process writing' model of the teaching of writing as is evidenced by this statement from the Writing Section of the 'Eastlands Language Program': "Children will be helped to discover their own unique way of 'process' writing and gain a working knowledge of the processes involved in writing for publication" (p. 3). The policy advocated has been heavily influenced by Walsh (1981). Although not referenced as such, the writing section incorporates the eight conditions of learning (itemised in section 4.3.1. above and attributed to Brian Cambourne's early 1980s work).

The reading component of the 'Language Program' has been heavily influenced by such writers as Brian Cambourne, Frank Smith and Ken Goodman and Yetta Goodman. As stated in the language document: "reading is a process of bringing meaning to and extracting meaning from print" (Eastlands Language Program, "n.d.", Reading Section, p. 2). The programme emphasises using the child's own natural language, rich literature experiences using 'real books', the integration of the various modes of language, a belief in the process of reading as an active reconstruction of meaning and the use of key cueing strategies. This language policy appears to be the current document even though the original publication is 10 years old. The School
"Charter 1995 - 1998" document, which is a more current document, specifically states "literacy and numeracy form the core of the programs. Units of work are planned using an integrated approach. An integrated approach is one where elements of many of the eight Key Learning Areas are linked through a common theme or topic" (p. 12).

In summary, it is clear that Eastlands P. S. has a curriculum oriented around whole language, integrated curriculum and inquiry/problem solving learning. Veronica believes that this combination of beliefs is based on "readings that we have done, it's in inservices that we have done. It's I guess, it is being in tune with language and what's happening with researchers, what the current research is saying" (K.13.3.). Her personal commitment to the philosophy of whole language is evidenced in this extract below:

HF: Why does this school think that whole language, integrated curriculum, and inquiry learning are the way to go?

VR: Well whole language approach is an approach that makes language meaningful for the kids. If you just do phonics, it is not meaningful to kids. If you just pick out - you have to start with something like in the lower grades it is a sentence that they tell you it is something coming from them, and then you look at that and you learn about language. You might read it together, then you might break it down and you might then look at CK in a word that they have used and build up a list, but the whole language is because it is meaningful and in that it incorporates your listening, your speaking, your reading, your writing, and it follows through that way through the school, so that in upper grades they would be writing about something that is meaningful to them. Then you would break it down and you might do their word study. It might be an excursion that you go to. (K.13.2.)

It is also not surprising, that like Alexandra, Veronica nominated Donald Graves as a significant person who influenced her literacy views. Veronica also nominated an Australian author Lesley Wing Jan as a person who was a significant influence on her views in the 1990s (ITQ - PB - Q5). However, Veronica's ability to integrate new knowledge with prior learning is quite apparent from the many discussions we had about children's literacy learning. In a discussion regarding process writing, Veronica confidently talks about the need to maintain the teaching of spelling and grammar in her language learning curriculum.

VR: Yeah, yeah and there was a huge change and this is where some parents now say 'My kids they didn't learn from process writing.' Now I think that is an overstatement, but also I think that sometimes people, when something changes do throw out the old and sometimes spelling was not as important to some people, and it was said don't touch the spelling and all that. Where as a lot of people who'd come through the old still think it is important, kids needed to spell and use grammar and so tried to keep up both and that's where it gets busy and hectic and because teachers are trying to put it all together to keep a lot of the old, to go with the new, to rationalise it all and see that you are covering all. (K.13.8.)
Veronica has a vast repertoire of teaching and learning strategies that not only reflect her teaching experience, but also her professional ethos of lifelong learning. In one observation period alone I witnessed and recorded in my field notes Veronica modelling to her students academic knowledge, socially accepted behaviour, individual responsibility and personal expectations (FN 11.12.1995).

"I have a great love for reading and writing and so can share this with my students" (ITQ - PB Q8), a statement reflected in Veronica's teaching practices. As part of a teaching session she read part of a chapter novel (The Hobbit) to the students giving an oral demonstration of pronunciation, expression and a vocabulary discussion. She conferenced individual students, ran conferences whereby students worked in pairs and conferenced each other and she undertook clinic conferences for a small group of students who had not completely understood the task expectations (FN 11.12.1995). Discussions with key informants confirmed that peer conferencing was a standard practice in Veronica's classroom (K.9.18. KII). Veronica's teaching and learning strategies in many cases are her assessment techniques. For example, by incorporating a read and retell or a role play into the integrated curriculum planning she has effectively generated formative assessment practices.

4.4.2.2. Veronica's Classroom: The Physical Layout

Veronica's classroom has an unusual configuration. The double storey building is constructed so that a common corridor runs down the middle of each storey. Each level consists of a series of blocks of classrooms. In each block there are four classrooms: two rooms on each side of the corridor. There are no walls down the corridor but there are partitions between the two rooms on each side of the corridor that can be open or closed as the need arises, or the teachers desire. Consequently, the potential for the noise from one class to disturb another class is high. However, it appeared from my observations that the noise level was not of a disturbing nature. Eastlands is an older very established school. The original construction was completed in 1875, the newer building was completed in 1972. Thus the school has had open planned classrooms since 1972. The principal Mary Chivas was appointed in 1986 and has a well established influence in the school. Established patterns of operating and codes of acceptable behaviour in open planned learning situations are part of the school's ethos. For example, the 'Code of Behaviour' policy states that everyone is expected to show respect for the rights of others and that students are to work quietly in class (SCDC).
The usual rectangular shape of a traditional classroom is apparent. However, two sides of the classroom have no walls, one side consists of windows from half way up the wall to the ceiling and the remaining wall is covered by a chalkboard. This means there is very little space to display student work around the room. Integrated projects are kept in the store room and retrieved when the children work on the pieces. Veronica's desk, filing cabinet and small personal library are placed in the window corner of the room. There is no student nor teacher computer in the room. The school has a common computer room at the end of the corridor.

4.4.2.3. Veronica the Data Gatherer: Literacy Assessment Strategies in the Classroom

Creative and innovative sums up the assessment practices in Veronica's classroom. Veronica incorporates assessment practices into teaching and learning situations in unusual and interesting ways. For instance, Veronica explained the various ways in which retelling, a teaching and learning practice as well as an assessment technique, was utilised in her classroom. In her classroom retelling took the form of retelling literature, "sometimes through music, drama, ... sometimes in writing" (K.11.8.); as "a response for a role play through drama" (K.11.9); through music such as "a rap" (K.11.9); or sometimes "through art" (K.11.9). Veronica sums up retelling in her classroom as: "it is all sorts of retelling through different ways" (K.11.9.).

In the initial field work preceding the prolonged research engagement with Veronica she nominated the following assessment techniques as ones she uses in the classroom:

- checklists (IQ - PB Q12)
- comparatively assessing work samples (IQ - PB Q11)
- conferencing with students (IQ - PB Q12).
- students' self evaluation (IQ - PB Q11)

Veronica commented in later discussions that:

Kids are very astute at knowing how they're going, their strengths, their weaknesses. Not maybe to say what linguistic structure, but in their own way they have a feeling of how they are going in each area, what they're good at, what they need to work on, whether they work hard enough, whether they've good strategies, whether they talk too much. (K.13.32.)

In discussions we had about particular techniques that she used to gather and assess literacy the following additional strategies were nominated:

- anecdotal notes (K.13.14.)
- cloze exercises (K.13.18.)
- running records (K.13.23.)
- peer assessment (K.13.26.)
- read and retell (K.13.27.).
In Veronica's Curriculum Programme she has an *Evaluation Book* which contains a separate page for each student. Veronica documents her observations about each student in terms of all the eight key learning areas. She records the following items for English:

1. Oral reading - Veronica uses the term 'operating reading record' to document comments regarding fluency, expression, vocabulary knowledge and clarity of reading.
2. Writing - Veronica uses the Read and Retell technique and comments on the student's abilities in terms of prediction, use of vocabulary, level of detail, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3. Literature discussion - this is an entry regarding oral reports of books read. Veronica comments on how well the book is retold, the clarity of expression and the level of detail recalled.
4. Diary and story writing.
5. Report writing - Veronica's comments are in terms of level of clarity, grammatical construction and style of expression.
6. Comprehension - plot, characters and setting are commented on in this section.
8. Homestudies - Veronica records comments about student's completion of homework tasks.
9. Anecdotal notes - Veronica leaves one page for each student and dates each entry (FN 25.10.1995). The anecdotal entries cover such items as discussions with the parents, behavioural observations, problem areas in learning, particular incidents or any extra information about each child (K.12.30.).

Figure 14 contains two illustrations of Veronica's comments regarding her student's English achievements. These reports contain Veronica's judgements concerning each student's achievement in relation to specific outcome statements taken from the CSF (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995). In addition, each report has Veronica's personalised judgements regarding each student's achievements.
Figure 14. Two examples of Veronica's report writing
Veronica also collects work samples from the children in her class to add to her rich data base of knowledge about each pupil. The students have their own portfolios in which they keep samples of their class work. For example in one of the observation periods I itemised all the items in Catherine's portfolio. She had the following pieces of English related work in her portfolio:

- a project illustration
- a page outlining her aims for 1995
- a read and retell
- three (dated) handwriting samples
- two (dated) self evaluation reports
- a number of pieces of written work covering different genre styles (reports, letter description, recount)
- a spelling test
- a literature response evaluating the believability of the characters (FN 1.12.1995).

However, Veronica also has a very strong belief in her own powers of observation as an effective assessment technique as is evidenced in the following extracts.

I think looking at the kids' work ...
So their assessment I guess is really looking at their work regularly and comparing it against how they have been going, what you have been wanting them to achieve, the sort of goals you have set ...
So I guess it is observation and putting into practice the sort of things that you observe. (K.11.14.)

When asked on what basis she makes her judgements Veronica commented: "from working with the kids every day, observing what they are doing, looking at the work that they have done, comparing it to what they did earlier in the year" (K.12.13.). This view was affirmed by Simon, one of the students in Veronica's class. "I think they should be watching you, like they're teachers and they're meant to be like watching us and what we are doing, they should know" (K.16.12. KII).

The next observations are related to Veronica's confidence in her professional knowledge base. When asked if she had any concerns about her own knowledge about literacy development Veronica replied, "No I am fairly confident about that" (K.11.22.); a view that is also in keeping with her ethos of life long learning: "I think really we keep learning and building on what we are doing " (K.11.20.).

In line with the philosophical beliefs expressed in inquiry, independent and reflective learning is the use of student self assessment as an assessment strategy. Veronica commented: "when I have taken some of them up (self assessments), I have been amazed at how perceptive they are, how ably they can look at their strengths and
weaknesses" (K.11.19.). When asked about self assessment, Simon commented that he did not think self assessment was a fair technique "because like, the teacher is, they've got to help us and they're gotta know what we are doing and not like just ask us again a bit quicker" (K.16.38. KII). Simon's concern was that teachers should know about the students in their classes: "they shouldn't say 'this is what I think the person knows', like they shouldn't say 'this is what I think he knows' they should say 'this is what I know he knows'" (K.16.48. KII). Simon felt the teachers should have "proof" for the parent-teacher interviews (K.16. 51. KII). Veronica's "proof" was linked to her various assessment strategies as well as the criteria upon which she based her judgements.

4.4.2.4. Veronica the Decision Maker: Literacy Judgement Criteria Used in the Classroom

You asked me at the beginning how do teachers know. They know because of this whole picture that they build up .... (K.13.15.)

A teacher in transition best describes Veronica when it comes to explicating the criteria she uses to make her literacy judgements. When asked if she still used the Victorian English Profiles, or the new Board of Studies CSF document, she replied, "I would have to say at this stage, the both of them because we're coming from the English Profile and we are moving into the CSF, so it is sort of a transition time" (K12.8). Although the students in Year 5/6 work within Level 4 of the CSF Veronica does not report levels on the biannual reports she must write. She still uses the descriptors from the English Profiles to report her students' achievements rather than the outcomes from the CSF. This was not an unusual situation in Victorian schools in 1995. As recorded earlier the CSF was released as a draft in 1994 and only published in 1995. Schools in Victoria had until 1997 to achieve a full change over. However, it is interesting to note that Veronica could not see Eastlands P. S. putting the CSF Levels on students' reports: "I don't think so, but then that could change, but no, I think you would put maybe the outcome, but I think you would have to put that in different language as well " (K.12.12.). This is in contrast to the DoE Directive Executive Memorandum No. 96/021 that instructs school to report using the CSF Levels by the end of 1997 (Appendix U).

The 'Eastlands Primary School Assessment and Reporting Policy' ("n.d.") outlines the key components of assessment and reporting:

Continuous and consistent recording methods will be employed at Eastlands Primary School. The use of profiles and other assessment strategies which assess the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes, are used to
ensure objective, on-going consistency. Teachers are encouraged to record the contexts in which the student has demonstrated achievable goals. The process of moderation, where active discussion encourages a uniform standard of assessing children’s achievement, is an essential part of the assessment system. (p. 1)

The reporting procedure involves a grade/unit information evening in Term 1, a written report at the end of Terms 2 and 3 and formal scheduled interviews with the parents at the end of Terms 2 and 3. The School Charter 1995 - 1998 contains the additional information that the assessment and reporting procedures are also in line with the Curriculum and Standards Framework (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995) and will employ student cumulative files using a range of assessment procedures (p. 17). Student performance and progress are monitored and reported to parents across the eight curriculum areas. An example of the English section of the December 1995 Year 6 Level Report is contained in Appendix T.

4.4.2.5. Veronica in Summary

In summary, Veronica is a very professional and experienced teacher. She is what colloquially might be called "a quiet achiever". Her literacy assessment techniques are varied and in some case quite innovative. Veronica has a philosophical commitment to integrated curriculum and whole language learning and her assessment strategies reflect this theoretical perspective. Veronica prefers to use formative assessment, documenting her assessments on each student in a continuous manner in her 'Evaluation Book'. This information becomes the basis for her report writing and parent interview sessions. In 1995 she had begun to take on board the new demands of the Department of Education Veronica's policy of assessing and reporting using the CSF.

4.4.3. Georgina

Confident, dynamic, professionally articulate, and conversant with the current curriculum documents informing Victorian schools best sum up Georgina as a teacher. Her concise articulation of the curriculum in her classroom and its relationship to the philosophical framework on which it is based is evidenced in the following extract.

In my classroom an integrated approach is used and so our topic this term is flight. I took that outcome from Technology in Science and Social Education that directly fitted in with flight and then I took the outcomes from the English Framework, the English CSF that complemented those and so we've done lots of work on procedural text and report writing, scientific reports and writing information bulletins. All those sorts of things have come directly from the CSF and reading, lots of um reading, lots of reports and talking about them. (K.18.16.)
Georgina Whyte is one of the three Year 6 class teachers at Northlands P. S. Georgina holds a Diploma of Teaching-Primary, Bachelor of Education, Graduate Diploma in Literacy Education, and is currently completing a Master of Education degree. Georgina has undertaken ELIC (Early Literacy Inservice Course) and ELIC Tutor training, CLP (Canberra Literacy Programme), and Frameworks: Assessment and Evaluation Tutor Training. Georgina is a very experienced teacher with some 12 years of teaching in her professional career. She holds an Acting AST (Advanced Skills Teacher) 2 classification. Georgina has taught in three different schools in the Victorian State Education System. She has taught across a range of year levels from P-6 and has been a specialist teacher in the library.

Georgina is a vibrant and enthusiastic teacher. She enjoys both her work and the students in her class. The students respect her as a teacher and respond to her youthfulness.

This relationship is evidenced by the following comments made by students in response to questions about Georgina's reporting strategies:

- Sandy: "She is honest" (K.21.73. KII).
- Mark: "Yeah, and like about our behaviour, our maths, she knows what we've done and integrated curriculum and language" (K.21.74. KII).
- HF: "If there was something in there that you didn't agree with are you allowed to discuss it with Ms. Whyte?" Mark and Sandy: "Yeah, yup" (K.21.75. KII).
- HF: "And what happens then?" Sandy: "She'll go back to the computer and fix it up" (K.21.76. KII).

The principal holds Georgina in very high esteem because of the effort she puts into everything she undertakes in the school. Michael commented that "we have special evenings on language or literacy or whatever and we use people like Georgina who can express themselves". Furthermore, "teachers who have never taken up that issue of looking at it more professionally, study or whatever, they are learning from her too" (K.25.25. KII).

Clearly, Georgina did influence the ways in which her colleagues approached teaching. For example, the teacher who works in the adjoining portable respects Georgina as a significant peer. At one point in the prolonged interviews I conducted with Georgina we were discussing the effectiveness of the whole language philosophy. Georgina commented on how Kass (the teacher in the adjoining portable) had taken on the whole language philosophy in her teaching because she had seen how it worked in Georgina's classroom. Kass, who had overheard our conversation from the other portable, called out, "so I've learnt heaps off Georgina. She's been wonderful" (K.20.39.).
The students’ active behaviour never appeared to wear Georgina down. However, I gained the impression that some of the other teachers felt swamped by the exuberant activities of the students at the school. Over the many months that I observed Georgina's classroom I saw her constantly interacting with the students and constantly trying out alternative curriculum planning and assessment strategies. Georgina’s class is always awash with noise. This is a combination of teaching and learning strategies that encourage group work, cooperative learning and problem solving involving student interaction. The architectural design of the joined portables is not conducive to the reduction of noise. In addition, the exuberance of a small band of very active Year 6 boys adds to the constant high pitched level of talk in the classroom environment. Georgina was constantly disciplining a small number of continually disruptive boys. In each case, however, the procedure still followed a similar pattern of ascertaining the misbehaviour, listening to the explanation, extracting the reasons stated by the student and negotiating a solution.

4.4.3.1. Georgina's Classroom: Literacy Curriculum Policy and Practice

The English Policy of Northlands P. S. states that the literacy learning at the school will:

Take place through a whole language program where children learn language through being immersed and surrounded by language, having language demonstrated in meaningful contexts, being expected to use language flexibly, being responsible for their own learning, being encouraged to make approximations in their early attempts, engaging actively in their language learning and receiving feedback in positive non-threatening ways. ... The teaching of language in P - 6 will be through an integrated curriculum.  
(English Policy, Northlands Primary School Reviewed During 1995, p. 1)

Georgina has a strong belief in both whole language and integrated learning. When asked why she had such a strong personal belief in these two philosophies she stated:

• It's what the research says and what I've discovered in practice works best (K.20.4.).

• Because of the context. We go from the whole down to the small part instead of going from these are the letters and the blends and the sounds up to the story, we do it in reverse now and it works better (K.20.7.).

• Because I think the research has proven that that's the way they learn best (K.20.11.).
Georgina's teaching and learning strategies involve the use of the process writing approach, conferencing with her students, USSR (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading) periods, problem solving related to integrated curriculum topic exploration, and negotiation and collaboration with her students. Observations and artefacts collected attest to this summary as do the following comments from students in Georgina's class.

When asked what was in his evaluation book Mark commented: "conference reports" (K.21.11. KII). When asked what this meant Mark replied: "just say we want to publish a story we put a piece of paper on the board and Miss Whyte calls you out and like, she does all the punctuation and that with you" (K.21.13. KII). Sandy confirmed this procedure when she was asked what Georgina talks about in a conference "um, our publishing, punctuation, correct spelling and everything" (K.21.15. KII). When asked why Georgina undertakes this process of conferencing with her students Mark confidently states, "because you can find out more stuff about us and how we work" (K.21.17. KII).

4.4.3.2. Georgina's Classroom: The Physical Layout
Georgina's classroom is in a small double portable. The double portable has a classroom on each side of a wet area, hanging space for students' bags and coats, and two computers for the students' and teachers' use. Georgina's tables and filing cabinets are stationed near the exit door. The room is cluttered with displays of students' work samples, pin boards, a white board, cabinets full of resource material such as paper, pens, books and mathematical material. The students have tables and chairs closely packed together. Consequently, the room has a feeling of being over crowded and claustrophobic. These particular portables were constructed to hold 25 students. However, the two classes had 27 - 30 children in each one. The noise level in Georgina's room is a combination of too many children in one room, a teacher in the adjoining room who raises her voice to obtain the attention of her class and a group of students that includes a small number of particularly difficult Year 6 boys. For example, in the duration of my observation period two boys decided to leave home and hitch hike to Queensland (some 2,000 kilometres away); another boy was found to be part of a group that had to demonstrate the ability to endure pain to be part of a club. This initiation ceremony entailed slashing his arm with a stanley knife or razor blade.
4.4.3.3. Georgina the Data Gatherer: Literacy Assessment Strategies in the Classroom

Georgina explained her assessment strategies as follows:

- "I observe them closely, what they can do." (K.18.25.)
- "I'm watching what they're doing." (K.18.26.)
- "Sometimes I have a focus and if I've got a focus, I'll walk around and make notes or call kids over to me and do a quick little interview." (K.18.28.)

When asked 'What data or how do you collect data to make those judgements?' Georgina replied: 'I'm a big kid watcher!' (K.18.21.)

Georgina uses a range of assessment strategies in her classroom. However, she is a strong believer in the merits of student self-assessment and teacher observation. When asked about her commitment to self evaluation Georgina made the following comments:

> Because I want the children to have the input into their learning and if they make some sort of comment in their self-evaluation that is criticising what we're doing and I get enough of those sort of comments, well then I'll change my teaching program to accommodate that. (K.18.61.)

When the students were asked if they thought asking children to self evaluate their own work was an effective strategy for teachers to use Sandy and Mark both commented, "Yeah, yeah" (K.21.33. KII). "Because we can tell because we can look at our work to see if it's got better, improved" (K.21.34. KII). Mark also thought it was important as a checking mechanism "Yes, because they're our reports. Um she might write something that's not true but she hasn't". However, Sandy commented: "She doesn't make a mistake" (K.21.81. KII). A comment that reflects the level of confidence and respect that the students hold of Georgina's teaching.

In accordance with the school curriculum policy and her own personal beliefs in student negotiation, student centred learning, and developing a personal responsibility for one's own learning Georgina has designed student operated learning portfolios. The students have a personal portfolio in which they choose what they want to keep as a record of their work. Georgina commented: "I wanted the kids to have ownership of their portfolios" (K.18.44.). Jolie, a Year 6 student, when asked about her portfolio commented: "I really like it because it goes to prove what you can do when you try" (FN 12.10.1995). Other students spoke confidently of the value of their portfolios. One student explained: "we have portfolios and that to show our parents" (K.22.49. KII), while another student pointed out how the portfolios contain "work that we do
and it's good, you can show people what you've done like the projects and your writing, how your hand writing is" (K.22.50. KII).

Georgina has an Evaluation Book for every student in her class. "The Evaluation Book is every single piece of evaluation that I have on those kids" (K.18.45). In the Evaluation Book Georgina records the following English related items:

1. English Profile - A copy of the English CSF Level 4 Texts, Contextual Understanding, and Linguistic Structures and Features descriptors is included indicating which outcomes each student has achieved.
3. A Read and Retell
4. Running Record Analysis and Summary sheets

In addition, assessment in relation to other key learning areas is recorded. Of interest to this research study are the following items:

7. Project evaluations
8. Integrated Studies self evaluation
9. Year Book evaluations
10. Discipline records for Terms 1/2 and 3/4
11. Parent/teacher records for Term 1/2 and 3/4

Georgina expects her students to self evaluate in a variety of areas. "I want them to be able to self evaluate their learning and their attitudes"(K.18.54). When asked why she commented: "the kids need to look back at all of the work they've done this year and comment on how their speaking and listening has changed over the year, their reading, their reading habits and what sort of writing they do" (K.18.55.). When the children were asked about the value of self evaluation Sandy commented: "Oh well to show our parents what we think, or if we um like our work, or if we just don't take any care with it, we just think that's work that's it" (K.21.32. KII). Figure 15 contains examples of two student self assessment sheets that Georgina uses with her Year 6 class.
Figure 15. Two examples of Georgina’s student self-assessment sheets
At Northlands P.S the students have a 'Cumulative Student File' housed within the administration office. This file consists of all the biannual reports written about the student during the time the student attends Northlands P.S. For example, Belinda, a Year 6 student in Georgina's class, has the following items in her 'Cumulative Student File': A June 1995 report written by Georgina, an English Profile Student Record Book (Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991), two self assessments completed by Belinda, a June and December 1994 report, a December 1993 report, a December 1992 report, a 1990 Grade 1 report and a prep 1989 report (FN 10. 11 1995).

4.4.3.4. Georgina the Decision Maker: Literacy Judgement Criteria Used in the Classroom

Northlands P.S. has a separate student assessment and reporting policy. The assessment policy states that evaluation and assessment of student progress should be a continuous process using a broad range of assessment techniques to collect and interpret data. The techniques recommended include the following: curriculum profiles, checklists, teacher made tests, anecdotal observations/records, group/individual appraisals, collection of student work (such as work folios, journals, projects, work samples), relevant published tests, personal interviews, conferences, reading/writing inventories, questionnaires, cumulative files (Northlands Primary School Student Assessment Policy, "n.d.", p. 1). The 'Northlands P. S. Student Reporting Policy' ("n.d.") sets out a timeline that includes informal classroom visits for parents in March, a written report and an interview in June, as well as a written report in December and an interview by mutual request (p. 1). Interestingly, there is no mention of the criteria or standards on which student progress is to be judged. However, the Northland Primary School Charter 1995 - 1998 mentions that the reporting principles will meet the Board of Studies requirements. It also states that there will be Student Files (recording personal data) and Curriculum Profiles kept in accordance with DSE (DoE) and Board of Studies guidelines. The written reports are to be in "clear, simple and precise language, free from jargon and cliche and expressed in positive terms" (p. 18). "Reports are written in a descriptive format focusing on student performance (achievement and effort)" (p. 19), the grading system used is consistent (C), satisfactory (S) and needs attention (NA).

I asked the students if they thought descriptive reports were a good way for Georgina to write in their mid-year and end of year report forms. David, a Year 6 student, said:

Yes, it's not like being at ... you say you have to use A or B or C and like that, it actually tells how you are actually going. Not just like, just say an A they're going alright but it doesn't tell you in what form they are going good at. (K.22.24. KII)
Another student Katherine commented: "sometimes it is because sometimes it answers all the questions that parents want to know about what we do at school and that, but sometimes it doesn't and that's why Ms Whyte has parent/teacher interviews" (K.22.34. KII).

The *English Policy Northlands Primary School Reviewed During 1995* document specifically mentions that "the staff of NPS have decided to adopt the *English: Curriculum and Standards Framework* as the basis for our English Program. We will use this document for planning programs and assessing and reporting on student progress" (p. 1). However, the school did not specifically require teachers to report the CSF Level that each student had achieved in their 1995 reports. Appendix T contains an example of the Northlands P. S. 1995 Year 6 mid year report for English Language and Integrated Curriculum.

Georgina does use the CSF document as one of the criteria she judges her students' progress against. As already stated in section 4.4.3.3 she has a copy of the CSF Level 4 in every student's Evaluation Book. She collects various sources of information (outlined in 4.4.3.3.) and then proceeds to make an 'on balanced judgement' about each students' achievements. David points out that Georgina

... takes a lot of, she takes notice in what we do in work and she compares it with other people's, or what we had to do on the board, or how other people do it compared to us and then she puts them both together and tries to work out how one person does it and the other person does it. (K. 22.11. KII)

In a discussion regarding what she does with her focussed observations Georgina commented on how she records the information. "Well, I um I might tick them off on my, on my work program I've got a grade list and I might jot down notes then that everyone can do it and when I go to update their profile" (K.18.30.), "which is on the computer, then I'll write Term 4, uses procedural text and what the observation was. So it could be kite making, or if they've gone off and written their own procedural text at home on something, I can say that they've done it then" (K.18.3.). In reference to the literacy profile which Georgina uses to make her literacy judgements she commented: "I updated it to the CSF" (K.18.31.).

**4.4.3.5. Georgina in Summary**

In summary, Georgina is a very professionally confident teacher and is a curriculum leader in her school. She is a role model to other teachers as is attested to by another teacher and the principal in this study. She uses an extensive range of literacy assessment strategies and has a very strong philosophical belief in the importance of student independent self assessment. Georgina uses student portfolios and a teacher evaluation book to record her student's literacy assessment. This information is used
in conjunction with the CSF criteria and forms the basis on which Georgina makes her literacy judgements for curriculum planning and reporting purposes.

4.5. **Summary: Case Studies**

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the contextual settings in which the three teachers work. The context is described in terms of the classroom setting and the schools' curriculum policies. In addition, the chapter describes the assessment strategies the teachers used to gather data with regard to their students' literacy development. This chapter lays the foundation for understanding the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the interview discourse in chapter 5.

As the descriptions in this chapter indicate, the teachers have been influenced by a variety of personal, philosophical, policy and political issues. Alexandra is a well established and experienced Year 5/6 teacher. Her decisions are influenced by her accumulated experiences and strong philosophical belief in the synergy of whole language, integrated curriculum and inquiry based learning, a philosophical belief reflected in the school's curriculum policies which therefore date the curricula to the mid 1980s. Changing DoE policies have been slow to influence Westlands P. S. This is a combination of a new principal who only took up her appointment in 1994 and therefore was still in the process of establishing new policy and practices at the school, and a historical situation whereby the staff have resisted externally imposed educational policies related to assessment, as for example the LAP.

Veronica is also a well established and experienced Year 6 teacher. She also works within the framework of whole language, integrated curriculum and inquiry based learning. The school has been led by a principal who has been at the school for eleven years. Because of this stability of leadership the school has well established operating procedures. Veronica works within this influence. The curriculum policies that influence Veronica's judgement making reflect a curriculum designed in the 1980s. The assessment strategies chosen by Veronica are consistent with her personal belief in the curriculum philosophy of the school. Eastlands P. S. is also a school that is slowly responding to new DoE policies. Veronica acknowledges that her knowledge of the new English CSF document is rudimentary and that she is in transition from the old to the new judgement making criteria. The established nature of the school and staff has resulted in minimal pressure for change at Eastlands P. S.
Georgina is the youngest of the three teachers in this study. She too works with a philosophical belief in the synergy of whole language, integrated curriculum and inquiry based learning. However, Georgina is influenced by a personal drive to complete her MEd and to obtain promotion. These two strong influences have resulted in Georgina being very aware of the changing educational climate of the 1990s. She has taken on board the CSF and this is reflected in her assessment and reporting practices in the classroom. However, the published curriculum documents at Northlands P. S., like all the three schools in this study, lag behind the published DoE policies. Georgina has a strong commitment to her belief in the power of teacher observation as an important assessment technique. She also has a strong commitment to the belief in student self evaluation and its relationship to her teaching and learning philosophy. Both these techniques are reflected in her daily classroom teaching. Georgina's thinking is influenced by her knowledge of the current political situation in Victorian education. Her classroom practices encompass the DoE's policy of assessing literacy using the seven Levels of the CSF.

As the recordings of the three teachers' experiences reveal, the reality of literacy judgement making is not always tied to curriculum decisions. A number of pertinent issues related to the influences on teachers' literacy judgements have arisen. These are summarised below in order to set the context for chapter 5 in which the main findings are presented.

The case studies indicate that there is an explicitly obvious, but superficial, level of influence as evidenced by the strategies that the three teachers nominated that they use in their deliberations of a students' literacy achievement. There is an implicitly revealed influence relating to the internalised tacit knowledge of each teacher. However, the data indicate that there are other powerful influences upon the teachers' judgement making processes. These influences are contextually bound to school and DoE policies. Another issue that emerged from the data gathered is the influence of the reigning political climate on educational policy. With respect to all of this data, seven themes emerged as the main influences upon teachers' judgement of students' literacy development (refer to Figure 12 chapter 3 and Figure 16 chapter 5). These themes constitute the focus of the following chapter.
NOTES


2. In a Victorian context P refers to a Preparatory year. Children commence school at approximately five years of age and enter a Preparatory class. They then proceed to Year 1 and continue on to Year 6 before leaving primary school and commencing secondary school. Secondary school covers the range Year 7 to Year 12. The year level structure of Victorian government schools underwent a name change in the early 1980s. The names of the year levels changed from Preparatory - Grade 6 in the Primary System to Preparatory to Year 6. In the Secondary School System the names changed from Form 7 -Form 12 to Year 7 - Year 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIMARY SCHOOL</th>
<th>Preparatory</th>
<th>5 years old (approximately)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>6 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>7 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>8 years old</td>
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<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>9 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>10 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>11 years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POST PRIMARY or SECONDARY SCHOOL</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>12 years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form 1</td>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>13 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 2</td>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>14 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 3</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>15 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 4</td>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>16 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form 5</td>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>17 years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, there are still teachers and parents who refer to the classes as Grade 5 or 6 and so on. Some of the participants in this study use both the old and the new terminology.

3. The education system in Victoria, Australia, has undergone a number of name changes in the last ten years. A number of the documents referred to in this study use the various names as listed below:

1988  Ministry of Education, Victoria
1988  Ministry of Education [Schools Division], Victoria
1990  Ministry of Education [School Programs Division], Victoria
1991  Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria
1996  DSE: Directorate of School Education, Victoria
1997  DoE: Department of Education, Victoria

4. The running records procedure entails a child reading a text orally while a teacher notes any deviations from the written version, as for example, omissions, substitutions, insertions. Analysis of the running records concentrates on the strategies the child uses in his/her reading. The miscue analysis technique is a very similar but more time consuming procedure. The procedure involves a student reading a text orally and a teacher recording the deviations. However, the depth of analysis is more complicated requiring the teacher to judge the student’s use of syntactic, semantic and graphophonic cueing strategies. In addition, the child must retell the text read.
CHAPTER 5.

TEACHERS' JUDGEMENT AND LITERACY ASSESSMENT: ANALYSIS OF MAIN FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

The case studies presented in the previous chapter elucidate the contextual environment in which the teachers make their judgements of students' literacy development. An outline of the curriculum policies of each school highlighted an interesting discrepancy between the published documents of the schools and the current official policy of the DoE. The chapter outlined what assessment strategies are used to gather information and what is involved in the judgement process. The chapter also served to describe how teachers made decisions and what criteria were referred to in the decision making process. All the data described highlights the complexity and the interplay of influences on the teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.

This chapter draws from the case studies presented in the previous chapter and provides an additional analysis of the interview data. A collective case study analysis of the interview data was undertaken using the computer programme KWALITAN (Peters & Wester, 1990, 1993) to facilitate the processing of the large quantity of data gathered. An analysis of the content of the interview discourse for explicitly stated and implicitly inferred influences was undertaken. From this process emerged seven main patterns or themes describing the influences upon teachers' judgements. The seven themes that emerged are identified as:

- internalised reflective knowledge
- assessment strategy selection
- external considerations
- dissemination
- peer power
- standards
- political context.

Figure 16 is a diagrammatic representation of the seven identified themes and the constituent code clusters. This figure is a refinement of Figure 12 from chapter 3.
Influences on Teachers' Judgements of Students' Literacy Development

Figure 16. Representation of the seven identified themes and constituent code clusters
This chapter gives an explanatory analysis of the seven themes as well as a discussion of the links with the literature reviewed in chapter 2 pertaining to theoretical models of English language acquisition and learning; expectations, standards and learning continua; and the research relevant to the field of teacher judgement.

The chapter begins with the findings pertaining to the influence labelled internalised reflective knowledge. This is a particularly pertinent place to begin the analysis. The literature review identifies tacit knowledge and teacher intuition as two factors in teacher judgement. These two factors have been used interchangeably and have implicitly encompassed a range of attributes. However, it is evident from the data analysed in this research that tacit knowledge is only one component of a complex interplay of influences that combine to form an influence that is more appropriately labelled 'internalised reflective knowledge'. The chapter proceeds to examine the influence labelled 'assessment strategy selection'. This influence is also more complex than the label would suggest. Assessment strategies are not selected on a simple linear relationship with the curriculum being assessed. External influences such as DoE policy directives and powerful educationists in the field of literacy development were two agents of change for the teachers involved in this study. How literacy achievement is disseminated influenced not only the teacher's choice of assessment strategies, but also, how they reported the information. The influence of peers on the process and the product emerged as an issue of importance. The way teachers react to, and deal with, issues of accountability and the achievement of literacy standards by the students in their classrooms provided evidence that such matters influenced teachers' judgements. The prevailing political climate within which teachers must work emerged as an explicitly stated influence on the teachers' judgement making process.

5.2. Internalised Reflective Knowledge

The influence on teachers' judgements related to the theme identified as internalised reflective knowledge is a complex interaction of influences internal to each individual teacher. It is an integrally related combination of seven sub-groups of features labelled as follows:

- tacit knowledge
- specific contextual setting
- the ability to articulate
- curriculum knowledge
- developmental knowledge of students
- interactive student contact over time
- personal receptivity (Figure 16).
5.2.1. Tacit Knowledge

The notion that teachers know because they know is a notion related to the concept of tacit knowledge (Carnbourne, et al., 1994), and to the notion of 'Personal Knowledge' (Polanyi, 1958; Polanyi & Prosch, 1975). Teachers have an accumulated knowledge pool of information related to students' literacy development. Some teachers are better able to articulate their tacit knowledge than others.

Alexandra is aware of her own ability and is able to articulate this knowledge; she states this quite clearly when asked if she recognises her own tacit knowledge. "Yes very good, plenty of that, after 20 years you should have quite a lot of tacit knowledge. I'd say" (K.2.21.). In a later conversation Alexandra was reflecting on her ability to 'know' and made the following comment:

I think in talking to you I have realised how much you do informally and how much you have in your head, and so I suppose, observations as such,

It is almost like just mental observations, I mean, your head as a filing cabinet is pretty good when I think about it in lots of ways. (K.3.49.)

What has in the past been given the blanket label of tacit knowledge is itself a complex combination of several influences, characterised by the group of attributes consisting of teacher judgement, intuition, a personal belief in one's own professional competence, common sense, and accumulated experience. The integration of these components constitutes an internalised attribute defining an ability to know about students' literacy development.

This powerful influence is more than layers of accumulated knowledge. It is an integration of expertise that encompasses an ability that can be demonstrated and is witnessed by observation of the skilful performance of teachers in their judgemental practices. Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica all articulated the influence that tacit knowledge, teacher judgement, intuition, competence, common sense and experience had on their judgemental decisions. The following four extracts from Alexandra and Georgina are illustrative of such influences. Alexandra articulates quite clearly her understanding of her tacit knowledge.

AA: Well I'm just saying that, why I'm telling you that is relevant to this, to a certain degree and I do not know what percentage but a certain degree is intuitive and it is to do with knowing children, it's to do with knowing how they learn, it's to do with knowing where they are at a certain age what their interests are and that comes from a whole wealth of experience not from necessarily what you learn at teachers' college what you read or whatever it comes from just being and relating to children and .... (K.6.6.)
Alright, and some teachers do it better than other people. Yes, and it's an intuitive sense of timing or it's a uh or it's an acute awareness of when it's best to speak, or catching the moment, or being aware of the whole group rather than just the one you're focusing on and all those things. Some of it is learnt, but some of it comes more naturally to some people than others. So why does it do that, why aren't we all products of just our ... (K.6.6.

HF: So in relation to this is the topic 'The Influences on Teachers' Judgements in Relation to Children’s Literacy / Students' Literacy Assessment'. There isn't anything that you'd like me to know that you think is important?

... AA: Common sense, um. (K.6.4.)

Georgina reflects on her own ability to make teaching and learning decisions and concludes that it is her tacit knowledge that enables her to make judgements in the classroom.

HF: How do you know that with this child, whole language, inquiry, integrated curriculum is the way to go, but with this child it's not the way to go? How do you make that decision?

GW: It usually takes me a while to make that decision and I'll move the kid around the classroom to see if whoever he or she's working with is the influence and try and work out discount all those other possibilities. It takes a while and you just use tacit knowledge, you just know that it's not working for them and so you make their activity more directed. (K.20.26.)

The following extract encompasses the complex interactive nature of the elements that constitute 'teacher judgement'. Alexandra's decision making processes are influenced by a myriad of considerations that are not easily identified as separate units of analysis.

HF: Now, say I am the other Year 6 teacher and I came in and said "Alexandra I don't think that this boy, this girl whatever, is proficient", what evidence would I have to give you to change your mind? So I said "look Alexandra I have got this report on ... and I don't think he is proficient". What would you do?

AA: Why don't you think he's proficient?

AA: I would expect them to be able to say what their interpretation of proficiency is and how his writing or his reading or whatever, doesn't display it. Now also on what do they base that. Because are they basing it on one example of his writing, or one particular situation. Or, say it was oral language all right, which we probably wouldn't have a discrepancy on with him, but say Ok she's noticed something in drama, and my report doesn't reflect it. All right. So what has he done in drama that shows proficiency, or the lack of it. Is it because it was a formal situation, was it a certain pressure in the situation, was he having a bad day, or conversely he stars in drama but he never contributes to class meetings, so what is it about the situation? So I would be asking for, what was the context, what was the expectation, and what was his performance that didn't meet her expectations? (K.5.9.)
Schön (Schön, 1987, 1991) writes about two aspects of competent practice calling them 'knowing-in-action' and 'reflection-in-action'. Knowing-in-action refers to the identifiable attributes that are revealed by "intelligent action - publicly observable, physical performances" (Schön, 1987, p. 25). Reflection-in-action is part of the process of professional critical thinking, the ability to analyse critically or reflect on one's actions and beliefs. In essence, it is thinking about what one is doing while one is doing it.

The three case study teachers in this study are highly articulate, coherent, and informed theoreticians and practitioners. They all demonstrate Schön's notions of 'knowing-in-action' and 'reflection-in-action'. The following extract from a conversation with Alexandra encompasses many of the attributes that constitute the complex components of tacit knowledge revealed in this study. When asked to comment on how she observes and draws conclusions about the achievement of students in her class, Alexandra states:

All right, so I know that about her, now so whether I actually hold that in my head or write that down depends on the circumstances and what I am doing. So but when I come to write her report I would then with that knowledge go to something like the First Steps or the profiles and say OK where does a child doing that sit. Ok so I have, I collect I suppose in lots of different ways through out the half year or each term, and sometimes at the end of term I will do something specifically for a week. I might, ok we've, you are going to write something, and I give them a set task or within a range of things to do, so apart from the book review that they are doing or apart from their own process writing that they've been doing during the term there will be a limited time for them to write, and I might tell them at the start of the week that we will be doing this later in the week so they can think about what they might do and they can choose the genre, but they are going to have another limited time to edit it and present it to me as published work. That would be a silent, sit down, read, write, whatever, and I will use that. Now that will not be the only thing I base my judgement on. It will be I will get the draft book and I'll be looking through that and see what sort of corrections they make and by looking just looking at it often reminds you of when I was doing it with them, so what you observed at that time if you haven't written it down so I get that from their writing I also think of the other things they have published and the projects we've done, or the topic work they have done and what they wrote in that, and I will have made a comment about their projects or whatever in my SOSE file so I gather, it's like having all the data and so I have the English sheets, the draft book, etc. Every kid's report ... I don't know how ever long. And I gather it all together and so that's the big picture. (K.2.26.)

Alexandra's extract illustrates the multifaceted complexity of the concept identified in the literature as tacit knowledge. However, this research highlights that the concept internalised reflective knowledge may be a more appropriate term. Such a term encapsulates the meaning of the several attributes that constitute this concept. Alexandra's, Georgina's and Veronica's decision making processes encompass professional and personal judgements, accumulated wisdom in the form of intuition,
knowledge of literacy curriculum development, an understanding of learning theory and individual student learning styles all of which are achieved through experience and an element that may well be called personal integrity. The professional commitment to their chosen occupation of teaching is evident throughout all the interview data. Their professionalism is illustrative of Schön's notion of reflection-in-action.

5.2.2. **Specific Contextual Setting**

The theme internalised reflective knowledge includes the components 'complex interact' - complex interaction and 'context' (Figure 16). The notion that a teacher's professional knowledge is a complex interaction of many influences that are difficult to isolate into separate identifiable units is a theme identified in this research and in the professional literature. The constantly recurring notion that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts is closely related to the influence of the complex interactive nature of a teacher's judgement making processes.

The influence identified as context refers to teacher conversation where they acknowledge that the total contextual setting influenced any decisions they made. The notion of total contextual setting includes the teacher's knowledge of the individual student, knowledge of the student's home environment, the curriculum and the social dynamics of the particular classroom and the school environment. The following conversation with Veronica at Eastlands P. S. gives an indication of the influence of context on her judgement making.

> And this is where it was hard when you said how often do you do things because um you're sort of really evaluating all the time, every time you are taking a language activity, and you know how you said you don't know how teachers say they know, because you are taking it in all the time and you are writing something down, looking at what you've written, doesn't or wouldn't tell an outside person all that that means. But when you look at it you remember that time, you remember what you wrote and you remember the circumstances round it, you built up the whole picture. Because you're with the kids each day and you are looking, and you are assessing all the time, that is why it is hard to say, once a week or however often. (K.11.2.)

5.2.3. **The Ability to Articulate**

The ability of the teachers to articulate the theoretical and practical underpinning of their literacy assessment practices is another component of the theme internalised reflective knowledge. Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica are all fluent in their ability to express the reasons behind their choices of assessment strategies. They are also able to articulate the influences, as they perceived them, upon their judgements. The
ability to articulate is tied closely to the ability to reflect upon their daily decision making practices. The following two extracts, from an interview with Alexandra, illustrate how she attempts to tease out the reasons behind her programme evaluation process.

AA: What do I do. Well programmes, really, if it works, it is evident in the children's achievement really.... I mean I could teach till the cows come home but if they are going to learn to have some sort of development or something well then it is not really effective, is it? So I would say in most cases I would use the same, however, there would be personal reflection, in how did I feel it went, or the atmosphere of the room, or um did I enjoy it as well, so that sort of thing, but it is not just a personal observation so it is still observation but it is mainly of how I .... (K.5.25.)

HF: So if you were going to say I have tried out this new reading programme, or I have tried out this new series of readers you would still use read and re-tell, or reading circles, or literature responses, you would still use that technique which you are assessing the children on their growth in reading, and you would still use that to say well look I think this instructional practice, or this teaching and learning activity was worthwhile.

AA: Was worthwhile
AA: Yes, because if there was negative responses to that well then I would look back and at what did I do and was it the material or the programme or they way I delivered it, so I would still use that as the impetus to reflect back on what I was doing as to whether they got it or not. (K.5.26.)

The ability to reflect and articulate the success or failure of their teaching and learning and assessment strategies influenced Alexandra, Veronica and Georgina's ability to change. The ability to accept change influenced their choice of new assessment and reporting techniques.

5.2.4. Curriculum Knowledge

A number of influences grouped together around a theme related to knowledge of the English curriculum. The codes identifying this influence are labelled as follows:

- 'curriculum'
- 'literacy compet' - literacy competence
- 'computer literacy'
- 'define literacy' - definitions of literacy
- 'teach&ing practice' - teaching and learning practice
- 'know base' - knowledge base (Figure 16).

What all these codes have in common is an understanding of the multiple concepts of literacy, a knowledge of the structure of the English language, and a belief that the
literacy assessment strategies used need to be related to the theoretical principles of English language development and the curriculum as practised in the classroom. In the initial stages of this research, and in an attempt to set a context for the study, the concept literacy was investigated. To assess literacy, it was argued, one should be able to define the concept. However, what one person defines as literacy in one point in time, turned out to be different for another person in another point in time. In Appendix A can be found an extensive collection of definitions of literacy gathered throughout this study. Initially, Alexandra, Veronica and Georgina were all asked to explain their understanding of the concept literacy. Alexandra responded: "reading, writing, speaking and listening" (ITQ - PB - Q1). In the interview data she expanded on this understanding by stating "it's successful communication with or through those particular aspects" (K.2.2). When asked to explain the meaning of her use of the term 'successful' Alexandra commented:

For an adult it would be competent use of all those, or successful to the situation at the time, I suppose, and that can be applicable to all levels and all ages. It is successful if their need to communicate orally and the message is received and understood and acted upon, well that's successful and so on in a written form. If it's demonstrated that a communication is heard and then acted upon that's successful and/or received from written communication. (K.2.4.)

In the questionnaire, Veronica responded to the question "When you use the term literacy, what do you mean?" in the following way:

Literacy is the ability to use and understand language. It is the ability to be able to speak clearly, to listen and to and understand what someone else is saying, and to be able to appraise what is said. It means being able to read and comprehend and analyse what is being read. Literacy also covers writing and being able to write for many purposes. I have included viewing but I feel that the written word is a bigger basis for literacy in primary schools. (ITQ - PB - Q1)

Veronica added to this explanation in one of interview situations as follows:

Well, my understanding is that it's language but it goes deeper than that. It is an understanding of language covering the different aspects of reading, writing, speaking, but doing it so that, not just doing it to a basic ability, but um literacy is sort of understanding language, how you understand language, um so it's really, I see it as analysing it, or being able to analyse language, um to talk to, to analyse speaking, to be able to write, to be able to write in different ways. So I see it as a very wide um word, that's got a lot of meaning in it. It is hard to define because you can't just say Literacy is that, it's the whole it takes into account, a lot of things, a lot of understandings. (K.12.2.)

Georgina's response to the question "When you use the term literacy, what do you mean?" is encapsulated in the following statement:
Literacy is communication. Literacy covers the ability to read, write, speak, view, think, and listen critically. Literacy learning occurs across the curriculum and is an ongoing process. Critical literacy.

(ITE - PB - Q1)
She elaborated on this understanding in an interview, commenting:

It's communication, written communication and reading, critical thinking, speaking and listening and viewing it, critical literacy, all those things. (K.18.2.)

HF: Everyone finds it hard to define. Why is it so hard?
GW: Because it keeps changing. (K.18.3.)

Georgina went on to include aspects of computer literacy in her understanding, stating that it was because "you need literacy skills to be able to use the computer" (K.18.7.). She included 'viewing' as a component of literacy stating that "well, as far as we're concerned our viewing involves lots of discussion afterwards, and kid reflection and responses" (K.18.8.).

This collection of understanding of what constitutes the concept literacy is a fascinating reflection of the material detailed in chapter 4. The understandings represent an integration of the school policy documents of each school and the current DoE Victoria and Board of Studies Victoria publications of the early 1990s (CSF), as well as a combination of the two dominant theoretical models of language acquisition and learning of the 1990s, namely the whole language movement and the genre school of thought. The concept that is not explicitly reflected in these statements is the prevailing notion of multiple literacies (The New London Group, 1996). However, this is not surprising given the very practical orientation that drives primary school teachers in the field. In addition, there is the influence of the prevailing political climate in not only Victoria, but Australia, of a measurement driven accountability emphasis (Australian Council for Educational Research, 1997a; 1997b; Department of Education Victoria, 1997). All three teachers demonstrate an awareness of the changing nature of literacy. Their comments also illustrate an understanding of the complexity of the concept literacy. Observations in their respective classrooms confirm that their working definitions of literacy are influential in many aspects of their curriculum and programme planning, choice of assessment techniques and reporting procedures as the descriptions detailed in chapter 4 illustrate.

The following extracts from conversations with Georgina demonstrate her knowledge base of the teaching and learning practices associated with students developing a knowledge of the structure of the English language.

HF: But when you say you observe, Georgina, um what do you observe?
GW: I'm watching what they're doing. Like if we're writing procedural text, I'll go around and help out the ones who need help and I know that
initially when we started procedural text no-one could do it and we did lots of modelling and lots of group activities on that and, now I can say that all 27 of the kids can write a procedural text without even thinking about it. They know this is what we need. If I want to make a kite, these are all the materials I need to collect, this is how I go about making it step by step and they know that they can do that. (K.18.26.)

HF: Yes, but why? Why do you use that as compared to, once again, why not just pick up the BRS reading test or the Basic Series Reading Test, or?
GW: Because I like read and retells because we do predictions from the title, or we do looking at words that might be in here and there is lots of discussion that goes on. It's a whole grade activity but it's an individual activity at the same time because everyone comes up with something separate but we all help each other in the first place and then we help each other evaluate it because they share with the person next to them or sometimes with the whole table group. This is what I've got, what have you got, let me see. Oh, yeah I remember that now and they highlight what the main points with what they came up with on the text. (K.20.106.)

This particular component of internalised reflective knowledge relates to the literature reviewed regarding the powerful and changing theoretical models of literacy acquisition and learning. In chapter 2 four decades of literature were reviewed encompassing three major conceptual views of how children become literate. Establishing a connection between a teacher's theoretical beliefs and the practical implementation of literacy assessment techniques is important.

5.2.4.1. The Impact and Influence of Theoretical Models of Literacy on Teachers' Classroom Practices

Triangulation of various sources of data - student responses, classroom artefacts, field notes, curriculum documents, school policy documents - showed the three teachers to be consistent in their theoretical explanations and practical implementations. This is in stark contrast to the British study (McCallum, Gipps, McAlister & Brown, 1995) documented in chapter 2.

Alexandra, Veronica and Georgina are articulate in their ability to reflect on changes in the theoretical underpinning of curriculum ideology affecting their classroom practices. Chapter 2 reviewed the significant theoretical movements over the past 40 - 50 years (section 2.3: Historical Context of Major English Language Learning Theories). The changing nature of literacy expectations and the competing demands of the various theoretical perspectives were reflected in the teachers' knowledge base, in their classroom curriculum, and the policy documents at the school level. All three schools refer to integrated curriculum, inquiry based problem solving, whole language, the development of skills as well as a knowledge of genre types in the three sets of teaching and learning policies collected and examined for this study (SCDC). The three teachers use the language of these documents in their conversations.
In the following segments Alexandra refers to the reasons for her belief in inquiry learning and to the changes that have occurred in educational ideology over the past 40 years. For Alexandra, inquiry learning is tied to children's natural curiosity: "The other thing about inquiry learning is the questioning. Is that kids have questioned since the year dot too. So that it follows on that natural curiosity" (K.4.16.). In addition, Alexandra comments on a change in outlook from the 1960s to the current day: "children were seen and not heard, children were little adults, children were um were told what to do and the way for them to learn what to do was to be told and to be directed, and not be allowed to climb a tree because they might break their leg. You know. The sensory awareness or whatever of climbing the tree was not put as highly as the possibility of breaking the leg" (K.4.17.). Such changes were attributable to an accumulation of experience, research and reading but also, in Alexandra's words "observation. Maybe more detailed and acute observation" (K.4.18). According to Alexandra, people have become "more interested in learning how kids learn" (K.4.18). She feels that there has been a change in outlook: "it was good to ask questions, so once you start asking questions, then you start asking questions about learning, the same as you ask questions about everything else, so the whole thing of the acceptance of information and the questioning of information has changed in that period too. So maybe that's got something to do with it" (K.4.18.).

Veronica also indicates her knowledge of the impact of changing educational practices in the following extract.

... you've been through a lot of different changes in other ways. There was the open classroom, where that was completely open and you didn't have the control or the standards or whatever, and kids, some kids were so frustrated because it was so open that there wasn't the teaching or the small groups or the workshops, the planning, everything that needed to go into it, and so people/teachers had seen that and realised that you can't revolutionise what you are going to do and leave out structure. You've got to have, you've got to cope for the creative and you've got to cope for - and that's where CSF was good because it covers the link with the linguistic side, it covers all the different outcomes, it covered the different areas. (K.13.12.)

Veronica's comments relate specifically to the relationship between assessment and curriculum and the acceptance of change. Torrance (1995) draws attention to the relationship between assessment practices and change in his research undertaken in Britain.

The UK evidence is that teachers' capacity and willingness to engage with changes in assessment is particularly influenced by very deep-rooted and long-standing notions of what the purpose of assessment is, and thus they have particular assumptions about what is expected of them
when they become involved in it. Teachers have engaged with changes in assessment most enthusiastically and effectively when these changes have derived from, or developed in parallel with, clearly understood changes in the curriculum. (p. 55)

All three teachers reflect a strong belief in the reigning theory of literacy acquisition of the 1980s (see chapter 2, section 2.3.2 for a detailed explanation). This is not a surprising result considering the data recorded regarding their teacher training (this information was taken from the initial questionnaire completed by the participating teachers (see Appendix C). Table 13 documents the period of their basic training, their post initial training and the ELIC (Early Literacy Inservice Course) which all three completed. All three were undertaking courses covering the 20 year period in Australia dominated by the whole language philosophy. What is surprising is the strength of their beliefs. The powerful influences of their teacher training courses and the ELIC programme should not be underestimated.
Table 13 outlines the teaching experience, qualifications and professional training of Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Alexandra</th>
<th>Georgina</th>
<th>Veronica</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 Years</td>
<td>12 Years</td>
<td>21+ Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Initial Training Qualifications**

- Diploma of Teaching Primary 1975
- Diploma of Teaching Primary 1983
- Trained Infant Teachers' Certificate 1969

**Additional Qualifications**

- Bachelor of Education 1984
- Bachelor of Education 1988
- Graduate Diploma of Special Education 1976
- Graduate Diploma - Literacy 1993

**Additional Literacy Training**

- ELIC (Early Literacy Inservice Course) 1989
- ELIC 1988
- ELIC 1987
- ELIC Tutor 1990
- CLIP (Canberra Literacy Inservice Program) 1991
- Frameworks (Assessment and Evaluation Tutor Training) 1995
The following sets of extracts from Georgina, Alexandra and Veronica demonstrate their commitment to the theoretical principles of integrated curriculum and whole language, and how these principles impact on their classroom curriculum. However, the data also indicate the teachers' awareness of the changing nature of literacy as they take on board aspects of the genre school of influence which has dominated literacy theory in Australia in the 1990s.

Alexandra is very confident in her belief that integrated curriculum and whole language are the most appropriate teaching and learning methods. In this following sequence of dialogue she comments on many issues related to language and learning theory. For instance, she equates integrated learning to natural learning: "Because it is the most natural way kids learn, and so they are following on from their natural learning, ... they don't use the world as in little pockets" (K.4.6.). She questions reading theories that propose that knowledge of the alphabet precedes the ability to read. Alexandra made this comment regarding any such idea:

Woo woo I'd stop you right there, because they can be reading when they're singing a nursery rhyme if they have the book in front of them and the pictures are there and the words are on the page and they know the words off by heart because they have heard the rhyme so often. (K.4.7.). "What is the learner doing in all that. The learner thinks they are reading and the learner's got to think that they can do it to be able to do it. So would the behaviourist stop them from opening the book and turning the pages and all that sort of thing because they are not really reading? (K.4.8.).

Alexandra is adamant that change has occurred "but we have learnt something since then surely! ... Have we not progressed down the track since 1960 when we were learning?" (K.4.9.). Alexandra is very confident that the relationship between integrated curriculum and inquiry learning "is the best way to teach" (K.4.10). When questioned about the strength of her belief she commented:

Because I've read things about it, it sounds logical, more natural than saying Ok we are going to read this little thing, then this little thing, then this little thing, because children remember things like the word dinosaurs kids will know the word dinosaur because they love it, and because they are interested in it, and they won't know the word can because it is meaningless unless they are in context. Context is everything. Context that's the word. Context is very important. As a learner, and we don't often put ourselves in learning situations, how much easier it is in learning the computer or learning, what else have I learnt recently, and in the context it was far easier to learn it. Now I'll try and remember the example, but yes. So context is huge, so given the context the kids will learn more easily, so integrated curriculum and I come to the inquiry box, integration curriculum
puts, I think is the best way of putting things into context. (K.4.10.)

Alexandra's belief in integrated learning and whole language is closely tied to the belief in the importance of context and the wholeness of learning.

When I taught without integrated curriculum, yeah, well and I still think this is important too, a certain degree of routine and direction and all that sort of thing is very important but actually half an hour of hand writing and half an hour you know this part of English and half an hour of that, I don’t thing that is important however the kids need to know - they still need the routine of, Ok we’ll do reading and we’ll um follow it up with some of our own writing or some you know whatever we are working on at the moment, they still like that routineness about their day, but necessarily little chunks here, there and everywhere. And as I say some kids won’t learn that way too. For some learning styles it probably is Ok, chunk it here and there and there. Some people like seeing trees rather than whole picture, some people like whole picture rather than trees. (K.4.11.)

Georgina is equally as committed to the principles of matching her assessment techniques to the underlying philosophies she holds about how children learn. When asked what theoretical literacy principles the assessment technique cloze was based on Georgina replied: " whole language ... because it is looking at the whole thing. They have got to be able to make meaning from the text rather than just having an isolated series of letters" (K.20.72.).

As noted in chapter 3 a cross checking of the curriculum, policy and reporting documents collected from the three case study sites was undertaken. It is noteworthy that there is little explicit reference to specific theoretical models of English language acquisition or literacy in the official documentation. A content analysis of the major curriculum, policy and reporting documents revealed only the following references to theoretical models of language acquisition in the school publications (Table 14). However, it is important to note that the documents do reflect the philosophical beliefs of the whole language movement in language written for a wide public audience. Curriculum documents at the school level are written for the total educational community not specifically for the teachers.
Table 14  ISYS Text Retrieval Search of the 16 School Curriculum, Policy and Reporting Documents for References to Theoretical Language Acquisition Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Westlands P. S.</th>
<th>Eastlands P. S.</th>
<th>Northlands P. S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Search for models of literacy learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Language</td>
<td>Language Program (Doc 6)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Language Program (Doc 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Reference Teaching &amp; Learning Revised Draft 1995 (Doc 4)</td>
<td>1 Reference School Charter 1995 - 1998 (Doc 1)</td>
<td>3 References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills-Based Behaviourist</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Literacy</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre School</td>
<td>Nil Word genre appeared in Language Programme (Doc 6)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil Word genre appeared in Language Programme (Doc 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Social Theorists</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psycholinguists</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Recovery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reference to enrichment curriculum in Charter (Doc 4) Reference in Language Programme (Doc 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.5. Developmental Knowledge of Students

Another influence on teachers' literacy judgements was an acknowledgment that there was a necessity to understand individual students and take this into consideration when making judgements. Understanding the psychology of student behaviour ('student-psy'), the different learning styles of students ('learning styles'), the effects of gender differences ('gender') and having a belief in the principle of catering for individual differences ('indiv diff') were all influences upon teachers' decision making and choice of assessment practices and strategies. Georgina's awareness of, and response to, the very special needs of individual students in her classroom are evidenced in this extract below.

HF: What would you do, what would you revert to with a child that isn't working in this total learning environment, what would you revert to?

GW: To being really specific and directed with that child. Most of the kids will learn from an individual type but catering for individual differences and I would just direct that child to something very specific. Like ... who's gone now to special school. These things didn't work for him so I would stick to one and to one and he's really directed to specific, one instruction, we will work through this together. (K.20.27.)

5.2.6. Interactive Student Contact Over Time

The participating teachers perceived that there was an influence related to the length and constancy of togetherness between teacher and student that was an important part of their judgement making process. Two features emerged to describe this influence: length of 'time' together and the 'proximity' or closeness of the time together. Time referred to the effect that teacher-student interaction, over an extended duration, had on the teacher's ability to understand the student's literacy achievements. The following interview with Veronica highlights the importance of the influence of time in relation to her professional knowledge of her students. Veronica was commenting on the additional information she brings to bear in an assessment situation.

Mum's having a new baby, he's going from house to house, his homework is never there, he's got nobody there to help him at home, so this is where you know you said "how do we know". This is how we know because if you are with the kids all the time and you have a complete year with them and you are not off much, you really do pick up this whole picture. Are they, are the kids organised, are they, have they got good work habits at home, are they here on time, and this is so important these basic notes. (K.13.16.)
Proximity, a co-influence of time, referred to the fact that the teachers perceived the extended periods of time spent with their students as an important influence on their judgement making ability. The teachers commented that as primary school teachers the effect of staying in the one classroom for extended periods of the day increased their access to knowledge about individual students. The implication was that proximity to the students enabled detailed knowledge to be accumulated about the whole student, a point clearly made by Georgina when I asked her if an outsider, such as myself, could persuade her to change her opinion about a particular assessment of a student. "I'm in that classroom everyday with those kids so it would take a lot" (K.23.22.).

5.2.7. Personal Receptivity

An influence reflected in the phrase 'personal receptivity' emerged from the data. The codes that marked this influence were 'change', 'personality' and personal situation ('person situat'). Participants made comments that explicitly, or implicitly, acknowledged that there was a human psychology related to the ability to accept change and a personality factor that was related to openness to learning, critical reflection and adaptation. One of the principals, Michael Wall, spoke of the effect of a teacher's current personal situation as being influential on the quality of a her/his judgements.

Can I, can I say something here that should clarify my line just then, the point of life that you're at sometimes has a big influence.
You could be an experienced person, if you are having a lull in your life, your own life, your personal life, you could experience poor teaching or whatever.

And we've got to be understanding of that.
Ah, so maybe that's another influence that comes into it.

Well, most of us, but we face it.
I've got a couple of nice people right now facing difficult situations and I'm trying to lift them and so that I understand as much as I can and not degrade them and make them feel good about working with our kids. (K.25.18.)

He also spoke of the necessity for a teacher to be able adapt to change. He described the attributes of a 'good' teacher as one who can change; by implication, this will affect the quality of a teacher's judgement making processes.

MW: I'm not sure what else influences teachers apart from good reading, keeping up with it, in-service work, making sure they stay ahead and I think they've got to be receptive to change, to change. I believe if you're a teacher and you're not with change, you're not much of a teacher. Because teachers are supposed to be part of that phenomenon, evolution if you like. (K.25.6.)
5.3. Assessment Strategy Selection

Teachers' judgements of students' literacy development were influenced by the practical consideration of the assessment strategies that the teacher chose to use in the literacy data gathering process. The choice of strategies was also a much more complex interplay of influences than one would have initially imagined. The cluster of influences that constituted 'assessment strategy selection' consisted of techniques selected to gather data, the effect the context of the assessment situation had on the selection of assessment techniques and a feature nominated as continuous assessment. However, each of these three clusters was a combination of several other influences upon teachers' literacy judgements.

5.3.1. Assessment and Evaluation Strategies Used by Participants in the Research Study

A number of features distinguished different assessment strategies chosen by the teachers to gather literacy data. In addition to the attributes of the specific 'techniques', teachers used 'observation', the use of 'portfolios' of samples of students' work, the use of classroom constructed 'tests' or commercially purchased tests, 'artefacts' such as the students' project work and student self assessment ('stud&teach assess') to gather literacy assessment data.

The types of techniques used related to the language philosophy underlying the curriculum in each classroom and school. However, it was not a direct or discrete relationship between philosophy and technique.

The teachers used a wide variety of assessment techniques. The code 'techniques' was used to mark specific and explicit references to literacy assessment techniques in the many interviews conducted. The types of techniques nominated by Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica are listed in Table 15.
Table 15  Literacy Assessment Techniques used by Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Technique</th>
<th>Alexandra</th>
<th>Georgina</th>
<th>Veronica</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotal Notes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checklists</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read &amp; Retell</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Records</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (Used with &quot;students at risk&quot;)</td>
<td>X (Used with &quot;weaker students&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscue Analysis</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolios</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Samples</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Conferences</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (parent and student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Reviews</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Role Plays</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tests - teacher</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tests - Scholarship</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self Assessment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning logs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diary</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation Books</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Circles</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Responses</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Code**  
X = Used strategy  
- = Strategy not used

The data in this table were cross checked by triangulating the observations made in the researcher’s field notes (FN); the responses to the initial questionnaire (ITQ) (see Appendix C for the questions asked); the school curriculum document collection (SCDC); and the analysis of the interviews conducted.

Although these techniques were nominated as data gathering methods, the teachers also spoke of them as teaching and learning strategies. There was little distinction drawn between assessment techniques, and teaching and learning strategies for the participants in this research study. The teaching and learning strategies that Veronica, Alexandra and Georgina used in the classroom were used as their assessment techniques as well. Summative assessment, which refers to assessment practices
carried out at a particular point in time often at the end of a topic, subject or year level, was not a practice favoured by these three teachers.

The collection of techniques in Table 15 is a representative sample of data collection methods to be found in the current literature on literacy assessment (Cambourne & Turbill, 1994; Cambourne, et al., 1994; Dilena & van Kraayenoord, 1995; Valencia, Hiebert & Afflerbach, 1994; van Kraayenoord, 1992; Wilson & Fehring, 1995; Wolf, 1993). On the 26th of March 1996 I conducted a professional development session in relation to assessment and evaluation (refer to Appendix G: PhD related presentations). At this teacher inservice I asked the 150 participants to write down the assessment techniques that they knew were being used at their schools. Appendix H contains a list of all the items nominated by the participating teachers. The techniques being used by the three teachers in the current research are a subset of the list contained in Appendix H.

5.3.1.1. Observation
A key strategy used by Alexandra, Veronica and Georgina to facilitate teacher judgement was observation. Georgina comments on her belief in the value of, and the power of, teacher observation as a method of collecting assessment data. Teacher observation is not just a collection of anecdotal notes but a theoretically focussed professional judgement making process.

HF: Observations. Why do you just have this strong belief that your observations, whether they be informal or focused observations, that they are the appropriate assessment technique for you to use?

GW: Because it’s less intrusive. I know that if I sit back and watch what the kids are doing, I’m going to get an accurate picture. But if I join in the group, then they are going to look to me for the guidance in the group and look to me to lead the group. Even though I could say I’m just sitting here observing, you’re the group leader, they’d still look to me. So if I stand back, sit back and observe then I don’t have I don’t intrude on the group and it doesn’t become it’s what Ms Whyte wants me to do, not what we are doing. (K.20.58.)

Teacher observation is well documented in the whole language literature as a favoured assessment data gathering technique (Braun, 1993; Cambourne & Turbill, 1988, 1990; Goodman, Goodman & Hood, 1989; Goodman, 1985; Jaggar & Smith-Burke, 1985). The term 'kid watching' was coined by Yetta Goodman in the 1980s (Goodman, 1985). Georgina's comments reflect the powerful influence of the theoretically dominant language learning beliefs of the 80s and early 90s.
5.3.1.2. Portfolios

The use of portfolios in the literacy assessment process was common to all three teachers. Portfolio assessment, as a common practice to demonstrate literacy development, emerged in the 1980s. The two definitions of portfolio assessment stated below are typical of the usage of the terminology and practice in Australia.

Portfolios are sources of evidence for judgements of student achievement in a range of contexts, from classroom monitoring of student performance to high-stakes summative assessment. All portfolios, whatever their purpose, contain 'pieces of evidence'. The more relevant the evidence, the more useful it is for inferring a student's level of achievement in a learning area. 'Relevance' is the degree to which the evidence addresses the knowledge, skills and understandings, or outcomes, of the learning area.
(Forster & Masters, 1996a, p. 2)

The portfolio is an approach to assessment utilizing the collection of information about performance to describe growth in literacy learning.
(van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1992, p. 93)

The practice of using portfolios as a means of documenting evidence of students' literacy development coincides with the psycho-cognitive era of the psycholinguists and whole language movement. With a decided distrust of normative tests, teachers following the beliefs of whole language needed alternate methods of demonstrating to parents, students and other teachers change and growth in students' literacy (Hiebert & Calfee, 1992). The policy and curriculum documents of the school sites in this study reflect the philosophical beliefs of whole language, problem solving inquiry and integrated curriculum (SCDC). Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica choose to use assessment techniques in their classrooms that reflect the theoretical perspectives within the school policy documents (detailed in chapter 4).

Georgina comments on her understanding of portfolios as an assessment strategy, and of her use of portfolios in her classroom assessment practices in the two extracts below.

GW: Now I've taken bits of everyone's concepts of portfolios. Um. It did start off as a specifically language portfolio but now I've moved over to a learning portfolio. Fairly impressive isn't it? And it's the children's choice of what goes in there. It doesn't have to be their best piece of work. It's something that they're proud of. (K.18.37.)

HF: So is this a file you keep somewhere or is it something the kid's keep in their own lockers or is it a book or ...
GW: One of those flat folders with plastic inserts, plastic pockets and the kids put their work in there. It's kept in a box near my desk, simply so that I know all 27 of them are there everyday. If they were in their
lockers they'd be lost basically and that's why their evaluation books are kept next to my desk too.

HF: These things?
GW: Yes. So work goes into their portfolio and I use that. Lots of self-assessment and I ask the kids how they think they can, they're going with those things. I think that's about all. (K.18.38.)

5.3.1.3. Tests

In these three case studies no evidence in any of the interviews or school policy documentation can be found of techniques being selected for their numerical or statistical attributes. Commercial tests containing norm referenced data were not used by Alexandra, Veronica or Georgina. There was a clear philosophical distinction drawn between using commercial tests and teacher constructed tests. Alexandra comments on her understanding and use of teacher constructed tests in the classroom.

HF: What do you call a teacher test?
AA: When you say to the child this is what you have to do on your own. You are not allowed to converse with someone else about it and we are doing it to see if you have improved since last time you did something. (K.2.36.)

Georgina held very strong views about the use of tests in her literacy assessment process. The following sequence of conversation was related to her philosophical opposition to the use of commercial tests in her classroom practices.

HF: Why running records though, why not just BRS reading test, or the TORCH reading test, or?
GW: Because I can do running records. (K.20.101.)
HF: You can do the TORCH Georgina, just give out the ...
GW: But the TORCH test costs money. (K.20.102.)
HF: The swamp creatures, you give out the swamp creatures, they're handed back in, you get the score sheet and you mark it.
GW: No, because running records you can do on a one-to-one basis, I can turn it in to a teaching time, I can interview the kids about the strategies they use. All of those things that are immediate and on a one-to-one basis and are individuals for 27 children in the grade. Whereas the TORCH test is not, I am going to get the same thing. (K.20.103.)

This strong opposition to the use of comparative tests is also a reflection of the influence of the psycholinguistic era of the 1980s and early 90s. Victorian teachers have had a historical opposition to state wide testing being imposed upon schools. Strong campaigns have been run against the LAP tests in Victoria. The basis of such opposition is that norm referenced tests are decontextualising from the curriculum and the child in the classroom. Such measures are not considered 'authentic' assessment techniques (Calfee, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1994b; Dilena & Leaker, 1991). The fact that the LAP tests are administered in these three schools is clear evidence of the powerful influence of external authorities upon the classroom teachers' assessment practices.
5.3.2. Contextualised Strategies

One of the more interesting influences on the teachers' decisions on the types of assessment strategies chosen was the group of influences labelled 'contextualised'. The group of codes forming this cluster are as follows:

- 'efficiency'
- 'inaccessible'
- 'authenticity'
- 'justifiable'
- 'curriculum'
- 'cost' and
- 'expense'
- 'critical' (Figure 16).

Efficiency referred to discourse making explicit statements that assessment techniques were chosen on the basis of time effectiveness and efficiency. Some techniques were not chosen because they took too long to administer, rather than the decision being based on authenticity or curriculum related aspects.

Inaccessible was the code that marked any reference to decisions not to use a particular assessment strategy because of the difficulty of organising it. For instance, although parent interviews were thought to be a useful strategy for ascertaining assessment information, the difficulty of organising such interviews made them prohibitive as a frequently used strategy.

Authenticity referred to references participants made about the importance of assessment strategies reflecting real life situations. Decontextualised literacy assessment practices, as for example, comprehension exercises unrelated to the material the students are reading, were not considered authentic. Teachers looked for literacy assessment techniques that gave students real life experiences.

Justifiable was a code that referred to references made by the participants to a belief that a teacher's literacy judgement must be justifiable from the evidence gathered. The following extracts from conversations with Georgina illustrate her conviction that the evidence gathered must support the decision made. When asked if I could change her mind about the assessment of a student's achievement Georgina commented: "You'd have to be very persuasive" (K.23.15.), "Well you'd have to justify it" (K.23.16.). In response to the question as to how I could prove to her my decision Georgina
commented, "Well show me that example to say well this is the reason why it doesn't fit into that. This child isn't using paragraphs consistently. They're only doing it for the beginning and the end not in the middle piece. So it would have to be something concrete" (K.23.27.). "And look at other pieces of work to show that it's some behaviour that's consistent with that child" (K.23.18.).

HF: So the evidence, the evidence that you would accept to say that I must have made a mistake would have to be concrete. Anything else?
GW: Justifiable. (K.23.19.)

HF: So I'd have to be able to justify my statement with examples.
GW: Absolutely, and I would justify mine. (K.23.20.)

HF: So if I said I feel the child has not achieved this, that wouldn't convince you.
GW: No, I would want to know why. (K.23.21.)

Curriculum was the code used to mark references to the situation that the type of curriculum being covered influenced the teacher's decision as to what assessment techniques to use. This point is made by Alexandra in the extract below.

HF: Is your checklist based on...
AA: The content of what I [see] is in the activity usually, and that's based on the content of the curriculum that I am meant to be covering in the year level, so I have developed an activity which the children will do and their ability to do it will be reflected in, will reflect their knowledge and understanding of it. (K.4.25.)

Expense was the code used to mark comments where teachers referred to the actual monetary cost of an assessment technique as being influential on their decision to chose it or not. The cost of some assessment techniques was perceived to be prohibitive in relation to the purchase, and therefore the use of, some of the available methods, a point highlighted by Georgina in the conversation documented in the following extract: "No and we're not rich enough to afford to go to ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research) anyway. That's the big issue. I mean DARTs are about $500 just for one grade at least" (K.23 101.).(1) "That's my whole budget" (K.23.102.).

Cost referred to an implied meaning of the cost of assessment strategies in terms of teacher time, efficiency or expediency. Particular assessment techniques were thought to be very time consuming and therefore in some cases prohibitive. In addition, some assessment techniques were thought to be too costly in terms of time to administer, especially considering the limited amount of information obtained, a point made by Alexandra in the conversation recorded below.
AA: Well there is a lot of variety of activities. Cloze well there would be all the actual written work that they do. I do at times get them to do a specific comprehension and a specific like written comprehension and written correction from the board, like they may edit a piece of writing that I have put on the board, if we are concentrating on a particular type of theme.

HF: Would you do a running record reading/running record on your kids once a year?

AA: Rarely.

HF: Miscue analysis?

AA: I reckon a number of them at this age don't use punctuation to get the flow of the story, so often it is a matter of doing that with them, just pointing out those sort of things, and it's amazing how much they improve in their reading fluency and their reading understanding because it is almost like they are concentrating too much on the words and not using that other strategy, so in most cases I'd say it is pretty clear as to what you need to hone in and so you strengthen that. Without having to do that because it is very time consuming running records and miscue, and you really haven't got the time unless you withdraw the kid and use some time like this, APT, it is very hard to do in the classroom because those kids are also not the confident readers and if everyone else is silently reading and they're reading aloud to me it all goes worse and worse, and so you are not giving them a fair check any way, so I wouldn't use them. (K.2.43.)

Critical was a code referring to the questioning of the usage of certain literacy assessment techniques, as, for example, if a teacher commented that they did not believe a technique could be undertaken as suggested or described in the technique manual. On one occasion Alexandra commented that she felt that the technique miscue analysis was too time consuming for teachers to be assessing a child each day. Alexandra was sceptical of teachers who stated that they were frequently administering a miscue analysis to individual students. In a discussion regarding the frequency of her usage of assessment techniques such as miscue analysis Alexandra made the statement: " I would say infrequently, and only with specific children. Responding to need" (K.3.25.). "Anyone who does regular miscues or running records, ... well, I reckon they are doing it during their recess or lunch time. You know they are taking a child each day at the start of the lunch time" .... HF: "Because these are so time consuming". AA: "Not because they are not good strategies" (K.3.25.).

5.3.3. **Continuous Assessment**

Formative assessment ("formative assess"), refers to continuous or ongoing assessment processes. Formative assessment is often informal and closely linked to the teaching and learning programme of the classroom as well as the school policy. It contrasts with summative assessment which refers to end on assessment. Formative knowledge is a term referring to building up knowledge of a student over time. To gain detailed knowledge of a student's patterns of behaviour and strengths and weaknesses a teacher needs to observe a student in a variety of situations over a
period of time. One off 'snapshots' of a student's achievements gained through decontextualised testing programmes are not conducive to an understanding of a student's literacy development. The teachers in this study frequently refer to the importance of gaining information about the 'whole picture' of a student's literacy development. Formative knowledge is gained through formative assessment processes.

The following extracts from conversations with Veronica illustrate her belief in the importance of building up formative knowledge using formative assessment practices and the impact this has upon her judgements.

VR: When we are planning we are usually looking at different outcomes that we want to achieve and so we might set a unit, to aim to reach that outcome. And so then we are looking at that work they have completed to see if they have reached the outcome. So But in between that time, we are looking at them all the time, and picking up different things and you end up with a whole picture that really tells you whether they have reached that outcome or not. (K.12.15.)

In response to a discussion relating to what constitutes failure and how teachers ascertain year level expectations, Veronica made the following comments:

VR: I think through discussion, hopefully if it was at the end of the year, you would have found a reason because you would have known the kid was weak before that and been working with them, then it is not always possible if they are really weak to catch them up even if you are working regularly, but they need to know and you know they have got a long holiday break it has got to keep going and they have got to work at home and school, they've got to have the support of the parents they've got to know how they can help, and they've got to know that they should be asking the teachers next year if there's a problem and tell them if they don't understand the stuff that's been ... well. The kids who are having troubles and they're moving on. (K.14.42.)

5.3.4. Section Summary

The information gathered in this section indicates that the three teachers selected the literacy assessment techniques based on a complex, and often interactive, number of influences. There is evidence in these data that supports the conclusion that the teachers did not select the technique on a singular relationship to the content being assessed. For example, the simplistic notion that any practitioner can select a spelling test, administer it to a student and therefore have an accurate measure of the student's spelling achievement is rejected by the evidence supplied by the participants in this study.
5.4. External Considerations

The theme 'external considerations' related to the influences that were external to the teachers' personal beliefs or the curriculum policies of the schools. This cluster of influences was either imposed on the teachers' decision making processes or accepted and incorporated into the teachers' considerations. The influences affecting teachers' judgements relating to the theme 'external considerations' consisted of the following four issues:

- 'parental influence'
- 'external requirements'
- 'expert reference'
- 'transition judgements' (Figure 16).

5.4.1. Parental Influence

The question: "Are teachers influenced in their decision making processes by parental concerns, expectations or pressures?" was considered in this study. The code 'parental influence' covered any reference to the impact that parents might have on the teachers' judgements of students' literacy. The data indicates that Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica were all conscious of a number of issues related to parental influence in education. They were acutely aware of the need to consider the language of assessment when reporting literacy development to parents and students. In discussions related to the CSF many comments were made regarding the unsuitability of the CSF language for reporting to parents. All three were aware of the fundamental importance of communicating to the students and parents in language that could be understood by the target audience. Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica modified the language of the CSF for the purpose of reporting to parents.

All three teachers responded to the apparent wishes of parents to give Year 6 students homework. Veronica commented that "parents particularly in Grade 6 get worried that high school is a huge jump and that if they don't, if they aren't given huge amounts of homework and all that sort of thing, that they will never make the grade" (K.14.62.). Alexandra indicated she was conscious of the influence of parents when she spoke of students not meeting curriculum expectations and the resulting consequences. In a conversation focussed on whether or not to require a student to repeat a year Alexandra illustrates her thinking about the issue and her perception of the parents' and students' needs regarding such a decision. Alexandra's awareness of the feelings, understandings and well being of both parent and child influence her advice regarding repeating a year level at school.
AA: If you are going to do that whether it is best to consolidate at the same school, whether it is better to consolidate at a different school, so that there is not a branding of the failure aspect. We are starting to talk in terms, I know with a couple of kids, especially ESL background, in terms of three years at or within the 5/6 unit, or three years within the 3/4 unit. So it is not necessarily seen as you would do one year at grade 3 and one year at grade 4 and you are a failure if you don't do it that way. That's a lot of educational shifting for parents to do though and often the culture or whatever, doesn't make that an option. You know the parents see that as my kid's a failure and is hopeless because it's taking them longer than the others. I would be the strongest advocate for not putting the kids into the system until they are really well and truly ready. So holding them back at the start if anything. If there is ever a dilemma of my child's 5 and a bit, shall I send them or shall I not, I wouldn't. Well it depends on the individual, but my immediate reaction would be really consider that once they get into the system do you want them to be older, more confident, more skilled, or do you want them to take the risk, and be a risk, and it may well work out quite well ... (K.5.39.)

5.4.2. External Requirements

An interesting discovery was a group of influences that clustered around the concept of externally required considerations. This group of influences on teachers' judgements consisted of the following codes:

- 'external require' - external requirements
- 'csf' - Curriculum and Standards Framework (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995)
- 'policy doc' - policy documents
- 'central policy'
- 'dse courses' - Directorate of School Education (Victoria) courses of study,
- 'english profile'
- 'accountability'
- 'lap' - Learning Assessment Project (Victoria).

All of these influences had the common feature of being imposed from outside the classroom context. The 'csf' refers to the document Curriculum and Standards Framework (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995). This document had a powerful influence on teachers' literacy judgement making practices. However, this was not reflected in the school documentation of 1995. The CSF document was trialled in 1994 and released to schools in 1995. This may well explain why reference to the CSF is not to be found in the school documents at this time. Most schools in Victoria work on a three year curriculum cycle and a three year School Charter strategic planning process. Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica all spoke in terms of the influence of the CSF on their classroom practices. Georgina reports the possible
conflict of interests between the imposition of the CSF and the existing curriculum practices within her school.

If you're not strong enough to say to the admin and the people who are saying change this, to have their little blocks of science and technology and SOSE, um if you aren't strong enough then it will be detrimental. But if you can say, that this unit has a technology and science focus but our next unit has got a SOSE focus and we will cover the 8 key learning areas across the 2 years then that's fine. It'll work. I think it works here. (K.20.43.)

Adapting to change involved the teachers in evaluating the new curriculum directives and incorporating such changes into their classroom routines. The DoE Directive Executive Memorandum No. 96/021 (Appendix U) required schools in the 1996 Annual Report to assess and report on students' progress in terms of the CSF levels in English and Mathematics. By the end of Term 2, 1997, schools were to report student achievement on the levels of the CSF in English and Mathematics to parents. The other 6 key learning areas were to be reported, in terms of the CSF Levels, by the end of 1997. This necessitated a redevelopment of reporting forms at the school level. Veronica comments that in Eastlands P. S. she is just becoming familiar with the content and structure of the CSF.

I'm a bit in transition but more towards the CSF, but I couldn't list them all off because there are so many but, I know the general sort of outcomes and the descriptors that come under them that sort of thing, an idea, and the different areas the contextual understanding and the texts and all that, .... (K.14.18.)

HF: So you have already moved from Bands in the English Profile to the lingo of the CSF or beginning too?
VR: Yeah, not completely au fait, but yeah. (K.14.19.)

Georgina, on the other hand, was very familiar with the CSF as she was completing a MEd Degree that involved studying the National English Profiles and the CSF.

HF: ... have you changed over to the CSF?
GW: We changed over to the CSF and we changed over at the beginning of the year because ...

HF: This year 1995?
GW: Yes, 1995. Sorry, because of my involvement with the National English Profile. I've been keeping the staff informed along the way the last few years and we did a big thing on viewing last year with PD (professional development) so people feel comfortable with it and at the beginning of the year we changed over. (K.18.14.)

HF: Do all your teachers use the CSF as a framework?
GW: Well they're meant to. (K.18.15.)

As part of this research, an analysis of the curriculum, reporting and policy documents collected from the three case study sites was undertaken. A full search was undertaken of all documents cross checking for any reference to DSE/DoE policy documents and
current curriculum publications known to be of use within the Victorian education system. It was interesting to note that this cross checking revealed only a few minor references to the CSF in any of the 16 publications collected. Table 16 contains the results of the ISYS search of the school curriculum documents analysed.

**Table 16  ISYS Search of the 16 School Curriculum, Policy and Reporting Documents for Reference to DoE and Curriculum Publications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Westlands P. S.</th>
<th>Eastlands P. S.</th>
<th>Northlands P. S.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Search:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Policy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publications</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELIC</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frameworks</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Profile</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Profile</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA First Steps</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National English Profile</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSE Course Advice (DoE Course Advice)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All school documents were searched for reference to any official DSE/DoE policy publications and current curriculum publications known to be of use within the Victorian education system.

The theme external requirements encompassed the investigation of the influence of school policy documents on teachers' judgements. 'Policy doc' - policy documents was the code used to signify influences on teachers' assessment gathering practices...
stemming from school policy commitments. The following comments from two of the
school principals, Colleen Hicks and Michael Wall, are illustrative of this influence.
When asked if the policy documents of the school influenced teachers' decision
making Colleen replied:

Oh, most definitely. Yes the directions of the English policy - then
they should be working on the type of activities that they should be
doing, they should definitely have an influence on them. The way they
perceive children learning and then of course the assessment of the
outcomes from the strategies and activities that they're involved in.
Yes it's paramount, school policies plus DSE policies a la being
assessed now it doesn't fuss me as much if they don't adhere to
information that is going to come out in the Course Advice. (K.8.4.)

Michael was also convinced of the influence of the schools' curriculum documents
upon the teachers because of the ownership in the creation of the documents.

It is significant for most of us, in particular the two areas that we
work very hard at in our school, Language and Maths. I'll talk about
language here. The policy we set is not the department one, or not
when it was written. We actually set it up ourselves. We've got the
people to sit down and actually talk about what do we need for our
students here. So it becomes part of their documents. So if you call it
policy, that's fine, it's stayed but, in actual fact, you can see it carried
out because they sit down and they actually work through it.
(K.25.11.)

The code 'central policy' was used when teachers made reference to policy
documents, curriculum publications or central administration directives emanating
from the Ministry of Education or the Directorate of School Education (DSE) /
Department of Education (DoE, 1996). For example, the 1994 Victorian Minister of
Education (Mr. Hayward) decided that year levels needed to be attached to each level
of the CSF. The following comments, from Georgina, are indicative of the power of
this influence on teachers' actions.

GW: Yeah, that was um a political motive" (K.23.36.),
HF: I reckon that would be a wonderful study to say that's...
GW: Who's going to do it though? (K.23.37.)
HF: It's good for your PhD.
GW: I can't, I'd lose my job because I would be commenting against what
the DSE is saying. (K.23.38.)

Georgina's comments illustrates her perception that breaching a directive from the
DSE/DoE would result in possible dismissal. It is in fact true, that in Victoria, an
employee of a government department is not permitted to openly defy a lawful
directive from the employer.
Georgina also drew the connection between an assessment strategy that is commonly used in Victorian schools and a set of policy documents (Minister of Education, Victoria, 1984, 1985) that could be considered to underpin the theoretical rationalisation of its use.

HF: ... I wonder why teachers persist with anecdotal notes. Is it the belief in the individual which would go with whole language, integrated curriculum and inquiry learning?

GW: I think it probably is and it probably comes down to all that social justice stuff too from the 80s.

GW: Ministerial Papers because that was really pushed at that time.

GW: And teachers took that on board. (K.20.57.)

Georgina's reference to the Ministerial Papers refers to a set of six documents published by the previous Labor Government in the early 1980s. The six publications covered a range of topics such as curriculum, assessment and reporting, and social justice and equity. The publications were written to support the previous Labor Government's education policy. The publications were widely referred to by schools in the mid to late 1980s.

Reference to the influence of the controversial LAP (Learning Assessment Project) in Victoria was minimal. In relation to a question about administering testing programmes Alexandra commented: "Do the LAP aaah aah, go way!" (K.5.23.). However, Veronica was more emotional in her response to the issue of testing being equated with the issue of accountability.

VR: ... people are aware of accountability. I mean we are very aware of assessment, I do look at their work and assess a lot to know how they're going, to plan. I mean you know when they talk about oh we should test them as if we never look at their work or anything they are doing is rubbish because we are looking and assessing, and in that way I guess, testing, all the time. (K.13.42.)

The participants in this study seemed to tolerate the testing programme but did not overtly comment on any significance of the LAP to their classroom practices. The lack of reference to the LAP is an interesting omission. It may reflect two issues: First, teachers must administer the LAP testing programme as it is a directive from the DoE. They are not permitted to openly defy this directive. The three teachers in this study did not support the LAP testing. On the other hand, they did not dwell on any discussion about the LAP. Secondly, the lack of reference to the LAP may simply reflect the lack of significance of this testing programme to classroom curriculum at the time of data collection. However, to ascertain the relevance of the LAP to classroom practice in Victoria is another study in itself.
5.4.3. Reference to Experts

A group of influences within the theme of external considerations centred on the notion of professional development and reference to external experts. This cluster of influences included the following codes:

- 'pd' - professional development
- 'expert reference'
- 'profess programme' - professional programme
- 'profess reading' - professional reading
- 'external reference'
- 'wa-first steps' - Western Australia Education Department's programme First Steps.

The common underlying issue in all these influences was the reference to outside expert knowledge. The participants in this study commented that the input from external sources of professional expertise was important with regard to keeping up to date with changing literacy practices. The three principals, Colleen, Mary and Michael, all commented that they felt that professional development (PD) was important for information flow into the school educational environment. Colleen's comment regarding the importance of PD at the school level was "Crucial" (K.8.21.). Michael was discussing the introduction of the new DoE Course Advice and commented:

MW: Some people would access it but generally I would say it would be useless unless you had some sort of professional development program to let's look at what this document means, is it useful, do we keep it together, all in one. I mean that's how we started off initially talking about the document or the documents, here they are, do we keep them all in here, should we split them up into levels.

MW: What do we do? So there's that initial point of access, what it means. I do believe there are a couple of things that have happened State-wide with the current Directorate that are going to have major impact on teachers.

HF: Yes.

MW: And I'm very concerned about those. (K.24.15.)

Michael also commented on the new management arrangements for professional development and how he felt this had increased the effectiveness of the programmes chosen.

MW: I tell you what the best thing that has ever happened to us right now is giving us the freedom, meaning all of us the teachers and myself, the freedom and the funding for it. It's the best thing that ever happened.

HF: The global budget ...

MW: The global budget by giving us $250, $240 per teacher.Apart from years ago, we used to get a day per teacher in terms of saying, OK, it's part of their professional development but it never happened because we used to use it as emergency teaching and so on.
MW: Now with the curriculum days being set aside and we have this funding, I walk up to my teachers and I say to them, look, it is your freedom that you have, you come and tell me how you want to spend this day on professional development, in a sense, where it's going to benefit us as much as possible meaning our school. But if you want to do it professionally for yourself, go ahead and do it as well because in the end that's going to help us in some way. So, yes it is the best thing that's happened.

HF: So professional development is very influential?

MW: Very, very, very much so. (K.25.19.)

An issue that became more and more apparent as this research proceeded was the amount of time that teachers are expected to commit to out of hours professional development. The principal, Colleen Hicks, commented to this effect: "Heather, you have a staff meeting one night, they go to Uni another night, and a lot of them here this year have done the ten weeks aids [first aid] course, two [no] four of them have done the ten week ESL (English as a Second Language) course, two of them have done the ten week science and technology course, so here they are a good bunch" (K.8.27.). A teacher's commitment to the teaching profession is not 8.45am - 3.45pm as the media might have the public believe.

In her work with teachers and performance assessment, Shepard (1995) comments that "current calls for assessment-driven reform acknowledge the need for staff development but tend to underestimate the extent and depth of what is needed" (p. 42). She comments on the need for teachers to consult experts in the development process. "Teachers need the opportunity to try new instructional strategies, observe what works and what doesn't, and then talk with colleagues about both logistics and underlying rationale" (p. 43). Some teachers' questions need to be debated with specialists or experts after teachers have had some first hand experiences with the new curriculum changes. "Experts, however, include curriculum specialists and lead teachers in school districts who have a thorough understanding of the conceptual basis behind content standards and curriculum frameworks" (p. 43). Shepard concludes that teachers have an ongoing need to talk to experts.

The information in this research indicates that teachers are expected to undertake considerable professional development after school hours. Perhaps it is timely for a reconsideration of the delivery of professional development programmes in schools. Question such as the following need to be addressed: When is the best time to deliver professional development programmes? What types of programmes are most effective? Once again, issues such as these are studies for further research.
The data in the current study were analysed for specific references to experts. There was a general reference to the influence of experts on curriculum issues in schools. The question arose as to whether or not there had been specific experts who had influenced the participants' thinking regarding English language development and literacy assessment and reporting. Brian Cambourne was named as a person who had influenced the thinking of participants in this study. The principal of Northlands P. S., Michael, commented: "Well I must admit, Cambourne had a big influence on all of us [in this school] (K.25.38.). As noted previously, Georgina Whyte was undertaking a Master of Education degree in 1995. This may well have been influential in her ability to nominate a number of specific educationists. She named Brian Cambourne, Donald Graves and Heather Fehring in one conversation (K20.12). In the Initial Teacher Questionnaire Georgina also named Brian Cambourne, Donald Graves, Heather Fehring and in addition Marilyn Woolley (ITQ - PB - Q4). In a discussion referring to change and the CSF she commented: "I've internalised the change. Michael Fullan 1991" (K.23.42.).

Alexandra named both Brian Cambourne and Donald Graves as people who had influenced her views (ITQ - PB - Q4). Veronica named an Infant Mistress (equivalent to a Deputy Principal 20 years ago) from the 1970s, Donald Graves from the 1980s and Lesley Wing Jan in the 1990s (ITQ - PB - Q5).

Again, it was noteworthy that a cross check of the curriculum, policy and reporting documents collected as part of this research revealed only a small number of 'experts' mentioned in the school publications (Table 17). For example, many of the key change agents of the whole language era are not mentioned in the school documentation. Two possible reasons arise to explain this inconsistency.

i) In my experience, once school curriculum documents are written they tend to exist unchanged for five years or more. Thus it is possible for the documentation not to reflect the current leading educational thinkers.

ii) The school curriculum documents are public documents for the total school community. They are written to be understood by a broad cross section of the community. Therefore, the naming of particular theorists is not seen as appropriate as it would be in academic writing. The ideas are reflected in the curriculum documents but not the names of the original authors.
Table 17 contains the data from the ISYS search of the SCDC for named experts. The persons listed in Table 17 are a compilation of experts named by participants in the interview data; authors recognised in the literature review as acknowledged experts in the fields of literacy and language acquisition and learning; a number of Australian authors; and authors whose work underpinned some of the SCDC documentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School Documents and Number of References to 'Experts'</th>
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<td><strong>Text Search for named 'Experts'</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambourne, Brian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clay, Marie</td>
<td>Language Program (Doc 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christie, Frances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gee, James</td>
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<td>Goodman, Kenneth</td>
<td>Language Program (Doc 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodman, Yetta</td>
<td>Language Program (Doc 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graves, Donald</td>
<td>Language Program (Doc 6)</td>
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<td>Halliday, Michael</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heath / Brice-Heath, Shirley</td>
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<td>Luke, Allan</td>
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<td>Martin, Jim</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parry, Jo-anne</td>
<td>Language Program (Doc 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Walsh, Frank</td>
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<td>Wilson, Lorraine</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolley, Marilyn</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*Chapter 3, section 3.5.6.1. contains a full listing of the SCDC)
In the course of the data gathering, and as a consequence of trying to ascertain if the teachers were influenced by external experts, the following interesting conversation was recorded. This conversation raises a particular case of possible participant researcher effect. The researcher was attempting to tease out why Georgina believed there had been changes in the philosophical underpinning of certain of her literacy beliefs. In addition, the line of questioning was attempting to ascertain who had been influential in Georgina's change of attitude. The question asked was why Georgina had changed her point of view about how children learn.

GW: Because I think the research has proven that that's the way they learn best. (K.20.11.)
HF: Who, but who?

GW: Like Cambourne and Donald Graves, Heather Fehring (K.20.12.).
HF: I don't know what I'm going to do with that question now Georgina.

GW: Yes, all those people. (K.20.13.)

Although initially I was flattered as an educationist to be named by Georgina, the comment later raised some doubt in my mind as to the influence I might have had indirectly, on Georgina's responses. A number of research methodologists raise the issue of the impact of the observer's presence on the phenomenon under investigation (Birnbaum & Emig, 1991; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hamel, Dufour & Fortin, 1993; Soltis, 1990). Taft (1997) commented on the following relationship for participant observers working within group situations.

A participant observer, by definition, plays an obtrusive role in the group process. Where the role of a group member as a researcher is overt, that person's role within the group can be compromised by the other group members' awareness of that fact and the latter are likely to control their behavior in order to enhance or defend their public image. (p. 72)

In this case did Georgina modify any of her responses because she knew of my work and publications in the field of literacy assessment? It is difficult to ascertain whether this situation was influential or not, especially considering I was the researcher and the person named as influencing the participant. However, one strength of constructivist (naturalistic) inquiry and ethnographic case study methodology is prolonged engagement with participants, a factor related to the element of trustworthiness in constructivist research. During the length of time I spent in Georgina's class I was given no other indication that Georgina was in any way modifying her statements because of my presence. In this particular situation it would be necessary for another investigator to examine whether or not Georgina was modifying her views because she knew of my professional point of view.
Yet another interesting situation to emerge in relation to influences on teachers' judgements was the Western Australian programme First Steps.(5) First Steps is a comprehensive curriculum package published by the Education Department of Western Australian in 1994. It consists of a series of books outlining a developmental continuum in each of the following: reading, writing, spelling, speaking and listening. In addition, the programme has a set of teacher resource books. This material has been extensively promoted and used in Victoria. This programme was positively mentioned by all three teachers in this study as a valuable, user friendly curriculum publication. No other state or territory programme was mentioned by participants in the current study.

Alexandra's comments encapsulate the teachers' viewpoints.

AA: Well it is very specific, it is very easy to picture a child and think Oh yes they can do that or they can't do that or they do it sometimes or they do it all the time. So it is easy to pick up the pointers whereas with the CSF it gives ok an overall thing. I think the CSF is still very general, even though it says ok this outcome is displayed by X, Y and Z, I still at times want to say yeah but ok what are the skills in displaying X, Y and Z. It sort of goes to that point but it doesn't come down to the finer detail, whereas the WA First Steps does and the English Profiles did. (K.2.13.)

Alexandra made the following comments about the differences between the WA First Steps programme and the CSF document. In reference to the Outcomes described in the CSF Alexandra stated, "they are still not specific as far as I am concerned (K.2.18). She went on to comment further:

- I would prefer them to be re-written into a specific language and if that involved having more it wouldn't phase me because at the moment I think we have got, OK this is the outcome but it is still left to the teachers to say OK what is involved in reaching that outcome and you say give us behaviours that demonstrates it, but even within those behaviours it still leaves us to say what is the skills needed to exhibit that behaviour (K.2.18).

- Still within the CSF what does that mean? It says this but what does that mean? So if you are having to ask that question it is not detailed enough. But then it is only meant to be a framework so maybe that is all it is meant to be. Maybe the CSF is not meant to be giving as much detail as something like the First Steps. (K.2.18.)

ii) In reference to the WA First Steps Outcomes Alexandra stated:

- I think that it is spelt out more. (K.2.18)
5.4.4. **Transition Considerations**

An unexpected influence emerged from the data specifically relating to the fact that these three teachers were all working in Year 6 or Year 5/6 classes. The code 'trans-judgement' referred to transition judgement. In Victoria, at the end of Year 6, students leave primary school and go to a secondary school. The three teachers are all required to provide information to the secondary schools to which the students are transferring. The information is often in the form of a checklist of achievements or a written report. 'Trans-tests' referred to transition tests. All three teachers prepared their Year 6 students who were going to sit scholarship tests for private school entrance. This was in the form of a trial run of the scholarship tests in class time.

Testing was not an assessment practice favoured by any of the school communities or individual teachers in this study. However, all three teachers undertook trial runs of scholarship examinations to prepare students for the transition tests they might sit before secondary school entrance. This influence reflected professional teachers making a judgement that their students would be ill-prepared for the rigour of external examinations without some preliminary practice. The socioeconomic environment of the three school sites provides an additional explanatory reason as to why there were so many students sitting scholarship examinations for secondary school entrance, so many that it influenced all three teachers to undertake practice examinations. Two of the schools (Eastlands P. S. and Westlands P. S.) are located in what could be considered, in Melbourne, middle class inner city areas.(6) This may well have explained a parental tendency to move their children to private secondary schools. The third school (Northlands P. S.) is an outer suburban P - 12 complex. Georgina's class had the least number of students preparing for private school entrance. It is a reasonable assumption that students attending a P - 12 school would stay at the same school for their secondary education.

5.5. **Dissemination**

The requirement for disseminating literacy assessment information was articulated by participants as an influence on their judgement making processes. Three codes emerged under the dissemination influence: 'recording', 'reporting' and 'kidmap' (a computer programme recommended by the DoE Victoria, see section 5.5.3 for a more detailed explanation) (Figure 16). How the assessment data were to be recorded and reported influenced the procedures the teachers used in their classrooms. However, in 1995, Kidmap was not an influential feature on teachers' assessment and reporting practices.
5.5.1. Recording

Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica use multiple recording methods within their classrooms. The use of portfolios has already been discussed in section 5.3.1.2. Other methods used by these teachers are discussed in this section. Alexandra records by remembering and using class checklists of various sources of information, as for example, a class checklist of the different genres of writing the students have tackled.

It would be both. It would be both. There would be some I keep in my head, alright and some I would jot down probably against a class list, because that makes, I find it easier to jot it down against a class list than having a particular book or something that you have to go flicking through pages for, and I write more succinctly by doing that. (K.2.23.)

Veronica uses a student file to record work for report writing and parental interviews.

Yeah, well in the reports and the interviews um I look at their work they have handed in and all my records and their work, and I put together the picture from that, related to their oral language, their written, their reading the different maths areas. (K.14.37.)

She also uses her curriculum programme and evaluation book to record information that she uses later to facilitate her judgement making processes. My observations document the extensive nature of the recorded information Veronica collects.

HF: Today's observation in Veronica's classroom consisted of reading through what Veronica calls her curriculum programme and evaluation book. In the back of Veronica's book is a section called Evaluation obviously and there are many, many entries in this book. Page by page separate entries on children's names and their writing, read and re-tell, literature discussions, spelling tests, diary writing, report writing in relation to their trials, comprehension assessment, home studies book, and then at the back of Veronica's evaluation book there is an anecdotal note section on which she has one page on each child with date of entry with significant observations that she wants to remind herself about. (K.10.2)

Georgina records assessment information by requiring the students to keep an evaluation book of their own work. She also keeps her own student files to record work for report writing and parental interviews.

5.5.2. Reporting

The issue of reporting student achievement in Victorian schools in 1995 was under going a great deal of change. For ten to fifteen years Victorian schools have had a considerable amount of school-based autonomy. Schools had designed their own reports based on their school curriculum policy documents. With the introduction of the CSF in 1995 (the draft CSF was distributed to schools in Victoria in 1994) reporting procedures started to change. In 1995 Victorian schools had begun the
process of redesigning their student reports to reflect the then informal DSE
instructions to use the CSF Levels in the reporting of student achievement. (Refer to
Appendix U for a copy of the official Directorate of School Education, Victoria,
Executive Memorandum No. 96/021: Implementation of the Curriculum and
Standards Framework. This was the formal directive issued in 1996.)

All three schools in the current study were in a state of transition with respect to their
reporting to parents procedures. In the discussions held with Alexandra, Veronica and
Georgina it became evident that the DoE Directive regarding the compulsion to report
using the Levels of the CSF influenced the teachers' literacy judgement decisions.
When Veronica was asked if Eastlands P. S. used the CSF Levels on the students'
report forms she replied:

   No, no although we work within level 4 because that's the
   grade 5/6 level, um we don't actually put that on to the report
   form. But then the report form was done before we were into
   the CSF enough to write a report form based on the CSF.
   (K.12.11.)

Veronica was unsure if Eastlands would change their old practices and place the CSF
Levels on the students' report forms in the future. The reason Veronica gave for not
undertaking the practice suggested by the DoE was "because it is jargon for teachers.
It would be far too much for a lot of parents" (K.12.12.). Appendix T contains an
example of a student's English report from Eastlands P. S. in 1995.

In Alexandra's school a similar situation existed. The reporting procedure did not
reflect the outcomes-based orientation of the CSF. Alexandra was still writing student
reports using the existing format. The school did not report in terms of the expected
Year 5/6 CSF Level 4 of achievement, although it was quite clear the teachers at
Westlands P. S. were addressing the assessment and reporting changes that were
resulting from the implementation of the CSF. The 1995 student reports had not been
redesigned to reflect these changes. Appendix T contains an example of a student's
English report from Westlands P. S. in 1995.

Of the three teachers Georgina was the most familiar with the structure and content of
the CSF because of her studies of the National English Profiles. When Georgina was
asked if she reported in terms of the CSF to parents she replied, "Yep. We changed
our reports last year to be language (language reports) and to write everything in there,
and so I used the terminology, the more parent-friendly terminology in the CSF. Not
the outcomes because they're too jargonistic for people to understand" (K.23.120).
The teachers at Northlands P. S. did not use the CSF Levels in the student report
forms. Georgina is quick to comment "Oh no! I don't say your child is operating on
Level 4" (K.23.121). However, Georgina does put a copy of the Level 4 Outcomes inside her students' Evaluation Books. Appendix T contains an example of a student's Language report from Northlands P. S. in 1995.

In 1995 the staff of the three schools involved in this study were all working on familiarising themselves with the CSF documents. They were attempting to address the ramifications of the implementation of the CSF Levels. However, at this very early stage in the familiarisation process all three teachers commented on the jargonistic language used in the 1995 CSF. The inappropriateness of this language was influencing the teachers' use of the CSF in the reporting process. They had all made a decision not to report in terms of the CSF Levels at this early stage in the familiarisation process.

5.5.3 Kidmap

In the Victorian context, the DSE/DoE introduced a computer programme called 'Kidmap' to assist teachers to record and report assessment information in school. This programme comes already loaded with the CSF material. However, the system requires special hardware to run the programme, hardware that some schools did not have in 1995. The Kidmap programme requires teachers to have special training to set up the database. In addition, the programme is very labour intensive in terms of i) setting up, and ii) entering the individual students' results into the programme. Alexandra's response to a question about the influence of Kidmap in her school was simply, "I don't know. I am not familiar with it. We haven't addressed it here at all" (K.2.19.). The programme was not operating in Eastlands in 1995. The principal of Northlands confirmed that he had a teacher familiarising herself with the working of the software but that it was not in general operation in his school in 1995.

5.6. Peer Power

The influence of peers or 'significant others' on the judgement making processes of a teacher emerged from the data. This influence consisted of a collection of three groups of features:

Principal Leadership
- 'principal-leader'
- 'principal respon' - principal-responsibility

Significant Peers
- 'internal mentor'
• 'colleague info' - colleague information
• 'peer influ (i)' - peer influence - teacher

Moderation Process
• 'moderation' (Figure 16).

This collection of influences was internal to the school. 'Peer power' appropriately encompasses the main attributes of this influence.

5.6.1. Principal Leadership

In the first phase of data reduction the code of 'principal influence' emerged. However, during the member checking stage it became obvious that this generic code was too broad to indicate a significant difference in the influence ascribed to principals. The code 'principal-leader' refers to the influence, as perceived by the teachers, that the principal has as a curriculum leader in the school. However, Alexandra, Georgina, and Veronica implied and explicitly stated there are some decisions a principal has to undertake by right of his or her authority as a principal. This influence was perceived as the principal's responsibility and coded 'principal respon'. The quality of the influence of a principal as a recognised curriculum leader is illustrated in these extracts from interviews with two of the principals, Colleen Hicks and Mary Chivas. The first extract is from a conversation with Colleen where we were discussing the curriculum organisation of the school. The extract illustrates the powerful influence of the principal as a curriculum leader in the school.

CH: ... Of course, its very much tied in with our approach in integrated curriculum of which we got too far away from I believe um in a manner in which we carried out our specialist programs here, but next year we brought them back tighter, because I see curriculum getting too fragmented and really it worried me that um sure that everybody was doing a top job but it wasn't really learning was still occurring in boxes and really it wasn't integrated. (K.8.5.)

The principal of Westlands P. S., Mary indicates her strengths as a curriculum leader in the school in this following extract with respect to the influence of the principal in a school.

MC: Another huge influence. We've learnt about that. So, yes, from the Principal having a vision and being the benign autocrat and seeing the direction for the school, and in the end that's what you bloody well get paid for anyway.

HF: Yeah.

MC: You want to set up a system where teachers do reflect on their practice, work together with their colleagues to sift and sort through that, then come in with something that fits in with:

a) what is perceived as a school need, you know, a P to 6 approach.
MC: How can this whole school approach be inclusive of what I can bring as an individual and I think that’s the shift and shaking in good curriculum planning and vision. So there’s the influence set by the leadership. (K.24.7.)

5.6.2. Significant Peers

The influence of significant peers emerged from the data as an issue affecting how teachers made their literacy judgements. ‘Significant Peers’ consisted of a cluster of three influences: internal mentor, colleague information and peer influence (teacher). There appear to be fine distinctions amongst these three influences. ‘Internal mentor’ was the code used to distinguish the influence of significant peers in the school. An internal mentor was a teacher within the school who was seen to be a respected curriculum leader. This person was perceived to influence teachers in the school by acknowledged expertise and leadership qualities. Mary Chivas speaks of the influence of an internal mentor within her school in the following extract.

Rather than talk in general terms, I’d want to talk in terms of what I think happens here and what’s happened to teachers here, and I think there have been a number of influences about what they do, why they do it and how they do it and I think there are influences and I think the influences, fall into these categories. a) People who come in and show leadership in that area and give them things to think about and we had such a person here who greatly influenced the direction of literacy, how they, how they would plan, what they would implement and then how they would make judgements of kids and follow in that cycle um pattern, and I think you know the person I’m talking about and that was Jane Wellington. (K.24.5.)

Collegiate influence was acknowledged by both Veronica and Georgina in their working relations with fellow teachers. It is worth noting that Eastlands P. S. has a semi open planned school structure. The four teachers in the Year 5 and 6 classrooms work as a unit. Two teachers work side by side in an open area, a walk way divides the unit, and on the other side two teachers work side by side. Georgina works in a two-teacher portable unit. Working in proximity to each other can affect the relation of two teachers. This may, or may not, be a respected professional influence as indicated in the internal mentor influence or the ‘peer influ (t)’ (peer influence - teacher). Alexandra worked in an environment where every teacher had a separate classroom. However, she also made comments that were interpreted as indicating the influence of colleagues on her decision making judgements.

The following extract from Veronica indicates the influence perceived to exist from two colleagues sharing planning knowledge.
HF: So you would use once again the CSF - the framework of the CSF to say in reading these are the sorts of things that the children should be managing. Are they?

VR: And the teacher I plan with, we look through every so often in our planning, the CSF, the outcomes, the sort of things that we are working towards. It might be newspaper articles, their opinion, the fact of whether they think it is fact or fiction, whether they agree with what's in it so they are reading, they are analysing, then they are presenting their point of view. It might be written, it might be oral, it might be both. So um then you might look at another outcome and its um working in a discussion way, but it might be putting their point of view, or being persuasive, so then you might say oh well that's covered the JSC (Junior School Council) meeting let's look at that.

(K.12.23.)

'Peer Influence (teacher)' was an influence characterised by a simple relationship whereby one teacher acting as a role model influences another teacher's behaviour. The relationship consists of one teacher observing a fellow teacher's teaching and learning strategies and being influenced by these observations. This extract from an interview with Georgina illustrates the influence of a respected peer upon another peer.

I know that when Karen started here 2 years ago, she wasn't using the whole language type approach almost because she hadn't been using the .... She spent a long time at the other end of the portable with me and now she does, she uses the whole language approach because she's seen how it works.

(K.20.38.)

5.6.3. Moderation Process

'Moderation' was the code used to identify discourse where teachers commented that they talked to other teachers to check, confirm or disconfirm their literacy judgements. Moderation, in essence, is a group negotiated agreement process. The process of moderation can be undertaken at a school level or at a system level. Essentially the purpose of moderation is to ensure comparability of assessment judgements, and standards, between teachers and across schools. Moderation can facilitate issues concerning inter-rater reliability. Individual schools take responsibility for within school moderation. For certification purposes educational authorities are responsible for moderation processes.

The following two extracts, taken from interviews with Georgina and Alexandra, illustrate the features of the within school moderation process. Georgina identifies the quality of information she would require for the moderation process to be effective.

HF: Say you come in to my class. Say I am teaching at Wilmont North and you came into my class and I ask you to moderate, so we're going to sit down and moderate on let's use writing again because it is easier, concrete example to look at. What would you want to know about my
students in order to be more accurate? When we are moderating on a piece of work.

GW: What the lead up to that work had been. Like if you were doing, we have just written procedural text for how to make a hot air balloon. So I would want to know what work you've done before hand on how to write a procedural text or was it just something cold that they'd done that day. Um. What that kid had been doing before hand. (K.23.11.)

Alexandra raises the issue of sharing information between teachers and the effect this has on literacy judgements.

AA: Yeah although that is really just like a personal moderation.
HF: You're moderating yourself.
AA: Yeah, yeah not moderating against... although there is a certain degree of that too in unit meetings through the year that you are talking with other teachers at your level about what you are doing, and how you are doing it and where the kids are sitting. So there is a lot of gee there's a lot of incidental stuff in evaluation and pupil assessment heaps and heaps of it. Because I was thinking what you were saying there, they are my four main things but throughout the year I am also thinking, ok when I want to write the reports I will really want to know how this child sits with their listening for instance. Ok so constantly you are thinking about ok which are the kids that follow directions well and are always on task, which are the kids you are always having to remind about what they are doing. Which are the kids who ask the question you have just been talking about. So all that is contributing to their listening. Which are the kids who in class meetings, who follow the discussion, who pick up on another child's point of view and all that. So that's happening all the time and that's not often written down. Sometimes I'll sit and I'll make notes about that, but a lot of that is head work. (K.2.30.)

The *Assessing and Reporting Support Material: Overview* (Department of Education, Victoria, 1996a) document acknowledges that teachers will need to engage in the process of moderation for effective interpretation of the CSF.

Valid and reliable judgements of student achievement require teachers to have a common interpretation of the CSF and the levels of learning described by each learning outcome. The development of a common interpretation requires teachers to discuss and share their views within schools, among groups of schools and across the profession. (p. 21)

What was apparent in this study was that the CSF moderation that was occurring was of an informal nature. Individual teachers were sharing with each other, but not on an across the school basis. The Department of Education, Victoria (1996a) document quoted above implies a more formal moderation process. Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica did not make any reference to Department of Education, Victoria initiated moderation professional development programmes being organised in, or between, schools.
5.7. Standards

The influence of perceived student standards in the judgement making processes of a teacher emerged from the data. This influence consisted of two clusters with four features:

- 'expectations'

Aspects of Judgement
- 'judgement-criteria'
- 'judgement-theory'
- 'judgement-training'

All three teachers had accumulated knowledge of the expected literacy standards they believed the students in their respective classes should achieve. The standards each teacher held were based upon three aspects of judgement. Judgement-criteria referred to statements teachers made about benchmarks, developmental continua or literacy criteria they used to make their judgements about students' growth, success or achievement in literacy. For example, the CSF. Judgement-theory was the code used to mark reference to the theoretical constructs underlying the choice of assessment techniques, strategies or methods. Judgement-training was the code identifying any reference participants made to the training they had attended to assist them to make informed literacy judgements.

The following extracts from interviews with Georgina illustrate a combination of all the components of the standards theme. She uses a combination of her accumulated experiential expectations for her students, plus a theoretical basis and criteria for her judgements. For example, in response to the question: "where do you select the criteria you use to judge students' reading achievement?" Georgina replied,

Some of it comes from the CSF outcomes when they read a variety of genre and others come from my expectation that they should be reading widely and I need to be able to back that up when I write their reports. Because if I want to write the report that Maria needs to move on from Goosebumps because she has only read Goosebumps for the last 6 months, I need to be able to back that up. Rather than just make a sweeping statement with no evidence. I would never do that. (K.18.57.)

With respect to how she informs parents of their children's levels of achievement Georgina replied:

I'd be positive about what the child could do, ... Even though I've got like a general expectation for Grade 6, what the kids are doing here, I've got different expectations for every kid in that classroom. My really bright ones I extend as far as I can and so
The choice of literacy assessment techniques is influenced by the theory that each teacher philosophically ascribes to regarding the judgement making process. When asked how she decided to use one particular technique rather than another Alexandra commented: "Some are more time efficient in my opinion. Some are more pertinent to the objective of the assessment. ... So it depends on what I want to know as to what I use" (K.4.21.).

Alexandra's length of teaching service has meant that she has worked with the English Profiles, the CSF and the Western Australian First Steps. All of these documents pertaining to literacy standards now influence her judgemental expectations. Her following comments indicate a combination of her experiential expectations and the documented judgemental criteria she refers to in the literacy assessment process.

... they relate closely to all the other reading and all the other training and courses I have done, so it is not like I could parrot off any of them, but my knowledge has grown to the point of well I think I have got it basically in my head the sort of things I expect. Now when I want to go and put them down on to paper for the reports I will refer back to the profiles, or I will refer to the CSF or I will refer to the Western Australia First Steps. (K.2.12.)

5.8. Political Context

Political context was a theme that emerged from the iterative analysis that occurred following the peer review considerations. The code 'political climate' referred to a macro level influence of the prevailing political climate. The current political philosophy of the party in government is having very substantial influences over the day to day practices in Victorian schools. The initial coding had taken into consideration the micro level influences on teachers' literacy judgements. However, as a result of a peer reviewer's suggestion that the macro political climate seemed to be a factor influencing the teachers' judgements this suggestion was taken into consideration in the second round of analysis. Comments referring to cultural change, climate of control and the economic rationalist policies of the incumbent government were taken into consideration as a big picture change affecting teachers' judgements.
5.9. **Summary: Main Findings**

All the data gathered in this study indicated that the three teachers use multiple sources of information to make their decisions. They also use a diverse selection of types of information to produce a rich base of knowledge on which to make their literacy judgements. All three are deeply influenced in their belief in whole language, integrated curriculum and the inquiry approach to learning. Such philosophical beliefs have dominated the Victorian educational environment for over 20 years. Alexandra, Veronica and Georgina's decisions to choose an assessment technique is a complex integration of influences involving the curriculum content being assessed, the contextual setting of the educational environment, the internalised reflective knowledge of each teacher, knowledge of individual students, cost in terms of time, efficiency and monetary expense of the techniques available, the influential relationships that exist between significant peers and school leaders, and the external pressure exerted upon teachers to conform to the existing political directives from the employing authority as well as the macro level influences of the broader political climate.

Many of these influences have ramifications for preservice and postservice training of teachers. Understanding the power of these influences also has ramifications for the development of school policy documents, school organisation, classroom structures as well as curriculum content and delivery. These issues will be addressed in the final chapter which will also include the study conclusions and recommendations for further research.
NOTES

1. DART refers to the Developmental Assessment Resource for Teachers. It was produced by The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in 1994/97. DART English Middle Primary (Levels 1 - 4 English Profiles) costs $195 for a complete package to test ten students. DART English Upper Primary/Junior Secondary costs $295 for a complete package to test 30 students (ACER published costs in 1997).

2. APT - Administrative and Planning Time
Teachers employed by the Department of Education Victoria are awarded two hours a week time release for administrative and planning preparation.

3. It is noteworthy that the term assessment has undergone a conceptual change of meaning in Australia since the early 1990s. Assessment now refers to the process of gathering information about learners and about making value judgements about the significance of the information collected. Prior to this, the term assessment was used to refer to gathering information, and evaluation was used for the making of value judgements about the information. In Australia the terms assessment and reporting are now linked as a unit whereas previously the three terms, assessment, evaluation and reporting, were tied together. The following two documents are typical of current publication titles:

   i) Australian Literacy Federation Position Paper No. 2: Assessment and Reporting in English Language and Literacy. Commonground. The Newsletter of the Australian Literacy Federation, No 3, November 1995


4. The CSF document is a guideline for Victorian teachers to use when planning curriculum. It must also be used for assessment and reporting purposes. According to the 1996 DoE Victoria Executive Memorandum No. 96/021 'Implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Framework' all teachers in government schools in Victoria must rate their students in accordance with the seven levels of achievement in the CSF (Board of Studies Victoria, 1995). A draft version of the Curriculum and Standards Framework document was released in 1994, then the final version was distributed to Victorian schools in 1995. In 1995 Victorian teachers were becoming familiar with the CSF document. They were exploring the ramifications of its introduction on curriculum implementation and assessment and reporting practices in the classroom.

5. 'wa-first steps'- Western Australia First Steps programme (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994a; Education Department of Western Australia, 1994b; Education Department of Western Australia, 1994c; Education Department of Western Australia, 1994d)

6. The SLN (Students with Special Learning Needs) Index is issued by the Department of Education Victoria to each school on the basis of the information supplied by the schools. The SLN Index for each of the three case study schools is as follows:

   Eastlands P. S. 1995/6 - 0.4809
   Westlands P. S. 1995/6 - 0.5374
   Northlands P. S. 1995/6 - 0.33

   The six indicators that make up the SLN Index for 1998 and their weightings are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>proportion of students receiving EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) or Aistudy;</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proportion of students who transfer into the school other than at the beginning of the year;</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proportion of students who are Koorie (of Aboriginal descent);</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proportion of students who mainly speak a language other than English at home;</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>measure of family status; and</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>measure of occupational status.</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   (Department of Education, Victoria, 1997, p. sl.2)

The School Global Budget was implemented in 1995 (Directorate of School Education, Victoria, 1995b, 1995c). The SLN Index was introduced in 1995/96 due to a restructuring of the Commonwealth funding arrangements. In 1995/96 the first 4 indicators were used to determine the SLN Index. However, in 1997 Family Structure and Occupational Status were incorporated into the SLN Index (Directorate of School Education, Victoria, 1995c).
CHAPTER 6.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: THE INFLUENCES ON TEACHERS' JUDGEMENTS OF STUDENTS' LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the conclusions drawn from the data in this thesis. The chapter revisits the main focus of the thesis, summarises the main findings, presents the conclusions and makes recommendations pertinent to educators in the primary, post primary (secondary) and tertiary sectors. Critical analysis of the perceived limitations of the current research and suggestions for further studies conclude this chapter.

To recapitulate, in the introductory chapter of this thesis the main focus of the study was outlined as an investigation of the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development. Understanding the influences on teachers' judgements enriches the field of research into literacies and related areas. Initially the investigation concentrated on examining the influences on teachers' choices of literacy assessment strategies. However, as the investigation unfolded and patterns and trends emerged it became evident that a narrow focus on assessment strategies would be insufficient to address the main research question. In order to provide insights into the complex interplay of influences on teachers' decision making processes, a much broader perspective was required. Consequently, the focus broadened to encompass areas of both school policy and system curriculum directives, and the point of view of other key participants, namely the three school principals and a small number of students.

To examine, in detail, the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development three case studies have been presented in this study. The choice of case study methodology to document the influences on teachers' judgements has been highlighted in chapters 2 and 3. Much of the limited research on teacher judgement has been quantitative studies correlating the results of teachers' judgements with another quantitative measure of students' academic success. In the current study the focus of each case study was the voice of the individual teacher. However, the analysis of the data collected was undertaken at both the individual teacher and the collective group level. While the experiences of each individual were unique, a number of the
themes that emerged from the study were common to the collective. The unique and common themes provide the basis for the summary of the conclusions that follows.

6.2. Summary of Major Findings

The major findings of this study are interpreted as spheres of influence. Seven major spheres emerged to describe the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development, and each major sphere consisted of several distinguishable features. The teacher is situated at the centre, as it is the teacher's point of view that is reflected in the diagram. The significance of the influences on each individual varies. Figure 17 is a diagrammatical representation of the interconnected themes that represent the major spheres of influence.

![Macro Political Context Diagram](image)

**Figure 17.** Diagrammatical representation of the spheres of influence on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.
The major spheres of influence are summarised in Table 18.

**Table 18  Influences on Teachers' Judgements of Students' Literacy Development that Emerged from the Current Research Study**

- **Internalised Reflective Knowledge**: a complex integration of experience, tacit knowledge/intuition, common sense, accumulated knowledge, professional competence; and an underlying theoretical philosophy of language learning that the individuals use as a conceptual base for their assessment practices.

- **Assessment Strategy Selection**: specific assessment strategies used to gather data selected on the basis of philosophical compatibility, cost efficiency and time effectiveness.

- **External Considerations**: external professional considerations related to the influence that experts and professional development programmes have had on teachers' thinking; how teachers respond to DoE policy directives; the impact of individual school policies and curriculum documents on classroom practices and the significance of school charters on teachers' work routines.

- **Dissemination**: the reporting of literacy achievement to the educational community.

- **Peer Power**: the impact of significant peers upon individual teachers and the power of the leadership demonstrated by school principals

- **Standards/Expectations**: the expectations underlying literacy standards and the judgement criteria determining such standards.

- **Macro Political Context**: the changing macro political context and the ramifications of policy changes at both the State and Federal level.
6.3 Conclusions Related to the Major Findings

The seven major spheres of influence indicated by the data in this research study are encapsulated in two dimensions of interacting relationships. There is a powerful intra personal dimension unique to each of the participating teachers in this study. In addition, there is an ecology of context dimension that encompasses the external influences upon the teacher's judgemental decision making processes. The ecology of context dimension refers to the integration of influences that occurs in the teachers' immediate surroundings. The following section contains a presentation of the conclusions.

6.3.1. The Intra Personal Dimension

The intra personal dimension encompasses the themes that are within the cognitive domain of each individual, such as the internalised reflective knowledge of each individual built up from experiential interaction in educational environments; the intricate interplay of tacit knowledge or intuition, teacher judgement and professional knowledge; and the articulatory practices that require teachers to explicate their professional judgements, reconstructing them into spoken language. The elements of the intra personal dimension are discussed in the next section.

6.3.1.1. Internalised Reflective Knowledge

Internalised reflective knowledge emerged as a powerful influence on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development. This influence consisted of many aspects as illustrated in Figure 16 in chapter 5. The significance of the classifications of this influence was that the elements were a complex integration of features unique to each participant, although common patterns emerged across participants and these patterns may be common to other teachers. The patterns that emerged were related to each participant's knowledge of the field of literacy assessment. A comment by Veronica, in relation to a discussion we had about her student evaluation book, highlights the essence of this influence: "it makes me realise that when I look at it I have so much in here [pointing to her head] which I am sure is true of many teachers" (K.10.3). The reality of internal reflective thinking is demonstrated when teachers articulate their knowledge. The power of this influence lay in the internalised theoretical principles of language learning that the teachers embraced. The label 'Internalised Reflective Knowledge' emerged as it became important to distinguish it from the concepts of 'tacit knowledge' and 'intuition'.


The literature review identified a number of writers who describe tacit knowledge as an important component of teachers' judgement making ability (Cambourne & Turbill, 1994; Elbaz, 1981; Hargreaves, 1977; Shulman, 1987). The unconscious and implicit nature of tacit knowledge has meant that it has not been investigated in relation to its component elements. However, the research in this study has revealed an influence on teachers' judgemental processes that is identifiable by a complex integration and interplay of features that are internal to the individual but that can be articulated and identified as teacher knowledge. Figure 16 in chapter 5 is an illustration of the features that distinguish this influence on teachers' judgements. Although such features are internalised, when teachers were encouraged to discuss their literacy assessment procedures and beliefs, they were able to articulate many of the features of this influence on their judgement making processes. There were two fundamental properties to all three teachers' internalised reflective knowledge: the defining qualities of their concept of literacies and the philosophical theory of literacy learning that underpinned the teachers' curriculum planning. These two considerations were building blocks on which the teachers based their judgemental decisions.

6.3.1.1.1. The Conceptualisation of Literacy: A Basic Building Block
Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica's judgemental processes are closely tied to their articulated understanding of the nature of literacy. All three teachers in this study define literacy as a complex integration of speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and critical thinking skills. Alexandra has a more unitary concept of literacy using the terms reading, writing, speaking and listening (ITQ - PB - Q1). Georgina includes viewing, thinking and the notions of critical analysis, communication, and the importance of across curriculum literacies as ongoing processes (ITQ - PB - Q1). Veronica's concept of literacy encompasses "the ability to use and understand language. ... the ability to be able to speak clearly, to listen to and understand what someone else is saying, and to be able to appraise what is said" (ITQ - PB Q1). She emphasises comprehension, writing and being able to write for many purposes, viewing and critical analysis. However, Veronica adds the comment: "but I feel that the written word is a bigger basis for literacy in primary schools" (ITQ - PB - Q1).

All three teachers articulate what is currently a most popular 1990s usage of the concept literacy. Their use of the term literacy can be placed in context by revisiting the discussion in the literature review chapter 2 regarding the changing nature of literacy and the use of the term literacies, and the definitions of literacies outlined in the historical collection itemised in Appendix A. In addition, it is noteworthy that in the document called Literacy for All: The Challenge for Australian Schools (Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1998) which is the 1998 Commonwealth Literacy Policies for Australian Schools, the following definition is
acknowledged as the widely used definition of literacy in Australia in recent years. "Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing. (DEET, 1991, p. 5)" (p. 7).

The teachers' assessment practices reflect their understanding of what constitutes literacy. As recorded in chapter 5 the acknowledgement by Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica of computer literacy and viewing as components of the concept literacy are very recent additions to the debate regarding literacy. The notion of multiple literacies, a phenomenon written about extensively in the 1990s (Gee, 1991; Lankshear, Gee, Knobel & Searle, 1997; Luke & Gilbert, 1993; The New London Group, 1996) is not explicitly referred to by the participants in this study. However, as demonstrated in this thesis, the teachers work within a context focussed on school literacy. School literacy is a sub-set of multiple literacies and needs to be understood and investigated in this light.

In chapter 5, section 5.2.4.1 (K.4.8 - 4.10) Alexandra very strongly defended her position that integrated learning, inquiry based curriculum and the importance of context to children's learning influenced her decision of how to assess. Both Georgina and Veronica hold equally strong beliefs that their assessment practices must reflect their beliefs about what is literacy and how children learn. Accordingly, they plan teaching and learning programmes that incorporate experiences facilitating the development of these components of literacy. Consequently, they also plan assessment and reporting strategies that cover the range of literacy attributes within such a definition and in what have been commonly referred to as authentic contexts (Appendix E). The close tie between integrated curriculum and literacy learning activities reported by the teachers illustrates this connection. The literacy assessment strategies chosen by Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica, documented in chapter 4 and 5, reflect formative practices, criterion based achievement and descriptive reporting procedures.

In the literature reviewed for this thesis it was not uncommon to find writers describing literacy as an integration of many facets of language learning. However, when they report achievements in literacy they report the results of a reading or writing test. The popular media are involved in this practice as well. Many headlines and articles can be found in the press, reporting so called literacy standards (Appendix I). However, they are in many cases articles regarding the results of single reading tests. The substantial works of Green et al. (1994a, 1994b, 1997) document much of this history of the reporting of literacy standards. This issue of the controversy over
what is termed literacies and what is tested and measured has been commented on for many decades and was so clearly articulated over 20 years ago in the British report *A Language for Life* (Bullock, 1975).

6.3.1.1.2. **Theoretical Models of Language Learning: A Second Building Block**

The three case study teachers articulated strong philosophical beliefs in models of English language learning emanating from the Psycho-cognitive era (1970s and 1980s) described in section 2.3.2. in chapter 2. More specifically, the theoretical stance taken by all three case study teachers reflects the view published under the label of the psycholinguistic process of language acquisition. Under this umbrella is the whole language philosophy to the teaching and learning of the English language. The teachers' views reflected this approach. Cross checking the teachers' beliefs with the stated beliefs in the respective school policy documents illustrated common underlying philosophies. Triangulating the data of the literacy assessment strategies used in the classrooms of the three teachers with literacy assessment strategies researched in the literature as encompassing psycholinguistic principles also produced a common picture. There was an internal consistency amongst the articulated beliefs of the teachers, the stated school policy documents, the teaching and learning activities observed during the observation sessions and the analysis of the interview data.

However, one inconsistency was observed in the interview data and the school policy documents: the teachers' articulated beliefs that reflected a knowledge of the genre school of literacy acquisition. The 'genre school' is commonly ascribed to the socio-cultural era of the late 1980s (described in section 2.3.3., chapter 2). This era encompasses the systematic functional grammar of Halliday, the genre school, the influence of the critical theorists and the emergent influence in the 1990s of multiple literacies. When cross checking the teachers' beliefs with the policy documents of the schools no substantial reference could be identified in the documents to the theoretical base of the teachers' views (Table 17, chapter 5). It would seem that the teachers' knowledge base was reflecting, and they were incorporating into their daily teaching practices, theoretical beliefs from the socio-cultural understanding of literacy acquisition and literacy learning. The policy documents of the respective schools had not been rewritten to incorporate such changes. Some curriculum documents dated back several years and the School Charter documents work on a three year cycle. There was a developmental time lag between the teachers' classroom practices and the official documentation of the schools' curriculum policies. The interesting situation was that the three teachers were changing their classroom practices to incorporate the 1990s philosophy that had emanated from the Sydney University (Australia) based genre school of theorists. However, teachers
do not have the luxury of the academic world. The academic world is able to hypothesise and advocate change with regard to the teaching and assessment of literacy less constrained by the shackles of bureaucracy. Teachers must work within the concept of a 'school literacy' that encompasses quite different groups of educational stakeholders. The power and expectations of these influential groups have also been demonstrated in this research. The influence identified as 'Macro Political Context' illustrates just one of the influences that impinge on teachers' decision making.

Another interesting feature, in relation to the influence of the teachers' underlying theoretical principles upon their literacy judgements, is the situation that has arisen in Victoria of the Learning Assessment Project (LAP) testing programme. The state wide testing programme is based on different theoretical literacy and learning principles to the language and learning and assessment philosophies of the teachers and of the curriculum policies of the case study schools in this research. As reported in this study many Victorian teachers have refused to be involved in the LAP testing programme. In the initial testing years there had been industrial action in opposition to the LAP. The three case study schools in this research did not support the LAP. However, the teachers have been directed by the DSE/DoE to administer the LAP tests to children in Year 3 and Year 5. The reality of the classroom is such that central directives override the theoretical principles and philosophies of the teachers. This situation once again demonstrates how the powerful influence of the macro political context impinges upon the assessment and reporting practices undertaken at the individual school, teacher and student levels.

6.3.1.1.3. The Effects of Articulation on Teachers' Internalised Reflective Knowledge

Another interesting observation arose from this study. An issue related to participants articulating their beliefs emerged during the ongoing analysis of the interview data. The iterative process involved interviewing study participants, reading curriculum documents, talking to key informants and making observations in the classroom context. This process resulted in cross questioning, revisiting discussions from one session to another and checking information in documents with discussions with participants. As a result of this intense and extended interaction, comments began to emerge that indicated the participants were rethinking, clarifying and analysing their positions on various issues as a result of articulating their beliefs in discussion. The very act of conversing with another person about their views was activating a reflective process that was enhancing the teachers' own understanding. For example:

- In one of the interviews with Alexandra we were discussing what assessment techniques she used in conjunction with references to specified standards and the
following comments was made: "Because I was thinking about what you were saying, there are four main things" (K.2.30).

- In relation to how Alexandra analyses a cloze exercise she commented:
  "Yeah, yeah, you don't reflect on why you do these things until you are asked" (K.3.13).

The act of making explicit what was perhaps considered tacit knowledge encouraged the teachers to reconstruct their knowledge and raised their own self awareness. This phenomenon may be linked to the influence discussed in chapter 5 (section 5.2.7.) called personal receptivity, the notion that an effective teacher must be receptive to the influence of change. Are the teachers who can openly articulate their internalised reflective knowledge the teachers who are not threatened by the challenge of change? This question would be an interesting study in its own right. Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica were able to discuss their beliefs, defend their teaching and learning philosophies, adapt their understanding of multiple literacies to take on board computer literacy and incorporate the teaching of genre in their curriculum. These three teachers were not threatened by change but embraced new developments in literacies.

In light of the McCallum, et al. (1995) research on teacher assessment models referred to in chapter 2 section 2.5.1., the teachers in the current study demonstrate characteristics of several of the identified groups. They demonstrate evidence of the 'Evidence Gathers' group as they 'gather evidence which proves what has been done'. They demonstrate evidence of the 'Systematic' group because they 'use multiple assessment techniques', and of the 'Children's Needs Ideologists' group as they also demonstrate characteristics such as the following: confidence; articulation; have a child-centred view of curriculum teaching and learning; and see teaching and assessment as a simultaneous process.

It became apparent that the ongoing interactive questioning between the participants and myself was in actuality developing the reflective process. The notion of teachers' voice was a fundamental component of the research methodology in this study. Therefore, the research process relied heavily on discussing and interacting with the teachers, asking the teachers questions, seeking clarification from document analysis, reiterating my observations of the daily classroom practices for feedback from participants and critically analysing actions and belief statements of participants. The very practices of discussing, questioning and asking the teachers to reflect and articulate their beliefs were facilitatory processes in the clarification of the teachers' literacy assessment ideas. Both Alexandra and Veronica commented on the influence
that talking to me was having on their thinking about the issues involved in making judgements about students' literacy assessment. In one conversation regarding what constitutes literacy Alexandra commented that she had been watching a television show about literacy after our initial discussion. I commented, "That's highly commendable. So I've got you thinking about this, have I, Alexandra?" (K.4.3.). Alexandra replied, "Well you have. I can't think of anything else, everywhere I go I hear oh literacy! What is it today?" (K.4.3.). These snippets highlight the significance of reflection in the following situations:

- the importance of colleagues talking
- the impact of professionals discussing literacy related issues
- the power of personal interaction when a researcher takes an interest in another teacher's literacy practices.

The issue of having a conducive environment, that is one based on mutual trust and respect, and the time and opportunity for discursive reflection are highlighted by this observation. Such a situation has ramifications for both moderation processes and professional development activities at the school, system and tertiary training level. In addition, the results of this study add to the growing body of research regarding teacher and university researchers undertaking collaborative research, the notion of co-researchers or research partners (Potter, 1997, Wolf, 1992). When teachers are involved in collaborative research they are truly participants rather than respondents or subjects. Future studies need to explore the full significance of this relationship regarding change processes in schools and in the reciprocal situation in universities. Each partner, in such research, adds to the body of knowledge of the other.

The results of this research highlight the powerful impact that professional development has on teachers' knowledge of literacy acquisition, language learning processes and assessment and reporting practices. The phenomenon that emerged from the observations in this study relates to the significance of teachers articulating their beliefs, philosophies and teaching and learning strategies. Professional development that uses the transmission model of experts imparting their knowledge to participants may not be maximising learning. Teachers articulating their ways of knowing and their beliefs about literacy practices may well prove to be a more effective technique for developing internalised reflective knowledge. Hill and Crevola (1997) recently commented:

Arguably the most important element in any design aimed at improved teaching and learning in school is the provision of effective, ongoing, professional learning opportunities for teachers related to their classroom practice. Such opportunities extend well beyond traditional forms of
professional development and in-service training to include observation and mentoring. (p. 10)

The current research extends this notion of professional development further. Internalised reflective knowledge is enhanced through the process of teachers articulating their principles of teaching and learning and literacy assessment practices. Hill and Crevola (1997) state: "effective teachers make a habit of monitoring and assessing their students' progress" (p. 9). However, the process involves more than just undertaking the assessment. The teachers in this study not only know why they use certain assessment techniques, but they are also able to articulate what the results of the assessment process mean and what they will do as a consequence of the judgements they have made. This connection between reflection, articulation and action needs to be a fundamental part of the professional development process.

6.3.1.1.4. Literacy Assessment and Reporting Strategies
The teachers' selection of literacy assessment techniques was another powerful influence on their judgement making processes. The teachers in this study selected literacy assessment strategies that reflected the philosophical stance they believed in regarding literacy acquisition. Table 15 in chapter 5 illustrates the collection of techniques that the three teachers stated that they used, that the researcher observed in use in the classrooms, and that is evidenced by the artefacts collected. There was clear congruence between the techniques and the teachers' beliefs in formative assessment. There were no assessment techniques of a summative nature chosen by the teachers. The only summative tests used by the teachers were either imposed on them by external authorities (for example, the LAP testing programme), or were practice scholarship examinations to prepare Year 6 students for the transition tests they would be required to sit if they chose private secondary schooling.

The assessment strategy observation was nominated by all three teachers as being an important technique for the collection of literacy data. This finding complements other recent Australian work (Forster & Masters, 1996a; Masters & Forster, 1996a; Moni, Tonkin & van Kraayenoord, 1996). However, further elaboration of issues involved in observation needs to be researched in depth. When teachers report that they use observation as an assessment technique, what behaviours are observed? Why is a particular behaviour chosen for observation? What reference criteria do teachers use to comparatively evaluate the observations? To strengthen not only the power of the technique of observation, but also the teachers' ability to articulate the use of the strategy, further studies in this area would be very valuable. Research of this nature would no doubt provide a wealth of information to inform both preservice teacher training and post-initial professional development programmes. In 1991 a comprehensive report entitled Teaching English literacy: A project of national
significance on the preservice preparation of teachers for teaching English literacy was published (Christie, 1991a). This project investigated the education and training needs of teachers across Australia. A number of the issues raised in this report have been discussed in chapter 2 section 2.4.4. 'Empowering or Deskilling of the Teaching Profession'. The results of this study overwhelmingly documented the need for teacher training courses to increase the studies devoted to English language and literacy. The fact that student teachers across the nation had fewer than six units of study in English language and literacy studies is a damning criticism of teacher training. The report also comments on the lack of English language and literacy studies that include issues related to literacy assessment. Further research in the area of teacher judgement and literacy assessment could make a valuable input into the courses training institutions offer future teachers.

When examining the influence of the selection of assessment strategies a finding emerged that was based on a group of elements labelled as 'contextualised' (Figure 16). This feature was distinguished by classroom organisational considerations. Key selection criteria of literacy assessment strategies were based on whether the techniques were:

- too expensive in monetary terms. Some assessment techniques were not selected because of the prohibitive cost of the items. There were literacy assessment techniques nominated as being of practical use to the teacher. However, due to the monetary cost of the item teachers could not buy them within their English language curriculum budget allocation.
- too costly in terms of teacher's time to administer. 'Running Records' and 'Miscue Analysis' were named as assessment techniques that the teachers believed they did not have enough time to administer on a regular basis.
- inaccessible in terms of difficulty to organise. The example given by Georgina was the use of parent interviews as an assessment technique; the difficulty of arranging such interviews prohibited frequent use of this data gathering method, so it was in effect inaccessible literacy assessment data.
- founded on a belief that the evidence gathered and the judgements made as a result of such data were justifiable. The notion that a teacher's judgements must be credible in the eyes of the students was a determining feature of the assessment techniques selected.

What has emerged as an influential factor regarding the teachers' selection of assessment techniques is not only the criterion that the strategy must be philosophically compatible to the literacy learning theory held by the teachers, but also a group of elements that run counter to theory and are based on very practical
organisational considerations. In some cases the theoretical criteria are overruled by
the cost and organisational difficulty of administering some assessment techniques.
This discovery has significant ramifications for school and system allocation of funds.
Literacy assessment strategies that are theoretically consistent with the curriculum
philosophy and appear beneficial for teachers to use are not being used by teachers
because the techniques are too expensive and/or too time consuming to organise. The
possible inadequacy of funding at the school level may be restricting the
implementation of effective assessment practices. In addition, the organisational
structure of schools and classrooms needs to be reexamined. Alexandra and Georgina
both commented that they could not use certain techniques because the curriculum is
so crowded that there is not enough time in the day to allocate more time to specific
assessment techniques. This research clearly indicates that there is no simple linear
relationship between the philosophy of the curriculum and assessment and the
techniques chosen to assist teachers to make literacy judgements. The data from
Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica are testament to this situation. New research
investigating this phenomenon across year levels, between classroom teachers and
curriculum specialists, and amongst novice and experienced teachers may shed more
light on the phenomenon and provide recommendations for change.

6.3.2. **The Ecological Dimension**

The ecological dimension encompasses a teacher's working environment. It relates to
the spheres of influence on teachers' judgements of work place factors. Micro political
webs within the school such as school councils, principal directives, significant peers
as well as policy and curriculum programme documents influenced teachers' judgements. Macro political influences relate to government directives at both the state
and federal levels and funding issues that directly impinge upon the decision making
process of a teacher in the classroom. These spheres are complex networks of
influence that produce the educational environment in which teachers must work. In
comparison to the intra personal dimension that operates within the individual
teacher's internalised decision making processes, the ecological dimension provides
the external influences characterised by the political web often outside the teachers'
control. The major elements of the ecological dimension are summarised in the next
section.

6.3.2.1. **External Considerations**
The teachers in this study were all influenced by situations external to their personal
judgemental processes. This cluster of influences was an intriguing collection. Some
external influences had been accommodated into the teachers' decision making
processes, as for example the schools' curriculum policies. Some influences had been directly imposed upon the teachers who had little choice but to comply, as for example the CSF and the LAP; and some influences had been taken on board because of the credibility of the acknowledged expertise of a programme or person. This situation raises a number of pertinent considerations. How effective is compulsion when related to changing teachers' practices? What are the consequences of enforced directives on classroom curriculum across year levels? What are the consequences of enforced directives on teachers, students and parents? How do acknowledged experts influence teachers' thinking and classroom practices? What are the distinguishing attributes of an influential expert? These questions provide the basis for many future studies.

6.3.2.2. **The Influence of Significant Others on Teachers' Judgement Making Processes**

The findings of this research indicate that the teachers involved considered the opinions and instructions of a range of significant peers. The participants acknowledged that the principal's power was twofold: first, the power vested in the principal as a consequence of the authority of the position; secondly, the principal viewed as a curriculum leader in her/his own right. The teachers perceived that the principal influenced their judgements by recognised expertise and by direction or compulsion. This finding has ramifications for principal leadership training in management courses.

The influence labelled significant peers was also an interesting diverse collection of attributes. Peers could just share information with other peers as in collegiate working relationships or role model situations. Peers could be internal mentors who appeared to be qualitatively more influential than other peers as they were recognised for their expertise and curriculum leadership qualities. In conjunction with this finding is the related effect of moderation upon teachers' judgemental processes. Moderation in the three case study schools in this research was considered to be more informal than a formally adopted process. However, moderation was viewed as an important process in collegiate sharing of knowledge. This finding complements the results of the comprehensive project entitled *Whole School Approaches to Assessing and Reporting Literacy* (Dilena & van Kraayenoord, 1995, 1996a, 1996b). "Teachers, for example, value collaborative reflection as a means of deepening and broadening their knowledge about literacy issues and value the expertise of their colleagues" (Dilena & van Kraayenord, 1996a, p. 36).

These findings together have important ramifications for both system and school level professional development planning. If professional development programmes are to have maximum effect on the implementation of new conceptualisations of multiple
literacies and change within system organisation and school curriculum, the power of significant peers needs to be taken into consideration. Future research needs to investigate the parameters and powers of significant peers, asking questions such as:

- who are the powerful peers in a school context?
- how do peers influence each other?
- in what contexts are peers a powerful influence on each other?
- what are the attributes of an influential peer?

Research in these areas would provide valuable knowledge for the structure of mentoring and post-initial professional development programmes.

6.3.2.3. Dissemination of Literacy Achievement Information

The reporting of students' literacy achievements is a vexed issue. Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica are influenced by their concern in the following areas:

- to report with integrity regarding their philosophical beliefs about literacy learning and literacy achievement
- to maintain credibility with the students by reporting their literacy strengths and weaknesses in an equitable and justifiable manner
- to communicate to a varied audience of parents in an informative fashion
- to provide accountability requirements demanded of them by the DoE Victoria.

These influences often conflicted with each other. The teachers sometimes had to choose between reporting in terms of descriptive criterion based outcomes that were linked to the curriculum of the classroom, school and individual student's achievements, and reporting relating to arbitrarily established achievement benchmarks. The ideological dilemma for these three teachers stemmed from their strong theoretical beliefs in many aspects of the whole language philosophy of literacy learning.

6.3.2.4. The Issue of Standards or the Influence of External Reference Criteria

To be able to make an evaluative judgement about a student's literacy development a teacher needs a reference criterion. For example:

- an expected standard or benchmark
- a developmental learning continuum
- a hierarchical ordered set of outcomes specific to language learning.

In this study the teachers based their evaluative judgements on their internal reflective knowledge as well as on the 1991 Victorian English Profiles (Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991); the 1994 Western
Australia First Steps Continua (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d) and the explicitly stated expectations from the Curriculum and Standards Framework - English (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995). The teachers consistently referred to formative knowledge of students' literacy development and of using portfolios to build a profile of each student's achievements. One of the teachers was much more familiar than the other two with the CSF English Levels and referred to them in her assessment practices but not her reporting procedures. All three teachers commented on the educational jargon in the CSF documentation. They all discussed the inappropriateness of using the CSF language in the report forms sent home to their students' parents. All three teachers spoke openly about the importance of assessing the individual student. The need to comparatively assess students' literacy achievements against other students, or to externally established student norms, was of no apparent interest to the teachers in this study. Consequently, they did not use Norm Referenced Tests (NRT) to establish reference standards of literacy achievement. The teachers' stated opposition to using NRTs complements their theoretical beliefs in the psycholinguistic principles of language learning.

The use of the CSF levels of achievement is not reflected in the case study schools' curriculum policy documents. However, this is not an unexpected result as the CSF was only released in draft form in 1994. The published version of the CSF was sent to Victorian schools in 1995; the year the data collection for this study commenced. Accordingly, one would not expect a document to be incorporated into the curriculum publications of Victorian schools in the year that the DoE officially requested school personnel to become familiar with the document. During the 1995 interviews the teachers commented on whether or not they would change their student report forms. As mentioned previously, there was some reluctance to commit themselves to this procedure. Veronica commented that it would be in direct opposition to the school's policy of not supporting comparative assessment practices. Georgina commented that if the DoE required this practice then teachers would be forced to comply. This in fact was what did happen. In 1996 the DSE sent out Directive 96/021 (Appendix U) stating quite clearly that schools were required to report to parents using the CSF Levels.

In 1997 I returned to all three case study schools and collected a new set of report forms. All three schools had added the appropriate CSF Levels to the front page of each report form. The influence on teachers' literacy judgements of external requirements (Figure 16) is clearly apparent from this example. The powerful influence of compulsion should not be underestimated. However, is there a difference between a directive that is undertaken through compliance, and a directive that results
in changes in curriculum planning and delivery? Ascertaining the effectiveness of compulsion, in terms of literacy assessment and reporting practices, is another study in itself. The teachers have complied with the DoE directive. Their 1995 concerns regarding the inappropriateness of the language of the CSF for reporting purposes may have been a reaction because of their unfamiliarity with the documents. Their concerns may have dissipated as a result of the CSF familiarisation processes, and of the use of the CSF achievement levels with students and parents. However, once again the powerful influence of the macro political sphere on the daily classroom practices of teachers is evidenced in this research. The political notion of summative assessment and benchmark testing, in relation to accountability practices, is inconsistent with the teachers' beliefs in formative assessment and reporting.

6.3.2.5. **Political Context**

The political context in which the teachers work should not be underestimated as a powerful influence upon their literacy judgements. The reigning political climate influences not only what they assess as literacy, but also when and how literacy is assessed and reported. Throughout the entire data collection process issues related to the influence of the political context over teachers' literacy judgements were evident and documented. The teachers spoke of the quality of the Western Australian programme known as *First Steps* (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d). However, they acknowledged the DoE directive to use the *Curriculum and Standards Frameworks: English* (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995). The teachers spoke of their use of multiple sources of outcomes based reference criteria regarding their literacy expectations (Ministry of Education [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1990; Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991; Ministry of Education, Victoria, 1988). However, they were very conscious of the DSE directive to test using the LAP and report to parents using the CSF Levels (Appendix W and Appendix U). The overriding issue of funding to schools was noted on several occasions as the reason why certain literacy assessment strategies could not be used.

6.4 **Summary Statement**

A number of major conclusions can be drawn from this research. First, internalised reflective knowledge is a powerful influence on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development. This concept is a comprehensive term encompassing various other terms used in the literature on teacher judgement: tacit knowledge, intuition, common sense, personal experience and personal theory. The use of the term
internalised reflective knowledge conceptualises the nature of the act and adds meaning to the complex cognitive processes involved.

Secondly, the research confirms that a diverse range of assessment strategies is used to ascertain literacy development in the three case study schools. The study also demonstrates that at the classroom level there is an ideological integrity in the relationship between literacy assessment techniques chosen and the theoretical model of literacy learning that underpins the teachers' literacy curriculum planning.

Thirdly, the research describes connections in relation to the influence of experts, significant others and influential peers on teachers' decision making processes. The study raises a number of issues about choice and compulsion related to literacy assessment and reporting practices.

Fourthly, the thesis highlights the complex nature of accountability issues in the educational community. The three case study teachers articulated a strong belief that accountability can be demonstrated through formative and school based contextualised literacy assessment. However, the findings also illustrate that standards and literacy expectations based on summative practices are externally imposed upon teachers and schools and within this broad political climate conformity is a reality.

Fifthly, the all encompassing political context is identified as a powerful influential feature not only imposing constraints upon teachers' judgements of students' literacy development, but also contributing to change at the system and school level.

### 6.5. Implications for Educational Practice

Each of these conclusions has important implications for educational practice at the school, tertiary preservice and post-initial training levels. Therefore a number of recommendations are made. These suggestions are relevant not only to teachers at the classroom and school levels, but also to administrators at the policy level in the education system, as well as those involved in teacher education and professional development.

#### 6.5.1. Moderation Practices and Teachers Articulating Their Beliefs to Enhance Professional Expertise

Effective teacher judgement of literacy assessment will be enhanced by practices that facilitate moderation between teachers. The research data in this thesis point to the
beneficial nature of the practice of asking teachers to articulate their beliefs, their classroom routines and the relationship of these activities to theoretical foundations. If teachers are encouraged to articulate what is effectively their internalised reflective knowledge, not only will they develop their professional competence to relate practice and theory, but they will also build up their knowledge base by sharing judgements. Professional development activities that require teachers to explain and share their decision making judgements in collaborative networks need to be developed.

6.5.2. Inter School Exchange of Literacy Assessment and Reporting Practices

Related to the issue of moderation is the need to facilitate communication channels between primary schools and secondary schools regarding literacy assessment practices. The data collected on the influence on teachers' judgements of transition requirements from secondary schools highlight the need for system collaboration. The teachers in this study were systematically collecting assessment data requested by the secondary school the Year 6 students were to attend the following year, in some cases bypassing the data already collected on the students' literacy achievements. The teachers were administering scholarships tests that did not reflect their philosophical principles about teaching and learning. However, the need to support their students, who were inexperienced in a testing environment, outweighed the teachers' own assessment beliefs. There is an obvious need for primary and secondary schools to communicate and collaborate on assessment and reporting information needs in the transition Years 6 and 7.

6.5.3. Changes in Policy to School and Education System Professional Development and Tertiary Institutions Preservice and Post-Initial Training

The relationship between teachers' selection of assessment strategies and their philosophical beliefs about English language learning has important implications for policy development at not only the school and system levels, but also for tertiary training institutions with regard to professional development practices. Examination of the teachers' qualifications in this study revealed that they had all been trained in the Early Literacy Inservice Course (ELIC) in the late 1980s (refer to Table 13: Years of Experience, Qualifications and Additional Professional Training). Ten years later these teachers still strongly believe in the theoretical principles taught through the ELIC programme. The ELIC programme was considered to be one of the most successfully implemented professional development packages in Victoria (Kennedy & Hodgens, 1989). The combination of psycholinguistic beliefs in English
language learning and the very effective implementation strategies have been influential in the teaching and learning strategies incorporated in the classroom practices of many teachers, not only in Victoria.

The combination of the power of internal reflective knowledge with the effect of teachers articulating their professional knowledge could enhance their understanding of literacy assessment practices. This raises a number of issues regarding professional development practices. At the school level, professional development planning that utilises moderation activities may be instrumental in developing teachers' profession competence. Moderation strategies that incorporate teachers articulating their professional understanding of literacy assessment and reporting could enhance the implementation of coherent school based policy development. Addressing issues such as the following would be invaluable discussion for school policy development:

- the literacy judgement criteria teachers use
- the literacy assessment techniques teachers use
- the literacy expectations teachers hold for a diverse range of students
- the public benchmark literacy standards used in large scale testing programmes in Australia
- the philosophical beliefs about English language acquisition and learning, and
- the teaching and learning principles and their relationship to the assessment reporting practices of individual schools.

At the system policy level, investigating professional programmes that incorporate teacher articulation as a key element in the package may well produce the most effective inservice. Clear recommendations regarding the essential nature of professional development for the teaching profession are made in *Literacy for All: The Challenge for Australian Schools*, the 1998 Commonwealth Literacy Policies for Australian Schools Monograph (Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1998). The report makes comments such as the following: "... the need for increased opportunity for teachers to have access to meaningful professional development " (p. 28). "... provision of adequate professional development for teachers is also essential when implementing new strategies ..." (p. 28).

The research in this study opens up the possibility of another dimension to teachers' professional development. Teachers articulating their practices and understandings may enhance the effectiveness of professional development programmes. New ways of involving teachers in their own professional development need to be researched. The transmission model of passing on expert advice may not be maximising either the incorporation of that advice, or the internal reflective knowledge of teachers.
The current research also raises questions in relation to tertiary institutions specialising in the preservice and post-initial training of teachers. The identification of internalised reflective knowledge as a powerful influence on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development needs to be nurtured in novice teachers and extended in experienced practitioners. Tertiary teaching practices that require teachers in training to understand and develop their own internalised reflective knowledge may add to the number of teachers in the field of the calibre of Alexandra, Georgina and Veronica. Tertiary teaching practices that involve student teachers articulating their beliefs in a public arena, defending their judgement and decision making practices in debate situations and demonstrating the evidence on which their literacy decisions are based would be valuable additions to this teaching and learning environment.

6.6. **FUTURE RESEARCH**

There are clear directions for future research indicated by the findings of this research.

6.6.1. **Investigations of the Internalised Reflective Knowledge of Diverse Groups of Teachers**

The powerful influence of internalised reflective knowledge now needs to be investigated from different teacher perspectives. This would give greater depth to our understanding of this influence on teachers' judgements. The research design of this study incorporated purposeful participant selection (Patton, 1990). Articulate, experienced teachers were involved in this study (refer to Table 8 'Criteria for the Selection of the Case Study Teachers and Schools'). The question now arises: are the influences identified in this study common to the teaching profession or to sub-groups within the profession? Valuable research can follow on from this study by working with a range of teachers - inexperienced novice teachers [criterion sampling (Patton, 1990)]; teachers whose initial training was in particular teaching methodologies [maximum variation sampling (Patton, 1990)]; and teachers who have not participated in post graduate studies [critical case sampling (Patton, 1990)].

The issue of gender difference and geographical location, such as country or urban based teachers, are other areas to explore, thus further expanding our understanding of the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.
6.6.2. Investigations of Internalised Reflective Knowledge, Technology and Professional Development

The educational community is at the beginning of a new wave of technological change. Computer literacy is already part of teachers' conceptualisations of literacies. The skills involved in becoming computer literate are changing fundamental notions of reading and writing. Major issues are emerging related to the new electronic technology, hypertext, online learning, using the internet to maximise learning, and understanding the future demands on students.

Snyder's work 'Reconceptualising Literacy & Hypertext (1995) and her special guest editorial of the Australian Language and Literacy Journal "Literacy and Technology" (1996) raise a wealth of new issues for all teachers of literacy. Snyder's (1995) article highlights many new notions regarding our thinking about literacy development. She states that: "In a hypertext environment, related information is linked together, regardless of its location and medium, and links lead to other links in a network of links" (p. 27). Furthermore, "readers can browse through linked, cross-referenced, annotated texts in an orderly but nonsequential way" (p. 28). The repercussions for the reading process, and literacies of the future, are yet to be fully documented.

It is very timely to investigate 'best practice' regarding the professional development programmes or packages that will enhance these new understandings. "Teachers not trained in or sympathetic to hypertext pedagogy may ignore or subvert the technology's potential" (Snyder, 1995, p. 33). Studies investigating how to enhance teachers' internalised reflective knowledge incorporating technological change will assist in providing best practice for future students and their literacy development. In addition, as Synder (1996) highlights: "if we do not actively participate in the process of technologising the literacy curriculum, we risk not only marginalisation and limitations on resources, we allow people who are not literacy experts to make important decisions about reading and writing technologies" (p. 289).

6.6.3. Investigations Studying Moderation Practices that Enhance Teacher Professionalism

The research indicates that, in relation to literacy assessment practices in Victoria, 'moderation' issues have not been explicated in very much detail. If teachers are to make informed decisions about students' literacy development, in comparison to 'recipe like' instructions from externally constructed assessment instruments, then moderation needs to be investigated. Professional moderation exercises underpin understanding in the following areas:
• student expectations
• literacy standards
• on balanced judgements
• individual student learning styles
• catering for individual differences.

Research studies investigating and identifying effective and efficient moderation practices will make a valuable contribution to the area of teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.

6.6.4. **Parental Input to the Research Process**

The focus of this study was the experiences of three teachers. However, further research in this area could involve the voice of parents. Although the current study investigated the perceived parental influences upon teachers' judgement, no parents were involved in the data collection phase. The perspective being investigated was from the teachers' point of view. Consideration could be given to including a parental component in the data collection of any future research in this area. This would add to the thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the influences upon teachers' judgements of students' literacy development. Such work would also add to the growing body of literature on the role of parents in the literacy assessment process (Australian Council of State School Organisations and Australian Parents Council, 1996; Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990).

6.7. **Concluding Statement**

The most powerful and enduring change in the classroom will be achieved by professionally informed and articulate teachers. Teacher judgement needs to reflect such expertise, because it is the teacher who is one of the most instrumental links between the minds of students and their future achievements in the multi-literacies required in the 21st century. Collaboration involving the diversity of voices seeking reform in literacies is essential. Meeting the literacy expectations of the 21st century will be achieved, not by a battle, but by an orchestrated and integrated alliance.
NOTES

1. RMIT abides by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines (refer to the RMIT Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services Ethics Web site http://www.eu.rmit.edu.au/committees/ethics/ for the ethics requirements in the research approval process).

2. The term moderation used here is contextualised to the Australian setting. Moderation, as used by Australian educationists, refers to a process of addressing inter-rater reliability issues. Through a process of group negotiated consensus, teachers come to an agreement regarding standards of students work (refer to chapter 5 section 5.6.3.). It needs to be acknowledged that this is not a universal usage of the term. In the USA the term articulation is sometimes used to refer to a similar process.
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APPENDIX A

Historical Context and Chronological Collection of Definitions of Literacy

Of the 4294 million inhabitants aged 15 and over living on our planet in 2000, almost 1 billion, or 21.8%, will know neither how to read nor to write.
(UNESCO, 1990, p. 4)

Literacy derives from the Latin *litteratus*, which, in Cicero's time, meant "a learned person". In the early Middle Ages, the *litteratus* (as opposed to the *illitteratus*) was a person who could read Latin, but after 1300, due to the decline of learning in Europe, it came to signify a minimal ability with Latin. After the Reformation, *literacy* came to mean the ability to read and write in one's native language. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the substantive *literacy* first appeared in English in the early 1800s, formed from the adjective *literate*, which occurred in English writing as early as the middle of the 15th century.
(Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 142)

16th Century

A significant development to the growth in literacy for all was the invention of the printing press.
(Eisenstein, 1980)

18th Century

The expansion of industrial societies in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries had a powerful impact on the demand to become literate.
(Soltow & Stevens, 1981)

19th Century

In 1850 to be literate one had to:
"Write (one's own) name, and read aloud a passage from (the) Bible".
(Gill, 1993, August 17, p. 13)

20th Century
1900 - 1950 Traditional (Positivist Paradigm)
(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2)

PSYCHOMETRIC INFLUENCE

1910

The US Census Bureau called people literate if they could write in any language (even if they were only able to write their name).
1940

After 1944 came compulsory secondary education for all [British]. The "personal growth English" point of view of teaching English became the order of the day. The emphasis was on what students wanted to communicate rather than imitating what their teachers wanted them to communicate, or what other people had communicated in the past.
(Bagnall, 1987)

In a 1947 survey the US Bureau of the Census used the term *functional illiterate* to refer to those who had completed fewer than five years of elementary school, on the assumption that this correlated with an inability to comprehend simple written instructions.
(Levine, 1982, p. 250)

1950

1950–1970 Modernist
(Postpositivist Era)
(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2)

The definition of literacy UNESCO used in 1951 was:

"A person is literate who can, with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life".
(Gill, 1993, August 17, p. 13; UNESCO, 1970b, p. 15)

... (L)iteracy is a characteristic acquired by individuals in varying degrees from just above none to an indeterminate upper level. Some individuals are more literate or less literate than others, but it is really not possible to speak of literate and illiterate persons as two distinct categories (UNESCO, 1957, p. 18).

A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group (Gray, 1956, p. 19).

1960

Progressive Education Movement
Postmodernist
1960s ...
(Macken & Slade, 1993, p. 208)
PSYCHOLINGUISTIC INFLUENCE

1970

UNESCO provided the following guidelines to its member states in 1978 'UNESCO Revised Recommendation Concerning the International Standardization of Educational Statistics':

The following definitions should be used for statistical purposes:

(a) A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his (sic) everyday life.

(b) A person is illiterate who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.

(c) A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development.

(d) A person is functionally illiterate who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development. (Limage, 1993, p. 29)

More recently, functional literacy has also emerged as an official goal for adult literacy programs within modern industrial capitalist countries. ... The US Office of Education defined literate persons as those who have acquired the essential knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and computation required for effective functioning in society, and whose attainment in such skills makes it possible for [them] to develop new attitudes and to participate actively in the life of [their] times.

And in Britain, A Right to Read ... quoted with approval the US National Reading Center's (USNRC) definition: 'A person is functionally literate when he [sic] has command of reading skills that permit him to go about his daily activities successfully on the job, or to move about in society normally with comprehension of the usual printed expressions and messages he encounters.'

As quoted in (Lankshear, 1993a, p. 90–91)

In 1978, this was UNESCO's definition:

People are literate when they have acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable them to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in their group and community, and whose attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic make it possible for them to continue to use these skills towards their own and their community's development for active participation in the life of their country.
Sociolinguistic Influence
Social Critical Literacy Influence

1980

It appears that a functional competence [in literacy] has been defined so that it is merely sufficient to bring its possessor within the reach of bureaucratic modes of communication and authority. (Levine, 1982, p. 261)

In their study of the learning and uses of literacy in West African Vai culture, Scribner and Cole (1981, p. 236) have defined literacy as a set of socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it. Cited in (Luke, 1988, p. 79).

Literacy is not an absolute, attainable goal but a social value that shifts as a society makes additional and different uses of print for changing social purposes. Literacy is a relative and changing state. People's ideas of what constitutes literacy change, the desirable levels change and will keep changing again and again as society makes more and more use of the skills and understandings attained by more and more people. The ability to read and write does not depend solely on the capacity of an individual to acquire a set of mechanical skills, for reading and writing are social acts. The social context will always determine what it means to be literate. (Reeves, 1985, p. 63)

In No Single Measure: A Survey of Australian Adult Literacy the concept of literacy adopted viewed "literacy as the application of specific skills for specific purposes in specific contexts, not as an isolated set of technical reading and writing skills". In this study, literacy was defined as: "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential." (Wickert, 1989, p. 4)

The Wickert study (1989) refers to three main dimensions of literacy abilities:

Document literacy: the ability to use and identify information located in documents such as forms and memos
Prose literacy: the ability to read and interpret prose in newspaper articles and books
Quantitative literacy: the ability to apply numerical operations to information contained in print material, such as menus. (Wickert, 1989, p. 5)

The definition of literacy developed by the ETC study was: 'using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential'. (Wickert, 1991, p. 59)

Literacy as defined by Garton and Pratt is as follows: "the mastery of spoken language and reading and writing." (Garton & Pratt, 1989, p. 1)

The term 'literacy', as I am using it, refers to all those uses of language in which its symbolic potential is deliberately exploited as a tool for thinking. (Wells, 1989, p. 4)
Literacy is control of secondary uses of language (i.e. uses of language in secondary discourses).
(Gee, 1991, p. 8)

1990 ... Postmodern
(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2)

I believe that any socially useful definition of 'literacy' must be couched in terms of these notions of primary and secondary Discourse.** Thus I define 'literacy as: mastery of, or fluent control over, a secondary Discourse. Therefore, literacy is always plural: literacies (there are many of them, since there are many secondary Discourses, and we all have some and fail to have others). If one wanted to be rather pedantic and literalistic, then we could define 'literacy' as: mastery of, or fluent control over, secondary Discourses involving print (which is almost all of them in a modern society). One can substitute for 'print' various other sorts of texts and technologies (painting, literature, films, television, computers, telecommunications) - 'props' in the Discourse - to get definitions of various sorts of 'literacies' (e.g., 'visual literacy', 'computer literacy', 'literary literacy').
(Gee, 1990, p. 153).

**Initial or Primary Discourse is ..." our socioculturally determined ways of thinking, feeling, valuing, and using our native language in face-to-face communication with intimates which we achieve in our initial socialization within the 'family' as this is defined within a given culture."
(Gee, 1990, p. 150)

**Secondary Discourse: "Discourses beyond the primary Discourse are developed in association with, and by having access to and practice with (apprenticeships in ), these secondary institutions." (Secondary institutions refers to schools, work places, stores, government offices, businesses, ...).
(Gee, 1991, p. 151)

The National Consultative Council for International Literacy Year, 1990 presented the following definition to the Australian Government. "Literacy involves the integration of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking. It includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations.
Functional literacy means the ability to read, write, speak and listen well enough to accomplish everyday literacy tasks in our society in different contexts, such as the workplace or the classroom."
Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1990, p. 4)

Literacy involves the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking; it incorporates numeracy. It includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognize and use language appropriate to different social situations. For an advanced technological society such as Australia's, our goal must be an active literacy which allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think, create and question, which helps them to become more aware of the world and empowers them to participate more effectively in society. "South Australian, Draft State Literacy Strategy, 1990".
(Weeks & Leaker, 1991, p. 14)
There are numerous definitions of literacy, each with its own purpose. What needs to be avoided is the kind of omnibus definition that is becoming more and more popular in Australia that includes reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, numeracy and problem solving. (Griffin & Nix, 1991, p. 4)

UNESCO recommended the following definition of an **illiterate** person. An illiterate is a person "who cannot with understanding both read and write a short, simple statement on his everyday life". (UNESCO, 1990, p. 2)

... the definition which guided this research was expressed as follows: Reading literacy is the ability to use and understand those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. (Wagner, 1993, p. 9)

There is apparent in some literacy literature a universalist view of literacy that seems to imply that there "is 'an essential set of skills' common the world over". (Barton, 1995, p. 463)

**Critical Literacy**

The view that there is no one literacy but only many literacies is a common theme in literacy literature in the 1990s. Colin Lankshear is one of the many writers claiming that the nature of literacy itself is under revision and that there are many literacies.

"There is no single, unitary referent for 'literacy'. Literacy is not the name for a finite technology, set of skills, or any other 'thing'. We should recognise, rather, that there are many specific literacies, each comprising an identifiable set of socially constructed practices based upon print and organised around beliefs about how the skills of reading and writing may or, perhaps should be used. (ii) The form that particular literacies take reflects aspects of the wider social reality within which they are evolved and practised. These aspects include values, goals, beliefs, assumptions, ideals, traditions, interests, institutional procedures, patterned power relations, etc. (Lankshear & Lawler, 1987, p. 58)

**Literacy** is control of secondary uses of language (i.e. uses of language in secondary discourses).

**Dominant literacy** is control of a secondary use of language used in what I called above a "dominant discourse."

**Powerful literacy** is control of a secondary use of language used in a secondary discourse that can serve as a meta-discourse to critique the primary discourse or other secondary discourses, including dominant discourses. (Gee, 1991, p. 8)

Literacy will be understood as a problematic and changing phenomenon, itself responsive to the shifting demands and priorities of society. What constitutes literacy at any stage in history depends upon the wider social context, and the kinds of demands made upon literacy from that social context. (Christie, 1991a, Vol 1, p. vii)
Christie sums up two issues which are relevant to this attempt to define literacy. In the report *Teaching English Literacy*, she makes the following two comments: First, the notion that literacy changes overtime, what constitutes success in literacy in one time period is not valid or relevant in another. And secondly, that literacy performance is not "a fixed, readily quantifiable phenomenon".

Literacy is defined as: "The ability and the willingness to use reading and writing to construct meaning from printed text, in ways which meet the requirements of a particular social context".
(Au, 1993, p. 20)

The view that literacy was a unidimensional product of learning to read and write, regardless of context and type of text began to change. "Literacy itself is a multidimensional concept, governed by culture, class and gender, among other factors, and probably more realistically thought of as literacies not literacy (Street, 1990; Gee, 1991)".
(Furniss & Green, 1993, p. 197)

**Information Literacy**

Information literacy refers to a person's ability to access and understand a variety of information resources....
Information-literate people are those who know how to find, evaluate, use, and subsequently communicate information effectively to solve particular problems or to make decisions.
(Lenox & Walker, 1993, p. 314)

Literacy education is about the distribution of knowledge and power in contemporary society. Who gets what kinds of literate competence? Access to texts? Where and to what ends? Who can criticise? How? To what extent? These issues are significant not only for students' lives and economic destinies, but also for the overall distribution of competence and knowledge, wealth and power in a literate society.
(Luke, 1993b, p. 4)

"... literate culture is played out according to both stated and unstated rules, where writing and reading are used to shape and construct one's social identity, to assemble one's identity papers (Gee 1990; cf. Shotter and Gergen 1989)".
(Luke, 1993b, p. 9)

The texts of everyday life are not innocuous, neutral texts requiring simple decoding and response. They are key moments where social identity and power relations are established and negotiated. Consider these examples: toy advertisements construct a world of gendered childhood and then invite the reader into that world as an enthusiastic consumer. Contracts build up legal versions of the world - with actors, possible actions and consequences - and then lock signatories into binding obligations and compliances. Texts and authors thus re/present and construct a version of the social world; and they position or locate the reader in a social relation to the text and to that world. They do so through various linguistic and semiotic techniques.
The goal of English in Years 1 to 10 is to develop and refine students’ ability to compose and comprehend spoken and written English - fluently, appropriately, effectively and critically - for a wide range of personal and social purposes. All students are encouraged and expected to strive toward this goal.
(Department of Education, Queensland, 1994e, Foreword)

A truly literate person is one who can mediate his or her world through multiple sign systems - not just language.
(Leland & Harste, 1994, p. 344)

Language is central to children’s intellectual, social and emotional development and has an essential role in all key learning areas. The learning experiences provided in this syllabus will assist students to become competent in English. They will learn about the resources of the language system and how to make appropriate choices in different contexts.

A functional view of language underpins this syllabus. This view of language is concerned with relationships between context, language structure and meaning. It is a useful classroom model because:

- it allows for the diversity of language contexts within a multicultural society
- it places emphasis on both spoken and written language
- it provides a comprehensive description of how language works.

Competence in English will enable students to examine their own and others’ experiences, feelings and ideas, giving them order and meaning. It assists them to learn about themselves, and their own and other cultures, to communicate their thoughts and feelings, to participate in society, to make informed decisions about personal and social issues and to discover and use their analytical and imaginative capacities.
(Board of Studies, New South Wales, 1994, p. 2)

The influence of the critical social theorists has had a major impact on the views of what constitutes literacy in Australia. Theorists encompassed by this label argue that literacy can only be fully understood when contextualised socially. Critical literacy "aims to 'unveil and decode the ideological dimensions of texts, institutions and social practices and cultural forms such as television and film, in order to reveal their selective interests'".
(Barton, 1995, p. 463)

An interesting collection of definitions has emerged from these three original statements taken from the following three publications:


B. *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy* (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991a)

A. **Literacy.** Based on generally accepted international usage, and adapted from Australia's ILY program, the working definition is:

*Literacy* involves the integration of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking. It includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations.

*Functional literacy* means the ability to read, write, speak and listen well enough to accomplish everyday literacy tasks in our society in different contexts, such as the workplace or the classroom.

(Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1990, p. 4)

B. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing.

(Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991a, p. 5)

C. **Literacy** is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.

Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening, and critical thinking with reading and writing. **Effective literacy** is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual's lifetime.

**All Australians need to have effective literacy in English,** not only for their personal benefit and welfare but also for Australia to achieve its social and economic goals.

(Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991b, p. 9)

1. "Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately in a range of contexts. It also involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing' (DEET 1991, *Australia's language: the Australian Language and Literacy Policy*, p. 5) and includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. In the area of learning called English, literacy also involves viewing."

(Australian Education Council, 1994a, p. 3)

2. **Board of Studies, Victoria - May 1994**
   **Curriculum and Standards Framework - English Section**

Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening, reading, writing and critical thinking within a cultural context, and enables a user to recognise and select language appropriate to different social situations. It will extend and enrich students' oral language capacities, and actively develop students' acquisition of reading and writing abilities to respond to, analyse and critique various texts.

(Board of Studies, Victoria, 1994a, p. 1)
According to Tuman (1995) there would appear to be a "... fundamental divide between modern and traditional notions of literacy:

Whereas traditional literacy promotes the notion of reading as recitation and writing as transcription - with both forms less important than the ability to make public speeches - modern literacy sees reading as comprehension, and writing as expression.

Whereas traditional literacy defines itself mainly in terms of the mastery of a common tradition; modern literacy does so in terms of one's ability to master the process that allows for the comprehension and creation of complex, deep meanings.

Whereas traditional literacy sees the text as a relatively unimportant storehouse of what is widely known ('what oft was said but ne'er so well expressed'); modern literacy sees it as the all-important embodiment of new ideas and experiences (that is, the source of aesthetic enrichment of individual as well as scientific progress for society generally).

Traditional literacy is part of traditional culture, a world where the goal of students is to learn, often through apprenticeships, the wisdom and crafts of elders, a world whose mere existence is testimony to its power to sustain itself, and hence whose primary concern is its own reproduction. In such a world there is often little sense of value of education in the abstract, since there is little valuable knowledge not embedded in specific local practice.

... 

The ideal student in modern education is neither the craftsman nor the courier but the innovator either as inventor or poet. The scientist and the artist, so often seen as antitheses, one literary and the other technological, are in fact united in the crucial role each plays in the modern world - developing and disseminating new ways of seeing". (Tuman, 1995, p. 19)
The International Reading Association's 1995 publication *The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing* has the following entry under 'Literacy':

Literacy is a minimal ability to read and write in a designated language, as well as a mindset or way of thinking about the use of reading and writing in everyday life. It differs from simple reading and writing in its assumption of an understanding of the appropriate use of these abilities within a print-based society. Literacy, therefore, requires active, autonomous engagement with print and stresses the role of the individual in generating as well as receiving and assigning independent interpretations to messages. By extension of the basic competence implied by literacy, computer literacy, cultural literacy, economic literacy, and so forth have evolved as designations of minimal competence required in these areas.

Although conceptions of literacy have been based on reading and writing for hundreds of years, recent usage has extended the skill range to include mathematics, under the assumption that the understanding of everyday texts sometimes requires this knowledge. Further extension to include speaking and listening has also been suggested. When used as an adjective, literacy tends to have a looser definition, as in the phrase literacy program, which refers to a wide range of courses that include instruction in reading, writing, or other basic skills. These directions tend to inflate the significance of literacy, making it a cover term for all basic communication and calculation skills required for existing in a modern society.

Literacy derives from the Latin litteratus, which, in Cicero's time, meant "a learned person". In the early Middle Ages, the litteratus (as opposed to the illiteratus) was a person who could read Latin, but after 1300, due to the decline of learning in Europe, it came to signify a minimal ability with Latin. After the Reformation, literacy came to mean the ability to read and write in one's native language. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the substantive literacy first appeared in English in the early 1800s, formed from the adjective literate, which occurred in English writing as early as the middle of the 15th century.

In current usage, the term implies an interaction between social demands and individual competence. Thus, the levels of literacy required for social functioning can and have varied across cultures and across time within the same culture. What was required for literacy in the time of Columbus is assumed to be different from what is required for literacy in industrialized nations today.

Attempts to define levels of literacy have led to phrases such as functional literacy, marginal literacy, survival literacy, and semiliteracy. Of these, functional literacy, which originated in the 1930s, has the widest currency. Since the UNESCO literacy studies of the 1950s, functional literacy has been defined in terms of skills or abilities required to use print to function in everyday life. This form of literacy has also been called pragmatic or conventional literacy. For marking the higher end of the literacy continuum, cultural literacy, advanced literacy, and high literacy are used. Richard L. Venezky, in Harris & Hodges, 1995. (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 142)
Post Critical Literacy

1997


What is literacy?

- Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately in a range of contexts.
- It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society.
- Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing.
- Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual's lifetime. (p. 1)

1998


"Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing (Department of Employment Education and Training, 1991:5)". (p. 7).

Literacy is the foundation of all learning. It is the key to our children's success in school and the basis on which they build their future.

... 

Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately in a range of contexts. It is also involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing, and includes the cultural knowledge that enables the speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to the social situation. In the English learning area, literacy also involves viewing.

(Australian Capital Territory Government, Department of Education and Community Services, 1998, p. 1)
APPENDIX B

A Comparative Analysis of the Levels, Learning Outcomes and Pointers in the *Curriculum and Standards Framework* (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995) and the Achievement Levels and Descriptors in the *English Profiles Handbook: Assessing and Reporting Students' Progress in English* (Ministry of Education and Training, [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991)

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**English Profiles**

(Ministry of Education and Training, [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991, developed from the Literacy Profiles Ministry of Education, [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1990)

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band A</th>
<th>Band B</th>
<th>Band C</th>
<th>Band D</th>
<th>Band E</th>
<th>Band F</th>
<th>Band G</th>
<th>Band H</th>
<th>Band I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Reading**
- **Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>Level 6</th>
<th>Level 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Prep</td>
<td>Level 1-2</td>
<td>Level 3-4</td>
<td>Level 5-6</td>
<td>Level 7-8</td>
<td>Level 9-10</td>
<td>Enrich</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Curriculum and Standards Framework*  
(Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995)
CSF (1995)
Level 1

Texts
Speaking & Listening
- joins in poems, action verses and refrains recited by the class or read by the teacher (p. 19).
- gives and follows simple instructions and directions (p. 19).

Reading
- engages in reading-like behaviour, such as holding a book, turning pages and relating story information as if reading words (p. 19).

English Profiles (1991)
Band A and B

Spoken Band A
- Joins in familiar songs, poems, chants (p. 27).
- Follows instructions, directions and explanations (p. 27).

Reading Band A
- Holds book the right way up (p. 47).
- Turns pages from the front to the back (p. 47).

Contextual Understanding

Linguistic Structures
& Features

Writing
- leaves a space between words or word-like clusters of letters (p. 23).
- writes from left to right and from top to of the page (p. 23).

Writing Band B
- Placing of spaces between groups of "letters" (p. 69).
- Knowledge that writing moves bottom from left to right in lines from the top to the bottom of the page (p. 69).

Strategies
CSF (1995)  
Level 2  

Texts

Contextual Understanding

Linguistic Structures & Features

Reading
- usually interprets statement, question and command structures, and their punctuation marks, when reading aloud and reading silently (p. 31).

Reading Band C
- Reads aloud showing understanding of purpose of punctuation marks (p. 51).

Strategies

Reading
- re-reads when meaning is disturbed by returning to the beginning of the sentence, leaving the unknown word out and reading on to the end of the sentence (p. 33).

Reading Band C
- Rereads a paragraph or sentence to establish meaning (p. 51).

Writing
- writes in a legible style (p. 33).

Writing Band C
- Legible writing with recognisable words (p. 71).

Writing Band D
- Marks most common words with incorrect spelling when editing writing (p. 73).

- Conventional spelling used most of the time; spelling shows recall of visual patterns (p. 73).

- re-reads and reflects on own writing and makes corrections to clarify meaning (p. 33).

- Reads, rereads and revises own written work (p. 73).
CSF (1995)
Level 3

Texts

Reading
- reads, for personal enjoyment and interest, poetry, short stories, and novels and factual texts for the younger reader (p. 35).

English Profiles (1991)
Band D and E

Reading Band D
- Selects books to fulfil own purposes (p. 53).

Contextual Understanding

Linguistic Structures & Features

Writing
- uses appropriate tense and a variety of conjunctions to suit the purpose of the writing (p. 39).

Writing Band E
- Appropriate shifts from first to third person in writing (p. 75).
- Consistent use of the correct tense (p. 75).

Strategies

Writing
- proof reads to identify and correct known spelling (p. 41).

Writing Band D
- Marks most common words with incorrect spelling when editing writing (p. 73).

Reading
- predicts and lists a range of resources for gathering information (p. 41).

Reading Band E
- Uses a range of books and print materials as information sources for written work (p. 55).

- uses tables of contents, index, page numbers or key words to find information (p. 41)

- Uses directories such as a table of contents or index, telephone and street directories to locate information (p. 55).
Texts

Contextual Understanding

Speaking and Listening
- adjusts speaking to suit the purpose and audience (p. 45).

Spoken Band E
- Uses vocabulary appropriate to audience and purpose (p. 35).

Reading
- demonstrates different interpretations of a text through role-play (p. 45).

Reading
- Improvises in role play, drawing on a range of texts (p. 55).

Linguistic Structures & Features

Strategies

Writing
- use a variety of strategies for planning, reviewing and editing own writing (Learning Outcome p. 49).
- decides when help such as a dictionary or thesaurus, or a conference with a friend or teacher is needed (p. 49).

Writing Band E
- Uses a dictionary, thesaurus, word checker to extend and check vocabulary for writing (p. 75).
APPENDIX C

Initial Teacher Questionnaire/Interview Schedule

RMIT
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
Coburg campus
PO Box 179
Coburg Victoria 3058
Australia
Telephone +61 3 468 2200
Fax: +61 3 350 1259

Dear

I am sending you this interview schedule ahead of our arranged interview appointment in order to provide time for you to think about some of the questions that it contains and the information I am seeking to obtain. Please fill in as many of the factual responses as possible. Some answers only require a tick in a box, the circling of a choice, or a yes/no response. Other questions require you to check your records and respond in more detail giving your own opinion. The schedule will be completed and collected by a project officer following the arranged interview.

All information will be regarded as confidential. Individual participants and schools will not be identified in the final report.

If there are questions or issues you need to have clarified in order to fill out this questionnaire please contact:

Ms Heather Fehring
Department of School and Early Childhood Education
Faculty of Education and Training
RMIT - Coburg Campus
Alva Grove
Coburg
3058

Ph: (03) 93539343
Fax: 93503054
Email: Fehringh@RMIT.edu.au

Your assistance in completing this interview schedule is very much appreciated.

Heather Fehring
Dear Colleague,

Please make yourself a cup of tea and take the time to read and respond to this questionnaire regarding your professional judgements in relation to the assessment and evaluation of children's literacy.

I would like to personally thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. I greatly appreciate your time and comments. This study is seeking to investigate the key factors that influence teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.

Please attempt all questions, and return the questionnaire, in the stamped addressed envelope provided. Your responses to this questionnaire are strictly confidential.

Thank you

Heather Fehring
Instructions to assist participants to fill in the Questionnaire Schedule

1. All information will be regarded as confidential.
2. Individual participants and schools will not be identified in the final report.

3. Please complete as many of the questions as is possible. Some answers require a tick, circle or a yes/no response. Other questions require a more considered response requiring you to give your opinion.

If there are questions or issues you need to have clarified in order to fill out this questionnaire please contact:
Ms Heather Fehring
Department of School and Early Childhood Education
Faculty of Education and Training
RMIT - Coburg Campus
Alva Grove
Coburg
3058

Ph: (03) 93539343
Fax: 93503054
Email: Fehringh@RMIT.edu.au

If you would like to receive information about the results of the questionnaire
please indicate by circling YES NO.

Your assistance in completing this questionnaire is very much appreciated.

[Signature]
Heather Fehring
TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY
Influences on Teachers' Judgements of Students' Literacy Development and the Learning Continua Underlying Profile Assessment and Evaluation in an Australian Context

RESEARCH QUESTION: What are the key factors that influence teachers' judgements of students' literacy development?

TEACHER JUDGEMENT CASE STUDY AND QUESTIONNAIRE CONSENT FORM

Investigator
Heather Fehring
Doctoral student
Department of School and Early Childhood Education
Faculty of Education and Training
RMIT - Coburg Campus

I, ..................................................................................
(please print name)

a teacher at.................................................................
(name of school)

..................................................................................
(school address)

Agree to take part in the study described in the attached explanation (Appendix A).
The researcher, Heather Fehring has given me a copy of the explanatory statement. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time and have had the opportunity to have a teaching colleague present while the study was explained and discussed with me.

Signed.........................................................................

Date................................................
TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: Influences on Teachers' Judgements of Students' Literacy Development and the Learning Continua Underlying Profile Assessment and Evaluation in an Australian Context

RESEARCH QUESTION: What are the key factors that influence teachers' judgements of students' literacy development?

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

This research is being conducted as my doctoral studies at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. The work I am undertaking is concerned with investigating the factors that influence teachers' judgements as they assess and evaluate students' literacy development.

It would appear logical that to create effective, efficient and powerful teaching and learning environments we rely on informed teachers who can combine the attributes of observation, intuition, analysis, interpretation, synthesis and judgement. It would also seem logical that accurate assessment and evaluation must precede informed decision making, which will lead to improved student learning.

The two quotes below are testament to the importance of teacher judgement.

In the Foreword to Evaluating Literacy: A Perspective For Change (1991) Garth Boomer wrote:

Australian teachers for literacy must fight to retain both their preeminence and their rights as the best judges of how well their students are doing.
(Anthony, Johnson, Mickelson & Preece, 1991, p. vi)

The Canadian Council of the Teachers of English (1985) policy on evaluation states:

... The teacher's judgement must be the main determiner of the performance of his/her students, and he/she will employ a variety of measures and observations to inform that judgement.
(Anthony, Johnson, Mickelson & Preece, 1991, p.10)
However, limited research into the factors which influence teacher judgement in relation to children's literacy development has been undertaken over the last 20 years. In my research I am trying to identify such factors. I believe that it is important to consider teachers' views about who and what has influenced their beliefs and thinking (both past and current). Professional development programs and curriculum changes are sometimes less effective than they could be because they fail to take into account teachers' opinions. The information from my research has the potential to improve both initial teacher training and post-initial professional development in the area of literacy assessment and evaluation.

I am seeking your assistance with my research by allowing me to come and work with you on a regular basis each week. The purpose of this contact is for me to undertake the following:
- to discuss issues with you such as what you believe is important in literacy assessment and evaluation;
- to work with you in the classroom during a teaching session and observe the routine collection of assessment information and the evaluation of students' literacy;
- to analyse the school's documents in relation to issues relevant to literacy assessment and evaluation;
- to observe the children's assessment portfolios and discuss with you your collection of information;
- to obtain feedback on a questionnaire (so I can refine the questions) I have constructed for a larger scale collection of information in 1996.

I am very conscious of the fact that this is personal information and I undertake to maintain the confidentiality of your information. The information will be collected and analysed to gain a better understanding of the factors and 'significant influencers' in relation to teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.

I am also conscious of the many constraints on teachers' time, I realise just how busy teachers are in the 1990s so I really appreciate your participation in this study.

Heather Fehring
KMIT
Ph: (03) 93539343
LITERACY AND TEACHER JUDGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Part A: General Information

Please circle or tick the appropriate response, or provide a written response when required.

1. Name ________________________________

2. Year level or position in School ______________________

* This information will be coded so that no individual will be identified in the final report.

3. Name and location (city) of the school you are teaching at in 1995:

   Name of school ________________________________

   Location i.e. Address ________________________________

Size of school:

   Number of teaching staff ____________
   (this includes principal / non teaching Assistant Principal)

   Number of specialist teachers (please specify the area and number)

   __________________________

   __________________________

   __________________________

   __________________________

   Number of teaching aides ____________

   Number of students attending school (approximately) ____________

   Number of classes ____________
4. **Teacher Classification**

Please circle present teaching classification:

**1995 Structure**

Principal

Assistant Principal

AST 3

AST 2

AST 1

SRP 1

Teacher

Other, please specify ____________________

**1996 Structure**

Principal

Assistant Principal

Leading Teacher 4

Leading Teacher 3

Teacher Class Level 2:
  Advanced Teacher

Teacher Class Level 2

Teacher Class Level 1:
  Beginning

Other, please specify:

_________________
5. Teaching Experience

Please indicate how many years primary teaching experience you have.

0-5 years  6-10 years  11-15 years  16-20 years  21+ years

i) Total number of years teaching

ii) Years taught at Prep level

Years taught at Year 1, 2, or 1 - 2

Years taught at Year 3, 4, or 3 - 4

Years taught at Year 5, 6, or 5 - 6

Other combinations

Specialist Areas (Please specify)

6. Please list the schools (City and the State) where your teaching experience has been gained since 1980.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Qualifications

Please indicate the qualifications you have obtained, the year you obtained each qualification and the college/institute/university at which you attended to undertake each qualification.
8. Have you ever undertaken any courses specifically related to literacy development?
   YES    NO

If the answer is yes, please circle which courses you have completed, and what year you completed each course.

YEAK COMPLETED
ELIC (Early Literacy Inservice Course)
LLMY (Literacy Learning in the Middle Years)
CLP (Canberra Literacy Programme)
CLIC (Catholic Literacy Inservice Course)
Frameworks: Assessment and Evaluation Module (Cambourne, et al.)
Frameworks: Literacy and learning K - 8 Core Course (Cambourne, et al.)
OTHER, Please specify course/s

9. Does your school have an English( or Language ) Curriculum Committee?
   Please circle answer
   YES    NO

10. Does your school have an English (or Language ) Policy Statement?
    Please circle answer
   YES    NO

11. Does your school use the Curriculum and Standards Framework: English (Board of Studies, 1995) document to plan or report on curriculum?

   YES    NO
Part B: Issues in Relation to Assessment and Evaluation of Literacy

I am interested in finding out how teachers make their literacy assessment and evaluation judgements. I am also interested in what are the most important influences on teachers' judgements in relation to assessing and evaluating students' literacy development.

12. When you use the term literacy, what do you mean?

13. Do you use the term to mean any of the following:
   - please circle answer

   • reading and writing
   • reading, writing, speaking and listening
   • reading, viewing, writing, speaking and listening
   • reading, viewing, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking skills
   • other, please specify your use of the term ________________

14. Can you identify where your current knowledge/beliefs about students' literacy development came from.
   - Please indicate with a tick
     - initial teachers' training
     - post graduate studies
     - in-service/professional development days held at school
     - personal reading
     - other, please specify

15. Were there significant people who influenced your views at particular points in time? Could you name these people, and identify the time period?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANT PERSON/AUTHOR/TEACHER/LECTURER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1960</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961 - 1970</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1971 - 1980</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981 - 1990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. What do you consider to be most important when teaching literacy to primary school children?

17. What knowledge do you think is essential for teachers to have to teach literacy skills effectively at the primary level of schooling?

18. How would you describe your knowledge of the literacy skills you mentioned above?

19. How do you feel about yourself as a teacher of literacy?

20. What is the most difficult aspect of teaching literacy in primary school for you?

21. How do you know that the students in your class are improving in their literacy development? What indicators or criteria do you use? Please try and be specific.

22. In your class, how do you record the students' literacy development?

23. We read in the popular media that literacy standards have fallen, how do you respond to this piece of information?
Part C: Strategies for Making Literacy Assessment and Evaluation Judgements

24. Do you use any of the following strategies / techniques / procedures to assess (collect data on) literacy development?

Please circle the strategies you use or have used, and indicate the frequency of your usage on the scale provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Usage</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>Once a term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anecdotal notes

Observations
• informal
• focussed

Checklists

Concept Mapping

Contracts
• Goal-Based Assessment

Cloze

Interviews
• conferences with students

Learning Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Usage</th>
<th>Regularly</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>Once a term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Journal/Diary

Miscue Analysis/Running Records
Peer Assessment  I______________________I______________________I

Questionnaire  I______________________I______________________I

Retelling
- reading circles  I______________________I______________________I
- literature responses  I______________________I______________________I

Role Plays  I______________________I______________________I

Self Assessment  I______________________I______________________I

Tests - Teacher Constructed  I______________________I______________________I

Tests - Commercially produced  I______________________I______________________I

Portfolios
- folios of Work Samples  I______________________I______________________I

Other, please describe  I______________________I______________________I

25. What documents do you refer to assist you to make literacy evaluations?

26. Do you use any of the following items when you are making literacy assessments? Please circle Yes or No.
- School guidelines/objectives/expectations/outcomes  Yes  No
- English Profiles (Victorian, 1991)  Yes  No
- Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF - BOS, Victoria, 1995)  Yes  No
- Checklists, please specify  Yes  No

__________________________________________________________
specific tests, please specify  Yes  No

__________________________________________________________
- Other data gathering techniques, please specify
27. Do your assessment and evaluation strategies vary with different class levels of students? Could you give examples please.

28. Which assessment and evaluation strategies or techniques do you find to be the most successful/beneficial/efficient? Please name the strategies or techniques and try and give reasons for your choices.

29. Do you involve parents/guardians in your assessment and evaluation procedures?
Please circle Yes No

Please explain the techniques you use to involve parents/guardian.

30. If you involve parents/guardians, what do they say about being involved in the assessment and evaluation of their own children's literacy development?

31. Do you involve the students themselves in your literacy assessment and evaluation processes?
Please circle Yes No

Please outline the methods or techniques you use to involve the students.

32. If you involve students, what do the students say about being involved in the process of assessment and evaluation of their own literacy development?

33. Do teachers at your school moderate (discuss together the criteria they use to make a judgement about a child's/children's work)?

34. How do you manage to evaluate the literacy growth of all the children in your class? Do you evaluate a number of children on a regular basis? Please indicate how many and how often.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Time period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part D: Reporting Procedures in Your Class and School

35. How often do you formally report to the parents or guardians of the children in your class?

Weekly
Monthly
Each term
Once a year
Twice a Year
Other, please specify

36. Do you informally report to the parents or guardians of the children in your class? Please circle answer.

YES  NO

37. When you report to the parents/guardians what type of reporting procedure do you use? Please just tick the appropriate response.

Parent/Guardian interview
Parent/Guardian interview plus a written report
Written report only
Written report and interviews on request
Other, please specify
Part E: Issues in Relation to Personal Concerns

38. Do you have any concerns about the way you make judgements about students' literacy development? Can you specify what your concerns are please?

In relation to:

i) Your own knowledge about literacy development.

ii) The assessment and evaluation strategies/techniques/procedures that you use to make judgements.

iii) The framework you use to monitor progress against.
   - School Profile
   - English Profile (Victorian)
   - CSF (BOS Victoria, 1995))
   - National English Profile (Curriculum Corporation, 1994)

39. Do you believe you get enough support to assist you to make informed decisions in relation to students' literacy development?
Please indicate by saying yes or no.

At the school level

At the district level

At the regional level

From the Department of School Education (DSE)

From the Board of Studies

Further comments
APPENDIX D

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Participant Consent Form

RESEARCH PROJECT INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Please note: This is a prescribed form. It is a requirement of the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee.

DEPARTMENT OF School and Early Childhood Education

FACULTY OF Education and Training

Prescribed Consent Form For Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews, Questionnaires or Disclosure of Personal Information

Name of participant:

Project Title: Influences on Teachers' Judgements of Students' Literacy Development in a Victorian Context

Name of investigator(s):

Heather Fehring - Principal Investigator
Dr. Pam Green - Senior Supervisor
Dr. Ray Adams - Second Supervisor

1. I consent to participate in the above project as an independent observer in the 'Member Checking' Phase, the particulars of which - including details of interviews or questionnaires - have been explained to me and are appended hereto.

2. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.

3. I acknowledge that:

(a) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied;

(b) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching and not for treatment.
2.

(c) I have read and retained a copy of the Plain Language Statement, and agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.

(d) The project may not be of direct benefit to me.

(e) My involvement entails [completing an initial questionnaire taking approximately 45 minutes and participating in ongoing interviews for a school term. I give consent for the interviews to be audio taped.

(f) My anonymity is assured. Audio tapes will be transcribed and code identities will be give to the interviewees.

(g) Confidentiality is assured. However, should information of a confidential nature need to be disclosed for moral, clinical or legal reasons, I will be given an opportunity to negotiate the terms of this disclosure.

(h) The security of the data obtained is assured following completion of the study. The data will be kept in accordance with RMIT regulations where upon audio tapes will be destroyed.

(i) The research data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to .....................................................[specify, if relevant].

Any data which may identify me will not be used.

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________

(Participant)

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________

(Witness)

Where participant is under 18 years of age:

I consent to the participation of __________________________ in the above project.

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________

(Signature of parent or guardian)

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________

(Witness to consent)

Any queries or complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Secretary, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, RMIT, 124 LaTrobe Street, Melbourne 3000. The telephone number is (03) 9660 1745.
TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: Influences on Teachers' Judgements of Students' Literacy Development in a Victorian Context

RESEARCH QUESTION: What are the key factors that influence teachers' judgements of students' literacy development?

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR PARTICIPATING TEACHERS AND KEY INFORMANTS

This research is being conducted as my doctoral studies at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. The work I am undertaking is concerned with investigating the factors that influence teachers' judgements as they assess and evaluate students' literacy development.

It would appear logical that to create effective, efficient and powerful teaching and learning environments we rely on informed teachers who can combine the attributes of observation, intuition, analysis, interpretation, synthesis and judgement. It would also seem logical that accurate assessment and evaluation must precede informed decision making, which will lead to improved student learning.

The two quotes below are testament to the importance of teacher judgement.

In the Foreword to Evaluating Literacy: A Perspective For Change (1991) Garth Boomer wrote:

Australian teachers for literacy must fight to retain both their preeminence and their rights as the best judges of how well their students are doing.

(Anthony, Johnson, Mickelson & Preece, 1991, p. vi)

The Canadian Council of the Teachers of English (1985) policy on evaluation states:

... The teacher's judgement must be the main determiner of the performance of his/her students, and he/she will employ a variety of measures and observations to inform that judgement.

(Anthony, Johnson, Mickelson & Preece, 1991, p.10)
However, limited research into the factors which influence teacher judgement in relation to children's literacy development has been undertaken over the last 20 years. In my research I am trying to identify such influences. I believe that it is important to consider teachers' views about who and what has influenced their beliefs and thinking (both past and current). Professional development programs and curriculum changes are sometimes less effective than they could be because they fail to take into account teachers' opinions. The information from my research has the potential to improve both initial teacher training and post-initial professional development in the area of literacy assessment and evaluation.

I am seeking your assistance with my research by allowing me to come and work with you on a regular basis each week. The purpose of this contact is for me to undertake the following:

• to discuss issues with you such as what you believe is important in literacy assessment and evaluation;
• to work with you in the classroom during a teaching session and observe the routine collection of assessment information and the evaluation of students' literacy;
• to analyse the school's documents in relation to issues relevant to literacy assessment and evaluation;
• to observe the children's assessment portfolios and discuss with you your collection of information;
• to informally talk with students in your classroom.

I would like your permission to audio tape our conversations, for the purposes of accurate recording. I am very conscious of the fact that this is personal information and I undertake to maintain the confidentiality of your information. The audio tapes will be transcribed and code identities will be assigned. I will keep the data in accordance with RMIT policy and at the completion of the study the audio tapes will be destroyed. The information will be collected and analysed to gain a better understanding of the factors and 'significant influencers' in relation to teachers' judgements of students' literacy development.

I am also conscious of the many constraints on teachers' time, I realise just how busy teachers are in the 1990s so I really appreciate your participation in this study.

Heather Fehring
RMIT
Ph: (03) 93539343
Plain Language Statement Submitted to the RMIT Human Research and Ethics Committee (HREC)

1. Title of Project "Influences on Teachers' Judgements of Students' Literacy Development in a Victorian Context"

2. Project description

Research Question

It would appear logical that to create effective, efficient and powerful teaching and learning environments we rely on informed teachers who can combine the attributes of observation, intuition, analysis, interpretation, synthesis and judgement. It would also seem logical that accurate assessment must precede informed decision making, which will lead to improved student learning. The key research question in this study is what are the key factors which influence teachers' judgements of students' literacy development?

Aims and Significance of the Project

The purpose of this research study is to investigate, describe, interpret and thereby understand a complex form of human behaviour, that is, teachers' judgments of students' literacy development. Investigations that involve research related to teaching and teachers seek to analyse the teaching act and thereby understand the underlying rationale. The interest in investigating the judgement of the academic achievement levels of students is particularly important because many decisions about students are based on teachers' perceptions of students' performance levels. As for example, screening and diagnostic decisions; classification and placement decisions; instructional planning and curriculum delivery; student evaluation and progress statements and program evaluation. (Hoge, 1983) The interesting fact however, is that a great deal of this research has centred on studies investigating the variance between teachers' assessment of students' achievement, and the traditional notion of an objective measure of students' learning. The objective measure of learning turning out to be a norm referenced test in many cases. Accuracy of teacher judgement has been researched in this manner. (Hoge & Butcher, 1984)(Hoge, R. D. and Butcher, R. 1984; Egan, O. and Archer, P. 1985) This research will attempt to identify, describe and understand factors that influence teacher judgement in relation to students' literacy development.
I believe that it is important to consider teachers' views about who and what has influenced their beliefs and thinking (both past and current). Professional development programs and curriculum changes are sometimes less effective than they could be because they fail to take into account teachers' opinions. The information from my research has the potential to improve both initial teacher training and post-initial professional development in the area of literacy assessment and evaluation.

**Methodology**

The research design centres on constructing a description of, and inductively analysing an interpretation of the factors that influence teachers' judgements in relation to students' literacy development. The nature of this investigation does not lend itself to a theory driven by variable control, a priori hypothesis testing, statistical probability, and a generalisation production perspective. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) With the emphasis on describing and understanding teacher judgement there was a need to investigate and choose from the methodological procedures from within the qualitative research paradigm. To understand teacher judgement there is a need to rely on language and dialogue - conversations, reflections, interviews, the 'voice' of teachers. In attempting to understand teachers and their actions 'from the inside' investigations of the personal and practical knowledge of teachers, the culture of teaching, and the inner workings of teacher thought are essential.

The notion of voice embodies the new quantitative (sic) and linguistic tools used to describe what teachers do, how they do it, and how they react to their teaching. Voice corresponds with such terms as "teacher's perspective", "teacher's frame of reference," and "getting into the teacher's head" (Ornstein, 1995, p.127). I chose therefore to work within a Constructivist paradigm of inquiry electing to employ techniques within the naturalistic and qualitative epistemology. To understand the phenomenon in question I elected to use case study analysis and the naturalistic, interpretive approach was the more appropriate methodological choice. (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Hamel, Dufour & Fortin, 1993) (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994)

Consequently the research design uses ethnographic techniques and multiple forms of analysis to enhance the validity and reliability of results. Three case study schools involving three Year 5/6 teachers were chosen. Conducting research that involves teachers' conversations, interview schedules, and teacher observations can so easily be influenced by the researcher's own personal prejudices that may or may not be covert. Inadvertent researcher bias needs to be acknowledged, understood and minimised. Ethnographic methodology uses triangulation and 'member checking' of the data collected to facilitate the minimisation of such bias. 'Member Checking' involves the respondents revisiting the data and the researcher's interpretation and reflecting on the analysis with the researcher.

The triangulation of analyses was planned for by using the following data sources:

- qualitative analysis of case study interview data
- qualitative analysis of classroom artefacts
- analysis of case study respondents' questionnaires
- qualitative analysis of key informant interviews
- interpretative analysis of in-depth observations of classroom interactions
- content analysis of key policy documents from each case study respondents' school.

**Contact Time with Case Study Schools**

Data collection with the initial three case studies began at the commencement of Term 4 1995. Half a day each week was spent at each school. This amounted to a total of 120 contact hours (12 hours x 10 weeks) with the three teachers and 80 - 90 students.
Several hours of contact time also occurred out of school hours when it proved impossible to achieve quiet interviewing time. The study began with the teachers responding to a questionnaire / interview schedule (See Attachment A). The questionnaire set the context for the assessment and evaluation issues to be studied in relation to teacher judgement and was used in the many conversations, discussions, interviews which were involved in the observation and participant observation sessions over the ten week period. The choice of interview data was an essential component of the research design of this study. Interviews were a combination of semi-structured and open questions. Although the interviews followed very similar procedures the same sequences of questions were not always possible, or desirable. The research design involved encouraging teachers to explore issues from their own perspective and talk about issues in their own terms. The researcher structured questions arising out of curriculum and policy documents to begin each interview then allowed the interview to follow a natural sequence of questions unique to each of the teachers and key informants interviewed. The more formal interviews were all audio taped with the teachers' consent. The participant observation sessions involved informal discussions with other teachers at the respective school and with the normal daily interaction and conversations with the students in the classrooms. Some key informant discussions were audio taped and retrospective consent forms are in the process of being obtained. Sessions were also recorded by the researcher writing field notes of observations during the observational sessions. Following the analysis of the data the researcher will return to the case study schools to obtain the teachers' reflections on the researcher's interpretation of the data. Audio tapes will be transcribed and code identities given to the interviewees. All data will be kept in accordance with RMIT regulations and then the audio tapes will be destroyed.

References


APPENDIX E

Glossary of Terms

ASSESSMENT - Is the process of gathering information about a student’s performance, and evaluation involves making judgements about the knowledge, skills and values that have been acquired. (Ministry of Education and Training, Ontario, 1995b, p. 9)

Authors using the same meanings for the terms:
(Anthony, Johnson, Mickelson & Preece, 1991, p. xi)

Assessment is the process by which information is gathered, and evaluation is the process of interpreting that information. (Bouffler, 1992, p. 3)

Assessing is the process of collecting, recording and analysing information about student progress towards achievement of the syllabus outcomes. (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 1994, p. 262)

Assessment is a purposeful process whereby information about students is gathered and organised in order to make judgements about students’ learning in relation to curriculum goals. (Australian Teaching Council, 1995, p. 14)

Assessment is the process of collecting a range of information about learners and their diverse achievements, and about performance, and making judgements about the significance of this information.

Assessment and reporting of development and achievement in English language and literacy must acknowledge the complexity of learning in general and learning language in particular. It needs to consider the diverse nature of learners including, among others:
• age
• language background
• gender
• socio-economic background
• cultural diversity
• learning styles. (Australian Literacy Federation, 1995, p. 3)

assessment n. the act or process of gathering data in order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of student learning, as by observation, testing, interviews, etc. Note: Some writers use the term assessment to refer also to the judgements or evaluations made after data are gathered. (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 12)

Assessment is taken to mean a deliberate process used to provide feedback and evidence for a judgement about students’ learning in relation to defined goals. (Directorate School Education, Victoria., 1996, Section G, p. 1)

For a teacher, assessment is a process in which we gather evidence, make inferences, draw conclusions, and act on those conclusions. (Clarke, 1995, p. 24)
AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

Assessment embedded in curriculum tasks and activities that children are engaged in on a day-to-day basis reflecting the learning objectives that teachers see as most important. (Croft, 1995, p. 2)

Performance assessment is also used for the term authentic assessment in the United Kingdom; 'coursework assessment' or 'school-based assessment' are also terms to describe the same concept as authentic assessment. (Torrance, 1995)

Like many professions, the field of education is replete with infamous "buzz words". Nowhere is this more evident than in the current status of alternative assessment. Recent attempts to reform assessment have created a collection of buzz words that include:
real assessment
meaningful evaluation
authentic assessment
non-standard assessment
expanded assessment
learning potential assessment
performance assessment
performance-and-product assessment
outcome-based assessment
portfolio assessment
process assessment
process-folio assessment
exhibits of learning
performance measures
task-driven performance assessment, and construct-driven performance assessment. (Blintz & Harste, 1994, p. 7)

B
BENCHMARKS

Synonyms - standards, milestones
A qualitatively or quantitatively defined set of behaviours which become the criterion which marks a stage, a level, or a phase of growth in a specified area of cognitive or physical development.

C
CONSTRUCT

A theoretical concept based on observable phenomena that aid researchers in analyzing and understanding some aspect of study. (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 43)

CRITICAL LITERACY

Analytical habits of thinking, reading, writing, speaking, or discussing which go beneath surface impressions, traditional myths, mere opinions, and routine cliches; understanding the social contexts and consequences of any subject matter; discovering the deep meaning of any event, text, technique, process, object, statement, image, or situation; applying that meaning to your own context. (Shor, 1993, p. 32)
DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Is the process of monitoring a student's progress in an area of learning so that decisions can be made about the best ways to facilitate further learning.
(Masters & Forster, 1996a, p. 1)

The distinguishing feature of developmental assessment is the intention to monitor student progress against a pre-constructed map of developing skills, knowledge and understanding.
(Masters & Forster, 1996a, p. 3)

DISCOURSE
The knowledge of any subject is known, constructed, negotiated and argued about in distinctive language patterns or discourses.
(Christie, 1995, p. 13)

Systematically organised ways of talking and writing, which give expression to the values and meanings of particular institutions.
(Knapp & Callaghan, 1989, p. 78)

A socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or "social network."
(Gee, 1991, p. 3)

EPISTEMOLOGY
Is the study of knowledge: it is the study of how we know what we know. All knowledge entails human representations and interests. Hence, no perception of the world is neutral. All seeing and viewing occurs from a particular standpoint and location.

EVALUATION
Evaluation is the collection and analysis of data, from a variety of sources and perspectives, which will contribute to:
• making judgements of merit and worth
• making decisions about future planning
• informing learning.
(Woodward, 1993, p. 2)

Evaluating is the process of gathering information and making judgements about the effectiveness of teaching programs, policies and procedures. Modifications to programs, policies and procedures may result from the evaluation process.
(Board of Studies, New South Wales, 1994, p. 307)

evaluation n. 1. judgement of performance as process or product of change. 

Note: Evaluation is an attempt to understand a process that is sometimes guided by preset objectives but at other times involves objectives added during the evaluation process.

2. the process of testing, appraising, and judging achievement, growth, product, process, or changes in these, frequently through the use of formal and informal tests
and techniques. *Note:* The process of evaluation is global in conception and application. It represents a broad concept that may be distinguished from the concerns of measurement, appraisal, and assessment in that the latter operations can form the basis for evaluation, but not the reverse. (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 76)

**ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH**

In education, the onsite, naturalistic study of classroom teaching-learning situations; observational research. (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 75)

**ETHNOGRAPHY**

In addition to being a product, ethnography is also a process, a way of studying human life. Ethnographic design mandates investigatory strategies conducive to cultural reconstruction. First, the strategies used elicit phenomenological data; they represent the world view of the participants being investigated, and participant constructs are used to structure the research. Second, ethnographic research strategies are empirical and naturalistic. Participant and nonparticipant observation are used to acquire firsthand, sensory accounts of phenomena as they occur in real world settings, and investigators take care to avoid purposive manipulation of variables in the study. Third, ethnographic research is holistic. Ethnographers seek to construct descriptions of total phenomena within their various contexts and to generate from these descriptions the complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behaviour toward, and belief about, the phenomena. Finally ethnography is multimodal or eclectic; ethnographic researchers use a variety of research techniques to amass their data (Wilson, 1977).

(Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 3)

**ETHNOMETHODOLOGY**

n. ...

2. the study of "the underlying processes which speakers of a language utilize to produce and interpret communicative experiences, including the unstated assumptions which are shared cultural knowledge and understandings" (Heath, 1989).

(Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 75)

**FUNCTIONAL LITERACY**

Harris and Hodges (1995) give the following explanation:

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural organisation (1978) defines a literate as one "who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life". Yet there are many people who are literate in this restricted sense, but who nonetheless suffer serious problems with more complex reading and writing tasks. These are the "functionally illiterate". (p. 90)

To be functionally literate a person must be able to "engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling
him to continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for his own and the community's development" (UNESCO, 1978). (p. 90)

Note that functional literacy is a relative measure rather than an absolute one. The same skill level may result in one being considered functionally literate in one context and functionally illiterate in another. Also, *functional* literacy calls for a broader as well as a higher level of basic skills than does literacy because it embraces calculations as well as reading and writing. It is, in effect, a measure of one's capacity to cope with the educational challenges of a given environment. John Ryan (p. 90)

**GENRE**

Refers to any staged purposeful cultural activity in which language is used, and this includes oral language genres as well as written language ones. A genre is said to be characterised by having a schematic structure- a distinctive beginning, middle and end. Genres are not set in concrete or fixed and unchanging forever. They have been developed over time to achieve social purposes and are constantly evolving. (Knapp & Callaghan, 1989, p. 79)

**GROUNDED THEORY**

To 'discover theory from data' through the 'general method of constant comparison'. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1)

**HYPertext**

*n.* in computer use, a sophisticated branching program that allows the user to move among or relate text, graphics, and sound data in new patterns in any desired order. (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 110)

**HERMENEUTICS**

Hermeneutics attempts "to describe and study meaningful human phenomena in a careful and detailed manner as free as possible from prior theoretical assumptions, based instead on practical understanding."

(Packer, 1985, p. 1081–2)

The hermeneutic approach seeks to elucidate and make explicit our practical understanding of human actions by providing interpretations of them. (Packer, 1985, p. 1088)

The hermeneutic method aims at a progressive uncovering and explication (which is, of course, never fully completed) of the researcher's practical understanding of what is being studied. (Packer, 1985, p. 1089)

**ILLITERACY**

*n.* 1. the inability to read or write a language; specifically, "the inability to use reading and writing with facility in daily life (UNESCO, 1988)". (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 112)
ILLITERATE

1. adj. unable to read.

... 

6. n. a person who cannot read or write. 
(Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 113)

J

K

L

M MARKERS Synonyms for the term markers:
- pointers
- indicators
- signs
- descriptors.

We define 'markers' as 'behaviors which mark that the child has achieved a certain outcome. These outcomes can be organised into broad levels which can be called 'benchmarks' or 'standards'.
(Cambourne & Turbill, 1994, p. 11)

MEASUREMENT

Broadly defined it is the process of assigning numbers or other identifiers to behaviour, according to rules. In the context of classrooms, measurement is based on the classification of student performance, using set procedures. Administering a test, completing a checklist, recording an observation, obtaining a running record, rating a product or performance, are all primarily acts of measurement.
(Croft, 1995, p. 1)

MODERATION

Valid and reliable judgements of student achievement require teachers to have a common interpretation of the CSF and the levels of learning described by each learning outcome. The development of a common interpretation requires teachers to discuss and share their views within schools, among groups of schools and across the profession.
(Department of Education, Victoria, 1996a, p. 21)
Refer to Mackay (1986) re consensus and statistical moderation.

N

NATURALISTIC RESEARCH Fourteen characteristics of operational naturalistic inquiry.

- Natural setting
- Human instrument
- Utilization of tacit knowledge
- Qualitative methods
- Purposive sampling
- Inductive data analysis
- Grounded theory
- Emergent design
• Negotiated outcomes
• Case study reporting mode
• Idiographic interpretation
• Tentative application
• Focus-determined boundaries
• Special criteria for trustworthiness.

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 39-43)

O
OUTCOMES-BASED LEARNING
Student learning described in terms of students achieving a set of defined outcomes.

Differences between learning described in terms of outcomes and learning described in terms of objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. focus on what the teacher will do</td>
<td>. focus on what the student will do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. describe the intent of teaching</td>
<td>. describe the results of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. focus on opportunities provided for learning</td>
<td>. emphasize how learning is used, especially how it can be applied in new areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. involves estimating the amount that can be learned in a given period of time</td>
<td>.require flexible allocation of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ministry of Education and Training Ontario, 1995a, p. 23)

P
PARADIGM
A paradigm is a cognitive framework for organising and interpreting what we see and hear.

Paradigms are made up of the sum total of commonly held beliefs, values, concepts, and ways of thinking about and solving problems that a community or groups within a community hold at any one time; paradigms influence the way that we construct reality: that is; how we interpret and understand the world; the ways that humans think about most areas of knowledge are framed by, perhaps even controlled by, the prevailing or most widely held paradigm of the time.
(Cambourne & Turbill, 1994, p. 3)

A paradigm expresses the configuration of beliefs, values, and techniques by which normal science is pursued. It represents the outlook and methods by which a discipline of study conducts its routine life, interprets data, and does research.
(Gelwick, 1977, p. 55)

PHENOMENOLOGY
Similar to naturalistic inquiry, is by some considered a paradigm rather than a research strategy. It began as a school of philosophy. In the course of applying this philosophy to the scientific exploration of the social world, however, scholars developed explicit investigative methods. Phenomenological researchers study the ordinary 'life world': they are interested in the way people experience their world, what it is like for them,
how to best understand them. In order to gain access to others' experience phenomenologists explore their own, but also collect intensive and exhaustive descriptions from their respondents. These descriptions are submitted to a questioning process in which the researcher is open to themes that emerge. A theme is something 'akin to the content, or topic, or statement, or fact in a piece of data' (Tesch, 1987, p. 231). Finding commonalities and uniquenesses in these individual themes allows the researcher to crystallize the 'constituents' of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 1975, p. 74). The result is a description of the 'general structure' (ibid., p. 75) of the phenomenon studied.
(Tesch, 1990, p. 68)

**Phenomenology** is a field of enquiry that attempts to understand and describe human phenomena from an experiential perspective. Phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld - the world as we immediately experience it rather than as we conceptualize, categorize or theorize about it. Phenomenology aims to come to a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences.
(van Manen, 1984, p. 37).

Phenomenology is not to be confused with phenomenography. "**Phenomenography** is a research method for mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, perceive, and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them."
(Marton, 1981, p. 31).

**PORTFOLIOS**

- "Are **collections** of artifacts of students' learning experiences assembled over time (Valencia, 1990)."

Different kinds of portfolios result from, and are appropriate for, different educational contexts and purposes.
(Forster & Masters, 1996b, p. 1)

- Portfolios are sources of evidence for judgements of student achievement in a range of contexts, from classroom monitoring of student performance to high-stakes summative assessment. All portfolios, whatever their purpose, contain 'pieces of evidence'. The more relevant the evidence, the more useful it is for inferring a student's level of achievement in a learning area. 'Relevance' is the degree to which the evidence addresses the knowledge, skills and understandings, or outcomes, of the learning area.
(Forster & Masters, 1996b, p. 2)

- The portfolio is an approach to assessment utilizing the collection of information about performance to describe growth in literacy learning.
(van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1992, p. 93)

Characteristics of portfolios:
- a portfolio represents the 'dimensions of literacy learning', ie the important literacy behaviours, knowledge, and attitudes
- portfolios need to include a variety of measures
- portfolios need to be linked to the curriculum
- the evidence about literacy development can come from many sources (e.g., teachers, parents, and pupils)
- a portfolio should reflect the growth and development of literacy learning over time
- a portfolio should be shared.
(van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1992, p. 94–96)

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

Portfolios contain a systematically collected range of student work used to demonstrate growth or development in specific areas of learning.

POINTERS

Synonyms for the term pointers:
- markers
- indicators
- signs
- descriptors.

PROGRESS MAPS (or 'continuum')

A progress map is a picture of the path students typically follow as they learn. This vertical map provides a description of skills, understandings and knowledge in the sequence in which they typically develop: a picture of what it means to 'improve' in an area of learning.
(Masters & Forster, 1996a, p. 1)

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives.
(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2)

Qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes counterdisciplinary field. It crosses the humanities and the social and physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. It is multiparadigmatic in focus. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multimethod approach. They are committed to the naturalistic perspective, and to the interpretative understanding of human experience. At the same time, the field is inherently political and shaped by multiple ethical and political positions. Qualitative research embraces two tensions at the same time. On the one hand, it is drawn to a broad interpretive, postmodern, feminist, and critical sensibility. On the other hand, it is drawn to
more narrowly defined positivist, postpositivist, humanistic, and
naturalistic conceptions of human experience and its analysis.
(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 3-4)

Research that is conducted in naturalistic settings in order to make
sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that
people bring to them.
(Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 200)

R
S
T
TEXT Any meaningful stretch of language - oral or written.
(Derewianka, 1992, p. 16)

Text is a general term which refers to any communication
written, spoken or visual, involving language.
(Campagna-Wildash, 1994, p. 1)

U
V
VISUAL LITERACY The ability to interpret and communicate with respect to visual
symbols in media other than print, as visual literacy in viewing
Television, art, nature, etc.
(Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 274)
APPENDIX F

Interview Questions: Principals

Interview Questions: Principals

Topic: Influences on Teachers' Judgements of Students' Literacy Development in a Victorian Context

1. What do you think, from your Principal's perspective, influences teachers' judgements in relation to students' literacy development?

2. What are the significant influences in the development of teachers' judgements?
   - Policy documents - school level
     - DSE
     - commercial publications
   - Teachers' personal knowledge
   - Teachers' experience - their accumulated wisdom
   - Professional Development Programmes:
     - At the school level
     - From professional associations (ALEA, VATE, PETA)
     - DSE
     - BOS
     - Special programmes - ELIC
     - Reading Recovery
   - Influence of original training
   - University courses undertaken

3. How influential is school personnel leadership?
   - Principal
   - Senior Coordinators
   - Colleagues

4. Do you think teachers are influenced by 'significant persons'?
   - Brian Cambourne
   - Frances Christie
   - ____________
   - ____________
   - ____________
5. How influential is teacher personality?
   - the professional teacher
   - the teacher who believes in life long learning

6. How influential is the commitment to school policy and curriculum practice?

I am thinking of your school where you have a commitment to integrated curriculum, whole language, inquiry learning, etc. Is the commitment to this philosophy important to the teachers' practices?
APPENDIX G

PhD Related Presentations

Tuesday, 7th July 1998  
*Understanding the Influences on Teachers' Judgements in the Process of Assessing and Reporting Students' Literacy in the Classroom.* Research paper presented at the Joint National Conference Australian Literacy Educators' Association & Australian Association for the Teaching of English *Literacy for All.* 5th - 7th July 1998, The Canberra School of Music, Canberra, ACT.

Monday, 30th March 1998  

Friday, 19th September 1997  
*The Trifecta in Research Design.* Doctorate of Education Seminar. Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services, RMIT, Melbourne.

Wednesday, 9th July 1997  
*Why I Chose the Research Design I Did*  

Wednesday, 9th July 1997  

Thursday, 8th May 1997  
*Assessment and Reporting in Victoria - 1997.*  
Professional development presentation at Northcote High School Victoria.
Friday, 7th March 1997  
**Assessing Learning Outcomes.** Curriculum day at Kings Park Secondary College, St. Albans, Victoria.

Wednesday, October 2nd, 1996  
**Professional Accountability: Literacy Assessment and Reporting.** Invitation to present at *This is Literacy* the TAWL - Teachers Applying Whole Language Conference 2nd - 4th October, 1996 at the Hilton Hotel, Melbourne, Victoria.

Tuesday, July 2nd, 1996  

Tuesday, July 30th, 1996  
**Assessment Today: Relating Assessment, Recording and Reporting to the CSF.** Department of Education Victoria, Doncaster District. Education Forum, Yarra Valley Country Club.

Wednesday, May 8th, 1996  
**Assessment and Reporting: Policy and Practice.** Directorate of School Education Victoria, Nunawading District 13. Old Orchard Primary School, Blackburn North Victoria.

Tuesday, 26th March, 1996  
**Keying into Assessment and Reporting: Issues for School Communities.** Directorate of School Education Victoria, South East Metropolitan Region, Maroondah District 16. York on Lilydale, Mt. Evelyn, Victoria.

Thursday, 13th July, 1995  
APPENDIX H

Assessment Strategies that Teachers Use to Collect Literacy Data

On the 26th March 1996 I conducted a professional development session in relation to assessment and evaluation (Refer to Appendix G - PhD Related Presentations). I asked the 150 teachers who participated in the session to nominate what strategies they knew were being used in their school to collect assessment and evaluation data. The following list is a collation of all the items nominated by the teachers present.

Assessment Strategies

Profiles
Formal testing
Informal testing/Teacher designed tests
Diagnostic tests
Collection of samples of work
Observation/Daily incidental observations
Anecdotal Records
Children's comments
Self Assessment/Student feedback:  • Oral
                                            • Written

Checklists
Intuition
Projects and assignments
Oral presentation
Passed on pupil information
Clinical assessments
Teaching procedures:  • Read & retell
                               • Cloze

Parent/Teacher Interviews
Journal
Learning Logs
Reading Logs
Group tasks
LAP (Learning Assessment Project)
Discussion- small groups, whole groups
Finished products (models, diorama)
Diagnostic information from Guidance Officer
Conferencing: teacher/child; teacher/teacher
Peer assessment
Running Records/ Miscue Analysis
Story Maps
Share time
Teacher questioning
Data Charts
Concept Maps/Mind Maps
Cooperative groups
Graphics
Surveys
Photographs
Curriculum Audits
Special education reports
Likert Scale ratings
APPENDIX I

Newspaper Articles Reporting Literacy Assessment Results

The following examples of newspaper articles reporting literacy assessment issues have been selected from the following time periods:

- 1917
- 1970s
- 1980s
- 1990s

The recurrent theme in all these articles (but one) is that literacy standards are falling.
EDUCATION NOTES.

(BY "PEDAGOGUS")

ENGLISH.

From our endeavor to broaden the reahon of instruction, auditorship has resulted in the fundammentals. Nearly all the Inspectors complain of the English which they do, or do not, find in the primary schools. Reading lacks fluency and expression, articulation is defective. The meanings of words have been taught in a mechanical manner, but comphrension of poems taught by recitation, and of reading lessons is rarely displayed. Recitation, too, often develops into a monologue, though the good old "sing-songs" still has votaries. Despite the stress that has been laid with word-building of late years spelling has not yet reached a high standard. Common difficult words do not receive the attention which was once devoted to them. Derivation does not appear to be taught in an interesting manner, nor correlated as it should be with the spelling and other lessons. Oral composition is weak, but written work has improved. The nature study lessons prove the easiest subject, but good essays and romances are rare. Grammar is the bugbear of most teachers and children, and results are proportionate to the spirit and interest with which both take the lessons. Even writing has not reached the satisfactory stage. What can be expected from the pupils of teachers who are not wide awake enough to set their copies as per Queensland Copybooks. "Back of the R's" will be a necessary slogan if improvement does not soon show up.

ODDS AND ENDS.

In Adelaide no less than 14,000 children are about from school daily. Some of them being away without valid excuse. On an enrolment of 85,000 the average attendance is 84.5 per cent. Queensland's average compares very favorably with this when our great distances are considered. Our average daily attendance is 82.1 per cent. New South Wales has a little, with 151,317 as 226,418, or 99.5 per cent.

President Wilson has followed the Chalky Way, as Professor W. Wilson. To enforce silence on visitors to the reading rooms at the John Hopkins University Library, each person is accommodated in a cabin with walls of transparent glass.

At least one school committee in Central Queensland opposed the installation of a library in the local school last year. What a boon is a Compulsory Education Act.

Draughts and chess might well be introduced into some of the schools. On the very hot and wet days the spare time could be made enjoyable.

History and civics do not appear to be favorite subjects in the schools. If a visitor wants to hear a dry lesson, he should stroll into one of the schools when civics is being taught. Interesting reading books can be obtained from the Government Printer, and teachers should obtain copies for their subordinates. From these books one can judge the amount of preparation which is given to the reading lessons.

NON-EXEMPT TEACHERS.

The Board of Education has withdrawn its circular advising teachers not to volunteer for full-time work under the national service scheme. The Director-General of the latter has given a guarantee that no teacher will be called up who are the school authorities consulted and given an opportunity of appealing. Each case is to be decided on its merits. Confidence would be engendered if members of
AUSTRALIA'S
EDUCATION SCANDAL:
WE'RE TURNING
OUT MILLIONS OF DUNCES

By PETER SAMUEL

The last five years have seen governments in Australia of all political colors lavish unprecedented and unparalleled amounts of public money on education. Vast sums have been spent on all aspects of school from bright new buildings through extensive research and innovation activity to the most expensive cost of all - the support of a much larger and higher-paid army of teachers.

Yet this upsurge in the application of community resources in pursuit of better education has been almost precisely matched by a spreading fear that the schools are failing as education institutions and that the increase in the cost and quantity of schooling has somehow been matched by a decline in the quality of their education.

have massively increased but the output of real education has declined. That has been a matter of observation and impression on the part of parents, teachers and employers, but now the failures of education are a matter of hard, cold facts and figures.

Two carefully designed studies soon to be published in Canberra will give details of extensive professional surveys of the problem of illiteracy in schools, and an even more alarming inadequacy in simple arithmece.

The study titled Literacy and Numeracy in Australian Schools being published in two volumes by the Australian Council for Educational Research is the more elaborate. It has tested a large sample of almost 13,000 Australian schoolchildren in normal schools and normal classes, deliberately omitting the many "special" and "remedial" schools and classes where the recognized handicapped and defective children are located.

It was a survey of ordinary, normal schoolchildren in ordinary average

Keeping our parents in the dark

CRUCIAL to the debate on our declining education outcomes is the question: How much do Victorian parents really know about their children's learning progress?

The answer, in any comprehensive, comparative sense, is almost nothing. With "equality" as the tagline of the new, comparative, evaluative assessment of either teacher or student performance, one-sided, radical teacher-union leadership, largely backed by ministerial and departmental advisers risen from their ranks, vigorously oppose collection of standardized data. They resist any systematic monitoring and measuring system through which one student can be compared with another, or shock, horror: one school with another.

All the hapless parents get are term reports with the vaguest of performance categories that set progress in a vacuum. It is a bizarre oddity that in an age when collection and practical application of statistics in many areas of daily life are being aggressively expanded, in education (or at least in that particular sphere) they appear to be anachronism.

"Why are medical teachers so sensitive to any broad statistical program that could provide wholesome light on comparative teacher ability and comparative worth of teaching methods, especially when these would be mere side-products of student evaluation that would benefit not only the students themselves but all parents anxious to help them?"

Parents are being coerced into a bloodless electoral upsurge, of no relevance to the world outside the classroom, in which the concept of failure is eschewed, while at the other end the gifted or exceptional child is deemed an embarrassing "molehill of privilege". It is all about levelling, with the inevitable implications of lowest common denominators.

"As one senior Victorian educator put it to me: 'The drive for equality, futures, mobility, is embraced, even encouraged. It is all about levelling, with the inevitable implications of lowest common denominators."

1. Do parents have a right to information on the achievement of their child's class in all areas of the curriculum that is, details of class performance overall, such as to use the trade term means, quantities, ranges and standard deviation?

2. Do parents have a right to information on the progress of their child's entire year group that is, all the children of that child's age in the school, as with classmates and parallel classes? (Heister 3 is a mere data breach on other independent schools.)

3. Do parents have the right to information on the performance of their child's age cohort in other schools, regions, states? Does the Minister have such data?

4. Can the Minister say which method of teaching English as a second language is working best, and with which children? Or does it matter if one method is better than another, or one works better with one group than another? In summary, if effectiveness is important, on what data does the Minister rely to inform homestay, Parliament and the public? As a senior academic deeply involved in education theory and practice, I put it: "How does the Minister fail to inform residents in the public on the function of individual schools in Victoria if he is not allowed to collect data by which the achievement of children in a school can be seen in the perspective of like children in a like school?" Given school-based curriculum and assessment, how is the child's (and, incidentally, the parents') community to benefit from the most appropriate teachers, methods and curricula? He tells us to rely on the advice of the teachers in particular schools who do not know, in fact cannot know, what is happening five miles away in a different school, with different curriculum, assessment procedures and goals?"


The following collection shows a series of three headlines reporting the same result of a study conducted in Victoria in 1988. The study, entitled "Literacy and Numeracy in Victorian Schools: 1988" was undertaken by the ACER.

Patchy report for Victoria's schools

By LUKE SLATTERY, education reporter

A study of Victorian students has found that the maths skills of 11-year-olds have fallen in the past eight years.

The study, conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research, also found a "small but significant" rise in the rate of spelling errors made by 10-year-olds.

The study, entitled "Literacy and Numeracy in Victorian Schools: 1988," found that between 1989 and 1988 the number of words spent incorrectly by 11-year-old students increased from about four words in every 100 to six.

The study, conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research, also found a "small but significant" rise in the rate of spelling errors made by 10-year-olds.

The study of Victorian students has found that the maths skills of 11-year-olds have fallen in the past eight years.

The Council's chairman, Dr Harry McGraw, said the study showed there was some evidence of a decline in standards in the lower-secondary years.

"That section of the education system is the one that is least sure of what it is doing. There has been less attention given to that level over the years, and more attention has been given to the senior years of the Victorian Certificate of Education."

The study tested 118,000 11-year-olds in 75 schools and 112,000 in 52 schools in Government and non-Government schools.

The study showed that the performance of 11-year-olds had been maintained during the period. "An important feature of the results for 11-year-olds is that since 1975 the level of achievement of the poorer-performing students has been rising," the report said.


Schooling standards have not declined, study shows

By SALLY HEATH, education reporter

Despite a widespread perception that education standards have slipped, the major study released today shows that the reverse is true.

The study has found that standards of literacy and numeracy across the state generally remain stable since 1975 (contrary to what was seen in 1975). It confirms that about one in 10 Victorian teenagers have literacy and numeracy skills necessary for their adult life.

The Ministry of Education commissioned the study of different skills in government, Catholic and private schools. It was carried out by the Australian Council for Educational Research last year.

Schooling standards have not declined, study shows

Improvement in learning in Victorian schools

JOAN KIRNER
Minister for Education

1988 have been recorded at the same levels as 1975, despite a significant influx of students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The number of students who speak no English at home has increased from 4 per cent in 1975 to 14 per cent in 1988 at Year 3 and from 1 per cent to 4 per cent at Year 9, yet this does not reflect the level of literacy skills.

However, Victoria will not be focusing on its lauders and the Government has taken major steps to improve the standards of literacy, teaching and learning. They include:

- The Literacy Strategy. This is being implemented over five years to ensure that all children are confident, motivated and independent readers and writers by the end of Year 3. It includes refreshers courses for teaching of literacy, a Reading Recovery program for children who fall behind and a parent participation program. The extension of the program to Years 7 and 10 will start next year with observer education courses for teachers.

- As Education Victoria reported last month the Reading Together campaign was launched as a key feature of the Literacy Strategy to publicize the benefits of adults and children reading together.

- Literacy Professions designed to better inform parents, students and teachers about children's progress in schools have been instilled in 100 schools since last September. The profiles provide a clear picture of where children are up to, where they are teaching and where parents and teachers can assist.

One of the highlights of the ACER report was the consistent improvement in maths among students who find maths most difficult. This has been particularly noticeable at Year 5 and appears to reflect a consistent improvement over the 13 years from 1975 to 1988. The level of achievement in maths at Year 9 is higher than 1975, although there is some evidence of a slight decline in science since 1980.

We have already taken steps to improve maths education through:

- The Numeracy Strategy which was developed along the lines of the Literacy Strategy.

Further study by ACER will be commissioned by the Ministry and this study will identify common errors made by students and teachers. This information will identify the errors made and how to overcome them. As mathematics, language and technology studies will be compulsory in the new Victorian Certificate of Education, which will be fully implemented by 1992. Years 11 and 12 courses have been revised to ensure better achievement levels in maths and emphasise problem solving and real life applications instead of mere learning.

The ACER study provides a mixed picture in the performance of functional writing tasks with some areas of improvement and some of decline.

Spelling performance has not declined for 14-year-olds since the first measure was taken in 1975 although there has been some decline in 10-year-old's spelling levels.

This may reflect the higher incidence of children from non-English speaking backgrounds and we must work to improve these standards.

The Government is currently developing Writing Profiles along the lines of the Literacy and Numeracy Profiles and the Literacy Strategy will pay particular attention to writing, spelling and reading as well as reading.

We intend to continue with regular reports by ACER on improvement in learning in Victorian schools.

New studies will include science, social studies and numeracy.

I believe the information will assist schools in lifting achievement levels and will also be useful to parents, teachers, students and the public and the education system as a whole.
Why the state of our learning offers a sobering education

By FRANK DOVENE

Of 1400 Year 12 students from all States and the ACT who did a Skills and Reading assessment test organised by The Australian, only 14 per cent could select Australia on a map and only 12 per cent could distinguish between a map and a globe. The test was designed to probe the image drawn back as of the myth of Australia; furthering our image of the Mediterranean, made that the only one of 10 West European countries that more than 10 per cent named it and 10 per cent did not even know it existed. Overall, 14 per cent were right. Nearly 140 of the 1400 identical none of the European countries correctly.

Closer to home, China correctly and Japan (15 per cent) were the only East Asian countries identified by more than 10 per cent. Only 12 per cent could identify Canada seems to be frequently mistaken for China in the Philippines, and 17 per cent for Canada. The Egyptians were the least identifiable in all countries surveyed by only 1 per cent of the students.

Moreover, 111 here and girls could not accurately locate from the map. The map, and 111 per cent of them found no difference in the shape of France and Nigeria.

The 418 students displayed a distinctly administered lack of knowledge of current affairs and literature.

Pools of human potential

By SUZANNE MCCOLL

Australian schools, both public and private, are proud of their advertisements, essays, and competitions. Yet, they lack a good showing when compared to those of other countries. This is the result of the lack of interest by students in their studies. They are not interested in learning, but rather in passing the test. This lack of interest is reflected in the results of the test. There were 1400 students from all States and the ACT who did a test. Only 115 of them could correctly identify the world's greatest ocean. This is an increase from the 112 who did so in 1989. However, this increase is still not enough to make the students interested in their studies. They need to be encouraged to learn and to understand the importance of their education. This can be achieved by providing them with interesting and relevant material. By doing so, they will be more likely to show an interest in their studies. The results of the test show that there is a need for improvement in the education system. The students need to be encouraged to learn and to understand the importance of their education. This can be achieved by providing them with interesting and relevant material. By doing so, they will be more likely to show an interest in their studies.
Our students lack essential knowledge

By SUSAN MOORE*

Because so much concern about educational quality has been expressed around the world, teachers in many countries have been trying to find out what children do and do not know at key stages of their development.

The cornerstones of literacy and numeracy and, more recently, general knowledge have become essential means around the globe of discovering what schools are accomplishing.

Increasingly, educators are asking whether children are being given enough general knowledge to make sense of their world.

Unfortunately, we in Australia have lagged behind other technologically advanced nations in general knowledge testing. It is heartening to note the effort by The Australian to test a sample of Year Nine students nationally — the first such endeavour in at least a decade. What a pity that only private schools were involved.

Immediate priority

The results of The Australian's test are reminiscent of those obtained by Or Malcolm Boer and Mr. Peter McGregor earlier this year, when, under the auspices of the Institute of Public Affairs, they conducted a study of social studies standards in both private and public schools in Victoria.

Both the Australian's and IPA's test reveal that our senior students lack essential knowledge about major human endeavours afflicting us all. The great majority of students taking The Australian's test could not name the two prime ministers who preceded Mr. Bob Hawke let alone identify writers and thinkers vital to the development of Western culture.

Most students who did the IPA test could not handle basic factual questions about Australian civic life — for example, most could not name the two Houses of Parliament.

If young Australians do not know the simple facts about our political institutions, how can they begin to comprehend the operations of government in our democratic society?

For all our sakes, the national testing of standards of general knowledge in all Australian schools, public and private, ought to be an immediate priority, as it has been overseas.

In the United States a federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities, funded a national test in history and literature for 8000 Year 11 students. Its aim was to assess general knowledge in both subject areas by means of factual questions in a multiple choice format.

The facts presented to the students who took the test were connected with large and significant cultural events — events high school graduates need to be familiar with in order to appreciate both their own heritage and the workings of the world in which they live.

Most of the US students did well on questions about fairy tales, national heroes and frequently encountered equations. But they did badly on history, geography, literature, mythology, scientific discoveries and international affairs.

In recent years, considerable international attention has been paid to a US best-seller, Cultural Literacy, by E.D. Hirsch. The author's central argument is that unless we possess a storehouse of factual knowledge, we cannot read with understanding, nor converse except at a most rudimentary level with our fellow human beings. Predictably, when interviewed by administrators of the 1986 US test, most of the 8000 students said they rarely read. Although they were living in a period marked by a tremendous explosion of knowledge, the majority had little acquaintance with it.

The Australian and IPA tests suggest that Australian high school students are as least as badly off.

Twelve years of schooling should equip children with the means of connecting the present with the past, with an awareness of timeless patterns explored by great thinkers through the ages and a secure pattern of knowledge on which to build.

It is imperative that Australia find out whether its children are so equipped.

*Susan Moore is a Sydney-based research fellow of the education unit of the Institute of Public Affairs.

One child in five has literacy trouble

At least one in five Australian children complete primary school unable to read and write properly, according to a joint federal parliamentary report.

The report said it was generally accepted that if children had not grasped the basics of reading and writing, listening and speaking by year three, they would probably be disadvantaged all their lives.

The committee's chairwoman, Mrs Mary Crawford, (Labor) said yesterday that although it was estimated that 20 per cent of school pupils completed primary school with literacy problems, it was probably closer to 25 per cent. At some schools, most students lacked literacy skills.

By MARGARET EASTERNBROOK, Canberra

Failing our children

KEN BAKER says too many students are illiterate because insufficient attention is paid to their early years of schooling.

The Victorian university where I used to teach had to conduct remedial classes in English — not principally for overseas students, but for Australians.

The teaching of basic English should not be the task of a university.

Why I used to wonder had those students been allowed to come so far in the education system without having their literacy problems detected and remedied?

In Victoria, much debate in recent years has concerned the VCE. But the root of literacy problems lies much earlier.

It is essential that more critical attention be paid to the early secondary and the formative primary years.

A report released this month by the Federal Government’s advisory body, the Economic Planning Advisory Council, confirms this view.

While recent reform efforts have been focused on tertiary education, it says, the problems in primary and secondary schooling are more pressing.

It is there that the foundations of life-long learning are set.

What has gone wrong?

澳大利亚s invest enormous amounts of time and money in education, but, in the language of the EPAC report, we know little about the system’s outputs.

There has been a reluctance, including from the unions, to support the testing of students.

Critics of testing say it stigmatizes those who fail. But the damage to self-esteem is greater for children who, promoted automatically, are confronted with tasks for which they are, and feel, inadequately prepared.

A federal parliamentary committee whose report, The Literacy Challenge, was released in February found that up to 25 per cent of children “graduated” from primary school with a problem in reading and writing.

The EPAC report now recommends that students “graduate” with a diploma at the completion of primary school only if they meet defined standards of literacy and numeracy.

A minority of the authors of The Literacy Challenge argued for the introduction of standardized tests for children as early as Year 1.

This seems sensible, given that the earlier a reading difficulty is detected, the easier it can be remedied.

To lift standards of literacy, a change of reading methods is also needed.

The best Australian research on this comes from Tasmania. After assessing more than 3000 children, researchers Byron Harrison and Jean Counsell have shown how reliance on the “whole word” or “real books” method of teaching reading (which involves children guessing words rather than sounding them out) produces poor readers.

The “whole word” method is widely used in Victorian schools.

The parents of children with reading difficulties who sought the researchers help had typically had their concerns dismissed by their children’s schools.

The parents were accused of being over anxious, or of interfering with the school’s instructional program, or they were told that their children would read when they were ready.

While most teachers are well-intentioned, inadequate training contributes to the literacy problem.

The Literacy Challenge points to a decline in the quality of candidates admitted to infant-primary teacher training programs and argues that too little time is devoted to language and literacy in those programs.

But schools and training institutions cannot carry all the blame. We are living in an age in which the image overshadows the printed word.

If Australian figures resemble those in Britain and the United States, 70 to 75 per cent of 15-year-olds watch three or more hours of television each day, making it their principal form of recreation.

Computer games are not far behind. Among teenagers, literature is out of fashion.

Some children’s books may also be exacerbating the problem. A recent issue of The New Scientist reports on a study shows children’s books written heavily on illustrations are detrimental for beginner readers.

The artwork in such books is often wonderful, but the pictures make the text redundant.

Parents and teachers share a responsibility to stimulate interest in the written word among children.

Or KEN BAKER is education director at the Institute of Public Affairs.

One child in five has literacy trouble

By MARGARET EASTBROOK

At least one in five Australian children is not capable of reading and writing properly, according to a report launched yesterday.

The report, which urges a massive overhaul of the education system, says that "a million children are at risk" of not being able to read and write properly.

The committee, chaired by Dr Peter Lord, said that the problem was "critical" and that the solution was "urgent".

"Reading and writing skills are essential for all children," the report said. "They are the foundation for learning and for life in society."
Reading and righting literacy test ‘wrongs’

BY BRIAN TOOHEY

BEFORE parents became alarmed at claims that 30 per cent of 14-year-olds lack basic literacy skills, they should realize some of Australia’s most literate people could fail the test.

When the author of a key passage in the test was tested by The Sun-Herald, he failed 46% of the questions.

Failure does not mean people are unintelligent or unable to read. In fact most intelligent people can disagree about what is the ‘right’ answer to some of the difficult questions in the test, supervised by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

A strong case can be made that some of the “wrong” answers to questions set out in the panel at left are at least as valid as those marked “right”. What is being tested is not a basic ability to read. Students are expected to give unconvincing answers about the meaning of a piece of prose which the writer deliberately avoids stating plainly what he means.

None of these problems is acknowledged in a press release from Schools Minister David Kemp, headed ‘Alarming New Literacy Results’, nor is the claim from Frontier Bob Carr that the state does a disturbing job of teaching basic literacy skills since 1975.

The ACER’s Dr John Aylen, who analysed results, says there has been no statistically significant change in results since 1975. The difficulties intelligent people can have with basic literacy is on vivid display in Kemp’s press release on the test, in which he says the “shock findings were a major cause of Australia’s high youth unemployment”. A moment’s thought should have convinced Kemp this was a very silly thing to say.

Study findings are not the cause of youth unemployment (maybe the phenomenon being studied are, but not the findings). This point may seem rather obvious, but it involves the sort of analytic skill being tested. Indeed, parents could be tempted to come to the “shock” finding that the fact that Kemp has a PhD from Yale University is no indication of his ability to think clearly. The more charitable conclusion is that anyone can make elementary errors in reasoning, even though little allowance should be made for such faults in the ACER results, which Kemp is jumping up and down about.

Kemp’s press statement also claims the “basic literacy skills of 28,000 14-year-old students in year nine in all States and territories were assessed in 1975, 1980, 1989 and 1997.”

Kemp’s office says that a comprehension test of the meaning of that sentence could lead many people to conclude 28,000 students were tested in each of those years. This is not what happened. The number tested each year was considerably less and that the total was 8,000.

Aylen says the results mean 30pc of 14-year-olds do not reach standards of literacy defined in 1975 as “mastering” what is expected from the school curriculum. Maturing was defined as getting 80pc of the questions right. Because tougher questions have been included since 1975, this figure has been adjusted down but the overall result remains about the same in the 1995 test. Nevertheless, it would have been easier to make the comparison if the questions had remained the same.

The questions in the panel at left are probably the hardest in the latest test. However, because they account for 25pc of the questions, any doubts about the validity of the “correct” answers can severely affect the conclusions about how many students have a “master of skills being tested.”

Part of the difficulty arises because the author of the passage, a journalist on The Sun-Herald, Martin Flanagan, uses metaphor as a literary device to square a traffic incident with war. Meaning is conveyed with style and imagery. Two options ask what Flanagan means in saying he was “trapped in a tunnel without a light.”

He does not say, for example, that the causes of war are often insidious rather than simply or directly. Reasonable people might disagree about what he is saying. Likewise, those who have watched events in South Africa might say a war is not literally until the fighting stops rather than when someone interferes and starts a communication.

Audibly enough, when Flanagan was tested by the writer, “failed” questions 2 and 4. Although he wrote the passage, the examiner claimed to have been more perplexed than would have been expected of school students.

At the very least, politicians who like to raise a ruckus about reading skills might care to examine some of the problems of achieving meaningful examinations, which is ambiguous. This is all the more so when he informs press release embarrassment devoid of basic literacy still.

G I V Y I ; J S S N C A D E O 2 0 8 1 0 5 8 9 6
What future for illiterate?

AUSTRALIA'S most popular writer, Bryce Courtenay, recently wrote an article on national illiteracy standards in The Bulletin.

Referring to a survey revealing up to 45 per cent of Australians are functionally illiterate, he surmised that the estimate was in no way exaggerated and the percentage is poised to go higher.

Courtenay pointed out how the illiteracy debate has occurred as regular intervals over the past 25 years with predictable results: education ministers and bureaucrats using the same table, teachers inertia to go on strike, and our children remain illiterate.

State education ministers will, on Thursday, meet in Melbourne with Federal Minister, David Kemp, to discuss future strategies, so the debate will get a new lease of life before settling for Christmas.

As one who has taught teaching almost two decades ago and recently returned, I can state, whereas literacy was a very important goal in the 60s and 70s, they are now disastrous.

We still need hard evidence research in the Australian Council for Educational Research to prove this for us any half educated adult should have been able to see at a glance.

Many, perhaps most, Australian parents can't write to receive social checks at Year 11 level.

By ROB DENTY

In a Year 4 class I taught earlier this year, 21 of the 35 students couldn't print.

They should have received a passage by Grade 4, of all the latest.

Students are not sure where to begin sentence begin or ends.

Capital letters are not used or not used at random.

Full-stops are very often omitted.

At least half of secondary students and about three-quarters of upper primary students do not write in paragraphs.

Their vocabulary is impaired and grammar is often amazingly bad.

It is, of course, ridiculous to expect students to hand-typed to be able to write English with any style.

Books without letters cannot be expected to fly, let alone ever.

Bryce Courtenay says the problem is compounded by the fact we now have a generation of adults - the parents and teachers of today's students - who themselves were not adequately prepared in the mother tongue.

The following extract is taken from a Japanese language textbook used throughout Australia.

It is part of a letter written by an imaginary exchange student in Japan to her family back in Australia. Well, in my head text were all on the truth behind the words, behind the words, behind the words about the country where I am living as a young married couple in Tokyo with my young family. We're in a small apartment, and it wasn't exactly like Tokyo, but the rent was quite cheap. They have their place. We live on our 12 weeks arranged in this special sort of stay on a guest house. I found it didn't sound exciting, but I was so still and sort of perfect.

My English teacher would have asked that place back and told me to write it properly.

These days it's acceptable, and it's probably helps explain why students hand-typed to be able to write English with any style.

The reading, method of teaching English, the best possible method, has become standardising across wherever it has been adopted in the US or Australia, but few teachers have had the courage to adopt it.

The teaching, method of teaching English, has become standardising across wherever it has been adopted in the US or Australia, but few teachers have had the courage to adopt it.

Several of Australia's best private schools in Sydney (Vivonne Bay School) and Melbourne (Melbourne Methodist Ladies' College) have introduced it.

It fundamentally produces high standards of literacy.

Recent research has confirmed what every casual observer knows: students from broken homes, particularly those who have difficulty with their schoolwork.

In many schools, at least one in 10 students is from a broken home.

French provincial, Dr. Bligh R., has found concentration improves if children watch television on average 30 minutes a day.

The problem is concentrated in Australia where conventional wisdom: it takes television, arts and computers a sign of educational program.

Whether the forthcoming meeting of ministers of education will produce more than hot air remains to be seen.

They would do well to consider some words of Bryce Courtenay to those who, each year and decade, ask all its mathematic theories and modern conveniences, education systems, and teaching methods, for proof that such new generations have a percentage of poor, average, bright and creative people. It's just that this has something to do with reading, writing and spelling, something with our five-year-olds.

Bob Denton is a school teacher who returned to the profession after a career in the advertising and computer industries.
APPENDIX J

The Process of Gaining Access to Research Data:
Timeline of Events

i) The Process of Gaining Access to Research Data

University
RMIT Faculty of Education and Training Higher Degree Standing Committee approval of research project, 1993; University Higher Degree Committee approval of research project; Faculty Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee approval; University Human Research Ethic Committee approval - 1992/Reaccreditation 1996. Issues of data confidentiality and security approved. Full documentation of the Ethics Policy and Procedures of the RMIT, Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services, Human Research and Ethics Sub-Committee can be found on the following WWW site: http://www.eu.rmit.edu.au/committees/ethics/

Directorate of School Education Victoria (DSE)*
*DSE became the DoE Department of Education Victoria in 1996.

North West Metropolitan Regional Office Victoria
Permission to approach Principals and School Councils approved - 1993/1996. Reciprocity: Copy of research findings when completed.

Principal Researcher

School
Principal and School Council approval to work in each school obtained - 1994. Issues of contact, time demands, confidentiality of participants' identity approved. Consent to interview and audio tape Principals. Reciprocity: Consultancy commitments to staff.

Teachers
Consent to work with teachers and students observing classroom routines. Permission to interview teacher and students and to audio tape conversations, and agreement to the collection of artefacts from the classroom - 1994.

Parents
Permission sought and consent forms signed to interview minors and audio tape conversation.

Students
Consent to discuss with, and audio tape conversations.
ii) Time Line of Events

1992–1993
Obtain Faculty and University Higher Degrees Committee approval; also obtain Faculty Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and University Human Research Committee approval for the research study (10 month process).
Obtain Directorate of School Education, Victoria approval to work in DSE schools. (DSE became the DoE - Department of Education Victoria in July 1996.)
Obtain approval to work in DSE school from the managing director of the Victorian Region in which the study was to be conducted.

1994
September–December
Contact three case study schools and begin visiting and negotiating with teachers and principals. Principals discuss research study with school councils where appropriate.

1995
July–August
Preliminary case study discussions with three participating teachers.
October–December
Classroom observation - half a day each week in each school.
An extended series of interviews with teachers, key informants and one of the principals.
Artefact collection - examples of school report cards and copies of student evaluation books.
School policy and curriculum document collection - as for example, teaching and learning and language policies of the schools, assessment policies, report forms and school charters.

1996
January–November
Transcribe interview tapes, prepare data for KWALITAN and ISYS programmes and commence analysis.
June–July
Complete remaining two principal interviews.
November–December
Participant member checking process.
April–October
Research study underwent reaccreditation process according to title change requirements and change of senior supervisor.

1997
January
Peer review process. (Refer to Appendix N for peer reviewers' reports.)
March
External Audit. Phase – 1. (Refer to Appendix O for external auditor's report.)
February–December
Interpretation of Data and write up of results.

1998
External Audit. Phase – 2. (Refer to Appendix O for external auditor's Finalise thesis and submit.
APPENDIX K

Participant Member Checking Procedure and Correspondence

A. Participant Member Checking Procedure

1. Set up in a quiet area
   - Tree Structure
   - Codes (2 copies)
   - Definitions of Codes (2 copies)
   - Coded Transcripts.

2. Introduce Mr. Garth Brown (Independent Observer). Garth is here as an independent observer to verify the member checking procedure, and so that I give you every opportunity to add comments, offer different interpretation/s, disagree, offer additional material.

3. Explain purpose of session
   - to show you the transcripts of the audio tapes
   - to show you the codes I have developed to explain my interpretation of the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development
   - to check with you my interpretations
   - to have you verify transcripts as a true record of our conversations.

4. Please feel free
   - to comment
   - ask for clarification
   - to see the transcripts for proof
   - disagree
   - add any comments, thoughts,
   - offer any translation changes you feel needs to be made
   - describe different interpretation/s
   - offer any additional material you think may assist in my interpretation/s.

5. Close session with offer that if any further thoughts come to the interviewees that they are free to contact me at any time. That if they wish to take home a copy of their own transcripts they may, however they must ensure that the material will not be photocopied at this stage of the research. The material will need to be returned to the researcher until the thesis is finished (this is to protect original material by researcher as it is a requirement of PhD submission).
Dear

I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in a further discussion session in relation to my Ph.D research. The purpose of this session is to discuss with you my initial interpretation of the many interviews we had together in 1995. As you know the purpose of my research is to investigate 'the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development'. I would like to give you the opportunity to:

• revisit our original conversations and reflect on my interpretations of your statements;
• correct errors of fact;
• to challenge what you may perceive to be wrong interpretations that I have made about what you said, or meant;
• volunteer additional information not provided in our initial period of engagement;
• affirm for the record the accuracy of the documented information and that the interpretation is a true and factual reconstruction of their statements.

As we discussed on the phone, Mr. Garth Brown will attend in the role of an independent third party to this 'data checking' phase of my research. Mr. Brown's role is to independently verify that the interview is a true and accurate record of the discussion and that you were able to freely express your opinion during the session. In research of this nature it is important that I am able to provide evidence of the trustworthiness of my interpretations of the data. Once again, I would like your permission to tape record the session for accuracy of recording the discussion content and for later reflection.

I look forward to seeing you at 2.30pm on the 5th of December 1996 at ... P.S.

Thank you in anticipation of our meeting and for your assistance.

Yours Sincerely
Heather Fehring

Ph: 93802017
Fax: 93503054
Email: fehringh@rmit.edu.au
Participant Member Checking Phase

All the interview data collected during the period October 1995 to July 1996 was transcribed. Initial preparation of the interview data was undertaken to nominate the textual units or 'segments' for the computer programme KWALITAN. A 'segment' constitutes the units of the analysis. (Peters & Wester, 1990, June, p. 9). In the current research a segment generally consists of a researcher question or comment and a participant's response. Once the data was installed into the KWALITAN programme three months of interpretative analysis took place. The interview data was coded so as to indicate what the interviewees were explicitly, or implicitly saying influenced their judgements about students' literacy development.

Following the completion of the interview coding follow up appointments were made with the three case study teachers and the three principals of each school. The six people were asked to participate in a discussion involving themselves, the researcher and an impartial and independent observer. These meetings were arranged in December 1996. The original audio tapes, the transcripts of interviews, the lists of codes designated as influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development, and a list of the defining qualities of each code were taken to each interview. The object of each discussion session was to establish the credibility of the interview data collected. By allowing the interviewees to reflect on the researcher's interpretation and the coding of the taped conversations the criterion of trustworthiness can be facilitated.

The member checking process gives the interviewees an opportunity to:
- revisit their original conversations and reflect on the researcher's interpretations;
- correct errors of fact;
- to challenge what are perceived to be wrong interpretations;
- volunteer additional information not provided in the initial period of engagement;
- affirm for the record the accuracy of the documented information and that the interpretation is a true and factual reconstruction of their statements (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
APPENDIX L

Independent Observer's Report of the Participant Member
Checking Phase of the Research Inquiry Process

RMIT UNIVERSITY
Faculty Education, Language &
Community Services
Department of School and
Early Childhood Education

18/12/96

Ms Heather Fehring
Department of School & Early Childhood Education
Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services
RMIT, Bundoora

Report from Mr Garth Brown as Independent Observer for Member Checking
Phase of Ms Fehring's PhD Research Study

I attended the following Member Checking sessions:
1. 25/11/96 at Eastlands P.S. *
2. 5/12/96 at Northlands P.S. *
3. 10/12/96 at Westlands P.S. *

The two staff from each school involved in the study were interviewed on the day indicated above.

The procedure in each case was the same:
1. The Independent Observer was introduced to the Participant and his role outlined.
   Confidentiality issues were reaffirmed by the Researcher.
2. Each Participant was shown the transcript of the audio tapes of previous interviews.
3. Each Participant was asked if this interview could be recorded. Each Participant agreed.
4. The Researcher showed the codes being developed. She explained each code and how each
   appeared as an apparent influence on teachers' judgements of students' literacy
   development.
5. The Researcher checked with each Participant the interpretations being made. Comments
   and reactions were invited.
6. The Researcher asked each Participant to verify the transcript as a true record of previous
   interviews.

At each interview Participants interacted freely with the Researcher. Each Participant made relevant
comment, asked for occasional clarification, and offered suggestions for modification of the definitions
of certain codes. The Researcher made immediate notes of such suggestions.

Each Participant was willing to take a copy of the codes and of their own transcripts to peruse and to
offer further comment. Each agreed not to photocopy the materials at this stage of the research and to
return all materials to the Researcher.

Garth H. Brown
Department of School & Early Childhood Education
Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services, RMIT University, Bundoora

* These are pseudonyms supplied by the researcher to protect the confidentiality of the schools and participants.
APPENDIX M

Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA) - Victorian Branch, State Director's Letter re LAP testing - March 1996

AUSTRALIAN LITERACY EDUCATORS' ASSOCIATION
(FORMERLY AUSTRALIAN READING ASSOCIATION)
A Language and Learning Organisation

March 7th,

To all members of ALEA in Victoria,

As a state initiative and liaising with the TAWL (Teachers Applying Whole Language) Special Interest Group, I have agreed to use our professional banner to approach parents and teachers informing them of the dangers of the forthcoming LAPS tests in Victoria.

In many discussions with Marie Emmitt, our President, Lorraine Wilson, the convenor of the TAWL group in Victoria and David Hornsby, a long standing ALEA member and founding member of the TAWL group, I have agreed as State Director to send letters to all ALEA members in Victoria. The accompanying letter points out the dangers inherent in any one off paper and pencil test which is the antithesis of what we know about authentic assessment and evaluation.

We urge you to read the letter carefully and where possible, bring it to the attention of parents and colleagues.

As a response to the 1995 LAP Testing Lorraine Wilson and David Hornsby analysed the Reading test to highlight the shortcomings as an instrument designed to test the CSF English outcomes in Reading as well as to assess children's development as readers. As it is a twelve page report we have not been able to distribute it to all members at such short notice but we have forwarded a copy to your Local Council President. Please contact your President who may be able to send a copy to your school.

Once again I urge you as professionals in literacy education to familiarise yourself with the content of the letter and think carefully about the outcomes for our students in the continuation of state wide testing.

With best wishes,

Claire Jennings
State Director of ALEA in Victoria
Feb. 1996

Dear Parents,

In March this year Grade 3 and 5 children in government, Catholic and some independent schools will be required to sit state-wide tests of maths, English and science. (The Learning Assessment Project or L.A.P.)

At the outset, we would like to acknowledge the right of a system to collect data about student performance. Such data is crucial as a basis for evaluation of existing programs, for information about patterns of learning across a state and for distribution of resources. For these purposes, there is no need to test every child, every year. Sample testing conducted every two or five years is more than adequate. We acknowledge also the right of parents to have detailed on-going information about their child’s learning.

However we wish to restate our position on the state-wide testing which has been implemented in Victoria.

1. State-wide, one-off pencil and paper tests are not VALID instruments for assessing individual student performance.
   Significant learning outcomes require assessment in a variety of contexts over extended periods of time. Centrally marked, short, pencil and paper tests are devoid of context. Multiple choice tests cannot test anything of consequence.

2. In countries which do extensive standardised testing of students (such as the U.S.A.) there has been no improvement in student performance.

   In fact, many countries are now abandoning state-wide testing. 'No other country invests so heavily in testing as the United States, but American schools lie at the bottom of international standards... American students have been tested all their lives and it's achieved nothing. To think testing will improve schools is nonsense.' (Prof. Per Dalion, the Norwegian Director of the International Movement Towards Educational Change; quoted by Prof. Alan Bishop, Monash University.)

3. Research shows that the most reliable indicator of students who are struggling with literacy and numeracy is teacher judgement.

   Teachers assess the children in their classrooms daily and in many different contexts. The information gained by such assessment is used by the teacher not only to inform you (the parent) of your child’s progress, but importantly, as the basis for their planning. Prof. Prior (La Trobe University) has said that 'research with Victorian school children has shown...
that teachers are quite accurate in picking out children who are not working at an age-grade appropriate level, or who have serious problems with basic literacy and numeracy.

4. The L.A.P. Tests will not tell Victorian educators anything they do not already know about patterns of learning across the state.

We already know the factors involved in educational success. These have been identified many times and include such things as language background, socio-economic status and home school link.

Light sample application of the Victorian English Profiles across Victorian children in 1991 showed clearly the categories of children performing least well at literacy. It also showed that ongoing teacher judgement of student work was an effective method of collecting data about student performance, for system purposes.

5. State-wide testing is an extremely expensive operation and is a blatant misuse of public money for no positive purpose.

The L.A.P. testing has already cost many millions of dollars. Such money could be much more effectively used in our schools with the supply of further human resources, together with money for the provision of books and the upgrading of libraries.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics preliminary data for August 1995 show that Victoria now has the worst ratio of pupils to staff (teaching and non-teaching) Australia wide.

The study into Reading Literacy, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, in 1991, across thirty-two international school systems found:

a) the number of books reported at home showed clear-cut relationships with their achievement levels.

b) the number of books in the school library is an indicator of the extent to which schools are prepared to encourage students to read.

We therefore urge you, as parents, to consider your options in relation to the L.A.P. tests, very carefully. The options are

1. To allow your child to sit the tests.
2. To keep your child at home on the test days.
3. To write a letter to the school, refusing permission for your child to be tested.

Remember also that if you have concerns about your child’s learning, to ask for an interview with your child’s teacher.

Marie Emmitt
(National President)

David Hornsby

Claire Jennings
(State Director)

Lorraine Wilson

APPENDIX N

Peer Reviewers' Reports

RMIT UNIVERSITY
Faculty Education, Language & Community Services
Department of School and Early Childhood Education

January 22 1997

Heather Fehring
Department of School and Early Childhood Education
Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services
RMIT University
Bundoora

Report from Gloria Latham one of two independent readers to verify the accuracy of codes used by Heather Fehring in her PhD research study.

I attended a briefing session where Ms. Fehring explained the nature of her study and the task to be undertaken.

I read through the codes in order to gain an understanding of how they were being defined.

Following this, I read through a range of transcribed data of one teacher and one principal with codes noted.

I then documented the process of checking codes against the transcribed data for their consistency of use throughout and offered relevant feedback.

I feel able to report, with confidence, that the codes designated by Ms Fehring are being used as a fair and credible interpretation of the data collected.

Gloria Latham
Department of School and Early Childhood Education
Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services
RMIT University
Bundoora
Peer review of transcripts numbered 10-14 and 24

Peer review by Paul Sharkey at the request of Heather Fehring in regard to the above named transcripts relating to her PhD research.
This report was compiled on 22 January, 1997

the brief

On the 9/1/97 I attended a meeting with Heather Fehring, her supervisor Dr Pamela Green and another peer reviewer Gloria Latham to be briefed on the peer review task. I was instructed to read through sections of the above named transcripts to evaluate whether the codes devised by Heather had been applied consistently and coherently. I was also asked to provide comment on whether the codes seemed adequate given the research topic and the content of the transcripts.

global comments

To begin with a general remark, I was impressed with the quality of the content analysis undertaken by Heather. The codes made sense to me as a coherent system and I felt able to understand what each of them referred to individually.

I felt that it was necessary for me to read through the entire text of each transcript so that I could get a sense of the context which surrounded the particular segments that were coded. On no occasion was I able to detect a code which I felt had been wrongly applied. The application of codes seemed appropriate in each of the many cases that I checked.

There are costs and benefits associated with the peer review process. A reviewer who is intimately acquainted with the study will have a better understanding of contextual considerations that pertain to it. A reviewer who is less familiar with the study lacks the contextual background but may be able to spot inconsistencies, omissions etc by virtue of that same distance. I place myself in the latter category. As an example of a moment where it was difficult to check the coding as an outsider I cite transcript 13-38 or 12-23; here it was difficult to gain some purchase on the meaning of what was being said without having access to the questionnaire or other extra-transect elements of the discourse of the interview.

specific comments

The member checking orientation of the researcher was impressive throughout the transcripts. It was clear that she was interested in refining her categories, questions etc on the basis of the feedback given by respondents. As a small point though I wondered, particularly in the early interviews (ie transcript 11), whether the researcher was limiting the feedback that she may have received by proposing "difficulty" too often as the reason why particular questions were not answered in the questionnaire. I cite here sections 11-2; 11-4; 11-13; 11-14; 11-22; 12-8. It may well have been that questions were left unanswered because they were too difficult but it may also have been that the assumptions, conceptual framework etc behind the researcher's questions may not have been relevant to the framework, assumptions etc of the respondent. I felt there was room for a more varied approach to determining the cause for non-response here.
I wondered how rigorously the codes were to be applied across the transcripts. By this I mean that the following codes could have been applied to the following segments and yet they were not: articulation at 13-25; profess programme at 24-24, 24-36; expert reference at 13-36; parental influence at 12-34, 13-40, 14-3, 14-46, 14-47, 14-51; external demands at 24-6. I do not mean to suggest that these codings were necessary for the cogency of the analysis of the transcripts, I merely point to the issue and leave it to the researcher to make up her own mind.

By and large I felt that the codes were appropriately disjunc one from the other. The only exception that I noticed in this regard was at a segment like 14-33 where I was a little unclear how the code" reflection" was being separated from the code "articulation". I also wondered about the use of the reflection code at 14-34.

A segment like 13-24 raised the question of the coding procedure that ought to be followed in those sections of the transcript that were heavily prompted by the researcher (rather than arising naturally at the respondent's initiative). If the codes are meant to point to the frame of reference of the respondent, then it would seem inappropriate to code a response that was so clearly provided by the researcher. If however the codes are merely pointers to all of the statements in the transcripts, whether they come from the researcher or from the respondent, then it seems entirely appropriate for such a code to be applied. I presume the latter to be the case.

I was intrigued by segments like 24-21 ff; 24-28; 24-37; 24-40; 24-41; 24-45; 24-47. I felt these segments delved into some very interesting political and structural issues. In general these sections were very lightly coded, if at all. As someone who is outside the study it seemed to me that there were issues here that were of importance to the topic but which were not caught by the codes. It could well be however that these sections were rightly left uncoded because they lie outside the locus of the research questions of the study (I was not privy to those research questions). It may be however that there is a lacuna in the coding system that detracts from the study - particularly the dimension of the study that would address the effects of nature power/politics/policy on literacy in Victoria.

**Conclusion**

The basic question I had as the peer reviewer was: Does the system of codes and their individual application make sense in terms of facilitating a coherent, consistent and cogent analysis of the text of the transcripts? The answer to that question was clearly "yes". It is perhaps a measure of the "yes" that I have spent the body of this report reflecting on relatively minor questions associated with the coding process.

---

Mr. Paul Sharkey  
Department of Industry, Professional and Adult Education  
Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services  
RMIT University  
Bundoora
APPENDIX O

External Auditor's Report

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Faculty Education, Language & Community Services
Department of Industry, Professional & Adult Education

Letter of Attestation

This letter of attestation is in relation to the inquiry audit of Heather Fehring's PhD thesis entitled "Influences on Teachers' Judgements of Students' Literacy Development in a Victorian Context."

The inquiry auditor examined both the process of the inquiry and the product. The audit was finalised at the conclusion of the inquiry. The following text was used as the main reference for carrying out the audit: Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

The audit was divided into two main parts. Part A involved outlining the structure of the audit trail and examining the accuracy of the transcripts made of the interview tapes. Part B was concerned with checking the evidence in the transcripts for the coding criteria constructed in the analysis process and discussed in analysis of data.

Part A

The structure of the audit trail was examined, along with the accuracy of the transcripts made of the interview tapes, the field notes, school policy and curriculum documents, and questionnaire data.

The audit trail and coding system used was logically and clearly defined, and records were well organised and indexed which allowed for quick access and cross-referencing.

The sources of data provided by the researcher for the purposes of the audit are outlined and documented in Attachment A for the three schools.

A random selection of spot checks was made of all the audio tapes. The verbatim accuracy of the audio tapes with the written transcription of those tapes was assessed.

1. There are three sets of interviews from the three schools. The interviews and transcripts with the case study teacher and key informants ( Principals and students) that were checked are outlined below.

2. In the "Member Checking" Phase of the research process the sets of interviews and the transcripts are also noted below.

A random selection of spot checks was made of the collected school policy and curriculum documents and the accuracy of the transcription those documents was ascertained. The transcribed documents in the ISYS program were made available to the external auditor so that this examination could be undertaken.
Part B

A random selection of spot checks of the interpretations the researcher has made in the coding process was made for trustworthiness (credibility and consistency of interpretation). The researcher was examining the interview data to determine the influences on teachers' judgements of students' literacy development. The external auditor was supplied with a list of codes devised and documents defining the meaning and usage of each code. The coded data in the program KWALITAN was made available to the external auditor so that the examination could be undertaken.

Because of ethical issues of security of data, the external audit took place in the researcher's home. Access to the raw data was made available for the external audit process.

At the completion of the analysis and write up stage of the PhD a number of spot checks were made of the data in the thesis and the original data sources. The following chapters were examined and spot checks were undertaken for verification of the reported data and the original data source. Attachment B documents the verification process.

Comments by the auditor

Spot checks were made of all the tapes and the transcripts. All the transcripts were verbatim and therefore gave a very accurate reflection of the discussions that took place.

It was at all times clear that the statements and generalisations used in the text stemmed directly from the data. No problems were encountered during the audit process as all sources were clearly identified and accessed easily. Multiple sources were often used for one reference and this cross referencing was found to be a true reflection of the data.

As an auditor I found it useful to have been familiar with the process of the inquiry and to have an understanding of the content. I believe that the audit trail was comprehensive and corresponded with the methodical approach used.

I testify that Heather Fehring's PhD thesis is a true and accurate representation of the data she collected in the field during 1995 to 1997.

Dr. David L. Forrest 29 May 1998

Brief C.V.

David Forrest is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Industry, Professional and Adult Education at RMIT. He is currently coordinator of Graduate Programs in Visual and Performing Arts and Arts Administration in the Department. His qualifications are B.Mus.Ed. (Newcastle), DSCM (Sydney), MCA (Wollongong), PhD (Melbourne). He is Chair of Cross Arts Victoria, and Publications Editor of the Australian Journal of Music Education, the Victorian Journal of Music Education and ASME Update.
Attachment A: Data Sources Examined

School A: Westlands Primary School

Taped Interviews
Principal 20 December 1995
Teacher 25 October 1995 (obser)
1 November 1995
9 November 1995
20 November 1995
12 December 1995
20 December 1995

Student 14 November 1995

Verification member check:
Principal 10 December 1996
Teacher 10 December 1996

Documents
Description of school
Teacher Questionnaire
School Charter
Teaching and Learning Approach (teacher's individual approach)
Blank Reports
Draft Report Revision
Teacher and Learning Philosophy of Westlands P.S. and revision
ESL Policy
Language Policy

Artefacts
Social Justice Policy - collection of documents from parents
Completed report form (Dec/June) x 6 - English Report
Expected skills of subject 1992/93
Interview Questions - Research Notes
Example - Cloze Activity - gathering associate data
Interview notes
Transition forms - completed
Student work examples (3)
Old School Policy December 1982
Draft English Policy (10 December 1996)

Consent Forms
- Teacher
- Principal
- Students
Letter to RMIT Higher Degrees Committee
Card from Teacher
School B: Eastlands Primary School

Interviews
Principal  17 July 1996
Teacher    3 November 1995
            6 November 1995
            22 November 1995
            12 December 1995
Student    15 November 1995 (2 separate)
            27 November 1995 (2 together)
Observations  11 October 1995
              25 October 1995
              15 November 1995
              5 December 1995
              11 December 1995
              20 December 1995
Member Checking  25 November 1996

Documents
School Charter 1995 - 1998
Completed questionnaire - Teacher
Assessment and Reporting Policy
Language Policy
Year 6 Report Card - revised (blank)

Artefacts
School Information Folder
Report Card - old version
Research Notes
Completed Students' Report Cards
  • end of year and mid-year report
  • one student did not have mid-year report

Consent Forms
• Teacher
• Principal
• Students

Transcript of interviews of above list
Check spot on tape 15 Nov 1995 - no teacher interview on two student interviews.
Researcher requested to check and consequently supplied interviews.
School C: Northlands Primary School

Interviews
Principal
Teacher
12 June 1996
30 October 1995
16 November 1995
21 November 1995
16 December 1995

Students
21 November 1995 (2 children)
1 December 1995 (whole class)

Observation
26 October 1995
10 November 1995
8 December 1995

Member checking:
Principal
Teacher
5 December 1996
5 December 1996

Documents
Complete Questionnaire - Teacher
Student Assessment Policy
Student Rep. Policy
Language Policy
School Charter
Student Report - blank report, letter to parents
1995 Annual Report

Artefacts
General School Policy
Principal's Report
Integrated Policy
School Policy - single pages
Blank proforma on specific tasks
Pieces of work from students (2)
Copy - students' evaluation books - Teacher and students write in
Whole class interview questions
Researcher Notes
Write up of school

Consent Forms
• Teacher
• Principal
• Students (2)
Letter from Principal
Sources of data
Running field notes for three schools over 10 weeks (October, November, December 1995)

Organised by
   Situation/Content
   Technique/Strategy/Assessment Procedure
   Rationale/Observations

Some weeks were blank
1. Wind-up class Westlands P.S. 20 December 1995
2. Replacement Class Northlands P.S. x October 1995

Untranscribed rough notes

Summary provided -
   Schedule of three schools - observations and interview

Initial Questionnaire
   Literacy and Teacher Judgement Questions and letter (Term 2 1995 - not dated)
   Plain Language Statement
   Consent Form

Letter sent after initial Questionnaire

Observations - half-day each week at each school
Attachment B

The page references commence at p. 1 for each chapter.

The following code have been used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>K.7.27.K11</td>
<td>KWALITAN, Document 7, Segment 27, Key Informant Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.18.26</td>
<td>KWALITAN, Document 18, Segment 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCDC</td>
<td>School Curriculum Document Collection</td>
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<td>PMCI 25.11.1996 (p. 8, line 27 - p. 9, line 32)</td>
<td>Peer Member Checking Interview 25 November 1996</td>
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<td>ITQ-PB-Q4</td>
<td>Initial Teacher Questionnaire - Part B-Question 4</td>
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<td>FN 11.10.1995</td>
<td>Field Notes, 11 October 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN 15.11.1995 AC</td>
<td>Field Notes, 14 November 1995, Artefact Collection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Ch. 1 No data sources reported

Ch. 2 No data sources reported

Ch. 3

| p. 21          | K.7.25.KII                                                                    |
| p. 21          | K.7.27.KII                                                                    |
| p. 22          | K.18.26                                                                       |
| p. 23          | K.18.28                                                                       |
| p. 24          | K.12.22                                                                       |
| p. 27          | K.13.7                                                                        |
| p. 29          | K.1.1                                                                         |
| p. 49          | K.2.27                                                                        |
| p. 49          | K.14.23                                                                       |
| p. 56          | PMCI 25.11.1996 (p. 8, line 27 - p. 9, line 32)                               |
| p. 57          | PMCI 25.11.1996 (p. 11, line 28 - p. 4, line 8)                               |
| p. 59          | PMCI 5.12.1996 (p. 8, line 23 - p. 9, line 11)                                |
| p. 59          | K.24.22                                                                       |

Ch. 4

| p. 6           | K.1.6                                                                         |
| p. 6           | K.1.7                                                                         |
| p. 6           | K.8.22                                                                       |
| p. 7           | SCDC Westlands P.S. Teaching and Learning Philosophy Revised Draft 1995 (pp. 2 & 3) |
| p. 8           | ITQ-PB-Q4                                                                     |
| p. 8           | PMCI 10.12.1996 (p. 54, line 9)                                              |
| p. 10          | FN 11.10.1995                                                                 |
| p. 10          | K.2.40                                                                        |
| p. 10          | FN 14.11.1995 AC                                                             |
| p. 11          | K. 2.26                                                                      |
| p. 14          | FN 9.11.1995                                                                  |
| p. 15          | K. 14.11                                                                     |
| p. 17          | FN 11.12.1995                                                                 |
| p. 17          | K.13.2                                                                        |
APPENDIX P

Explorative Phase: Initial Code Identification and Concept Memo Specification

A. Initial Code Identification
The 66 codes are in alphabetical order. In the KWALITAN programme codes may not be more than 19 characters in length.

<table>
<thead>
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* The KWALITAN programme does not allow for the use of capital letters in the naming of code labels. Therefore the code labelled 'english profile' had to take a lower case 'e' for English.
B. Initial Concept Memo Specification

The explanatory 'concept memos' (Peters & Wester, 1990, 1993) for the original 66 codes are outlined below. In addition, there are examples of interview discourse that display the code and meaning given to each code.

**artefacts** - refers to any reference a participant made to objects or artefacts used to assist in the judgement making process.

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<td><strong>artefacts</strong> teacher</td>
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<td>judgement articulation</td>
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1. HF: But you have folders, or a locker full or have you a tub in your room of things you keep on each child, so that when you come to write their reports do you open a file...

2. AA: Yes I have their file as well, their individual file.

3. HF: Not their tub, not the kid's tub.

4. AA: No my own file.

5. Yeah, but I will go to their tub to get their draft book and their English book, well project they don't keep, but what ever else, maths book.

6. So that would be part of it, Yes I have a file and a lot of this end of term stuff I might put in that, like that single sheet of story writing, that they're done the draft and their final I would put that in.

**articulation**

The ability to articulate what assessment judgements are made and why such judgements are made was coded 'articulation'. This code was used to acknowledge a combination of teachers' reflective and metacognitive abilities.

**authenticity**

This code was used to recognise the influence on teachers who were looking for assessment strategies that reflected real teaching and learning activities in the classroom.

**central policy**

A code used to refer to discourse where teachers stated that Department of School Education, Victoria (DSE)/Department of Education, Victoria (DoE) administrative directives influenced their decision making in the classroom.
change
This code refers to an acceptance by the participants of the influence of change upon their judgement making processes.

collaboration
In the initial analysis, if a teacher stated that she either conferenced with students, or negotiated with students about literacy assessment practices, the code 'collaboration' was used. This code was subsequently refined and changed.

colleague info - colleague information
A code used if a teacher referred to her use of previous assessment reports written by other teachers.

common sense
Common sense was a term used by teachers to identify on what basis they made decisions.

computer literacy
A code used whenever participants included computer literacy in their elaboration of what constituted the concept literacy.

context
A code referring to a teacher's acknowledgement that the total context influences any judgement she makes.

document/segment K.11.2.
respondent: interview Veronica (VR)
3rd Nov 1995

codes: context formative assess
         teacher judgement

10. VR: And this is where it was hard when you said how often do you do things because um you're sort of really evaluating all the time, every time you are taking a language activity, and you know how you said you don't know how teachers say they know, because you are taking it in all the time and you are writing something down, looking at what you've written, doesn't all wouldn't tell an outside person all that that means.

11. But when you look at it you remember that time, you remember what you wrote and you remember the circumstances round it, you built up the whole picture.

critical
This code covered statements made by teachers to indicate that they were either sceptical, or did not believe, that certain assessment strategies could be undertaken as described by the manuals or as stated by other teachers.

csf - Curriculum and Standards Framework
Any reference made by participants to the document Curriculum and Standards Framework (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995).
curriculum
This code emerged as references were made to the fact that the type of curriculum being covered influences a teacher's decision as to what techniques to use to assess literacy.

respondent: interview Alexandra (AA)
20th Nov 1995
codes: techniques curriculum

1. HF: Is your checklist based on...
2. AA: The content of what I (see) is in the activity usually, and that's based on the content of the curriculum that I am meant to be covering in the year level, so I have developed an activity which the children will do and their ability to do it will be reflected in will reflect their knowledge and understanding of it.

define literacy
Whenever a participant referred to their understanding of what constituted the term literacy this code was used.

dse courses - Department of School Education, Victoria curriculum courses
Any reference a participant made to curriculum documents published by the Department of School Education, Victoria. (The DSE was subsequently renamed the Department of Education, Victoria [DoE])

efficiency
This code was used to mark comments about choosing assessment techniques on the basis of time effectiveness and efficiency. The fact that some assessment techniques take too long to administer was used as a criterion to mark efficiency.

english profile
When a participant specifically mentioned the English Profile (Ministry of Education and Training [School Programs Division], Victoria, 1991) this code was applied.

evidence
Evidence was a code that emerged from a student interview. This code referred to the student's feeling that teachers should be able to provide evidence to backup their decisions and judgements about students' assessment performances.

respondent: interview Simon
15th Nov 1995
codes: evidence stud judgement

1. HF: So how can I prove that you have done it. What, When I say 'I know Simon can do this, what shows me that, what makes it that I know Simon?
2. S: Um, you have to make sure you ... at the parent/teacher interview they've got the books.
3. HF: So show the work.
4. S: Yeah
5. HF: Here is Simon's work and this is how I know.

**expectations**
This code was used when teachers referred to what they expected students to achieve. It referred to statements made that implied judgements were a cross between experience and the use of an external reference point.

**experience**
When a participant used the word experience in relation to what influenced their judgements this code was used.

**expert reference**
This code refers to any comments made by participants to books or to people who had influenced their thinking in relation to assessment practices.

**external demands**
Initially this code referred to segments of discourse where teachers identified the influence of external requests upon their assessment practices in the classroom. For example, all three teachers prepared transition forms from secondary/post primary schools about the Year 6 students.

**external reference**
This code was a generic category referring to any influence outside the school or education system.

**formative assessment**
A code used to identify references made by teachers to ongoing, continuous assessment. Formative assessment is often informal and closely tied to the teaching and learning programme of the classroom.

**formative knowledge**
A generic code used to refer to knowledge based on ongoing, continuous assessment practices in the classroom.

**gender**
The code gender emerged as teachers nominated that they were specifically influenced by the issue of student gender in some decision making judgements.

document/segment: K.5.45.
respondent: interview Alexandra (AA) 12 Dec 1995
codes: gender

1. HF: What about the girls?
2. AA: Yeah most of them are attentive.
3. I would comment in taking risks.
4. HF: The boys would take risks but the girls won't.
5. I mean I know that is a sweeping generalisation.
6. AA: Um.
7. No the girls are beginning to take more risks and therefore doing better than the boys of course, of course

inaccessible
This code emerged in response to interview discourse that acknowledged the situation that some assessment strategies are not used because of the difficulty of organising them. For example, parent interviews are difficult to organise so they are used infrequently as data gathering events about students.

indiv diff - individual differences
An implicit or explicit reference to the awareness of the importance of acknowledging individual differences when it came to curriculum design and choosing assessment strategies for diagnostic purposes.

intuition
If a teacher made a specific reference to the word intuition or intuitive knowledge this code was applied.

judgement-criteria
This code refers to statements teachers made about what benchmarks, developmental continua or literacy criteria, that they used to make their judgements about students' growth, success or achievement in literacy.

judgement-theory
This code emerged to reflect the statements teachers made about the theoretical constructs underlying their choices of assessment techniques.

judgement-training
This code refers to any reference teachers made to training they had attended to assist them to make literacy judgements.

kidmap
A code used for any reference to the word Kidmap in the interview data. Kidmap is a computer programme recommended by the DoE Victoria. In 1995 it was promoted as a programme to record assessment judgements against the CSF.

know base - knowledge base
This code emerged from the principals' interviews. Knowledge base refers literally to the accumulated knowledge teachers use to underpin their assessment judgements in the classroom.

lap
Any reference by participants to the Learning Assessment Programme (LAP) was coded lap.
learning styles
An articulation of the knowledge that different students have different learning styles was coded learning styles.

learning theory
Any reference to understanding how students learn.

literacy compet - literacy competence
This code was used when a teacher referred to her own knowledge of the structure of the English language and to her own confidence in her ability to teach this knowledge to students.

moderation
A code used to mark
i) teachers talking about the fact that they talk with other teachers to check or confirm their assessment judgements;
ii) teachers who said that they do not talk with their peers as an informing assessment strategy.

observation
Any explicit statement, or implicit reference, to the use of observation as a strategy for collecting information about student learning.

| respondent:       | interview Veronica (VR) |
| codes:            | observation |

1. HF: So it's more in depth is it that you would use some of these techniques, but

2. RV: Yep, yeah I'd rather than just take up a piece of work when they have finished I tend to sort of always be moving around, rather than sit at the table, being with the kids and seeing what they are doing, and where they are having trouble and getting them to talk about it and talk through the steps of what they are doing.

| respondent :       | interview Veronica (VR) |
| codes :            | observation profess competence |

1. HF: When your objective is to diagnose the needs of your class as a group would you ever do that would you ever assess for class needs, group needs, or is it always the individual?

2. VR: Oh, no, everything you do you are looking at how they are going and I guess you are weighing up all the time and you're seeing this is what the picture you build up of who's confident, and who's having trouble in what areas and planning from there on what you need to workshop on with what group and you can say to the
kids, and they are quite open if you don’t put pressure
or make a big deal or belittle them or anything, ok some
kids when we did this yesterday um there was a few
problems, some of you might have missed out when this
was taught, let’s get together and do it, so um

observation notes
Anecdotal notes made by the researcher during periods of observation in the three
school sites.

parental influence
Any reference a teacher made to the fact that parents have influenced their decision to
do, or not to do something in relation to literacy assessment.

pd - professional development
A code used to identify any literacy inservices or professional development
programmes teachers say they attended regarding assessment practices.

peer infl (t) - peer influence teacher
This code refers to the influence a fellow teacher had on the actions, understandings or
skills of another teacher.

personality
An expression by participants that there is a certain personality who is more
responsive, more open to change.

policy doc - policy document
A code used for teachers referring to the influence of internal policy documents upon
assessment practices in the classroom.

portfolios
A portfolio is a term used to refer to a collection of a student's work: writing drafts,
published pieces, project work, tests, hand writing samples, etc. Portfolios are
collections of sources of evidence on which teachers make their judgements about
students' literacy development.

principal infl - principal influence
A code used to indicate when a specific mention is made to the power or influence of
the principal over what assessment policies and strategies are employed in the school.
The following extract is an interesting implicit reference to the principal's influence
(emphasis added to extract):

respondent : interview Veronica (VR)
12th Dec 1995
codes: policy doc principal infl
learning theory expectations

1. HF: If you had to assign grades to students.
2. Now I know you don't do that here, but if you had to assign grades to students, would you use a different type of assessment?

3. VR: No

5. VR: No I could grade the kids and at the end of the year we have to do that, not that we pass it on or whatever, but we have to grade them A, B, or C, just so that when we mix up the grades we have a balance of academic ability, so that you are not putting all your A's in one grade and all the C's, not that you say that they are that or anything like that just

profess competence - professional competence

This code refers to teachers' talk that implicitly make reference to their professional competence regarding curriculum issues, especially assessment matters. It also refers to teachers not transferring knowledge from one KLA (Key Learning Area) to another

document/segment: K.2.45.
respondent: interview with Alexandra (AA)
            1st of Nov 1995
codes: profess competence

1. HF: Why do you do that in Soc and not in English
2. AA: in Soc and not in English
3. HF: just out of curiosity.
4. AA: Yeah that's a good question.
5. I have never thought of doing it in English, I have never thought of doing it in maths.
6. HF: So it just seems to make sense in Soc, to ask them their opinion
7. AA: those sort of things.
8. AA: Yeah what have they learnt about publishing, or what have they learnt about spelling, what have they learnt about.
9. HF: Or what do they think they don't know, or what do they think they do know.
10. AA: Yeah.
11. HF: It is a whole revolution for next year Alexandra

In addition this code was used to refer to teachers doubting their own confidence or abilities.

respondent: interview with Veronica (VR)
            3rd of Nov 1995
codes: pd articulation
        profess competence

8. VR: Well my personal concerns, are just that like I think really we keep learning and building on what we are doing and so but it is hard to keep up and hard to do as good as you think you should be able doing with all the new stuff and even though you sort of take a lot and do
a lot of assessment and you are happy to do that, you do sort of think, am I doing enough or am I doing too much, you know or what I see is it the right thing, have I kept up with all the latest, you know keeping the time element and I guess you know there is not as much time for PD, the curriculum days are cut down and um

profess programme - professional programme

Any reference to a professional/commercial package used (for example, SRA kits), or to any professional development programme (for example, ELIC, EMIC, CLIC) was coded profess programme.

profess reading - professional reading

This code refers to any comments teachers made to books or materials they had read in relation to making literacy judgements.

proximity

This code refers to comments teachers made about the fact that as primary school teachers they see, and are close to, their students for extended periods of time. This constant and close physical proximity with their students adds to the knowledge base teachers have of their students when making assessment judgements.

recording

When teachers commented on methods or strategies they used to record their assessment judgements this code was applied.

reflection

When a teacher actually nominated that she used personal reflection to judge her curriculum programmes, teaching strategies or assessment judgements this code was used.

respondent: interview with Veronica (VR)
12th of Dec 1995

codes: observation reflection

1. HF: No, I mean I wouldn’t have thought so.
2. VR: Um.
3. Righto.
4. HF: Now this is when you evaluate your own instruction.
5. Moving away from assessing the child but when you evaluate your own instruction saying this unit of work that we did was very successful.
6. Do you use a different type of assessment to do that for your teaching and learning evaluation than when you assess the growth of a child’s literacy development.
7. Would you use this range of instruments or procedures, techniques, strategies?
8. VR: Well I would be looking at the sort of things the kids came up with. Now if that wasn’t really what I was aiming for then I’d be looking at what I had given them and thinking, well I didn’t ask that very well, or but
really didn’t do what I was looking for, it didn’t really reach the goals, or whatever.

**reporting**
A code used to mark any reference to the need to pass on information about students’ literacy development to other people - parents, students, other teachers, or internally in the system.

**stud judgement - student judgement**
Refers to the students in this study making evaluative comments about the assessment techniques their teachers use.

**student-psy - student psychology**
If a teacher referred to the fact that when they assess students’ literacy they took into consideration such factors as: student feelings, the psychology of negative comments on a student's self esteem, or comments in regards to understanding how students learn this code was used.

**tacit knowledge**
This code refers to some almost indefinable ability that teachers have to know because they know. This code reflects experience, accumulated wisdom and professional knowledge.

**teacher judgement**
Any reference made in the teacher interviews as to how teachers made their literacy judgements was coded teacher judgement.

**teacher respon - teacher responsibility**
This was a code used in the students' interviews, it refers to students who believe that it is the teacher's responsibility to know about their students' academic development.

respondent: interview with Simon
15th of Nov 1995
codes: techniques observation

**teacher respon**
1. HF: Then do it.
2. What about um Simon what about an interview, talking to you, teachers sometimes tell me that they sit and talk and ask their students. "What can you do Simon, what don’t you know Simon?"
3. What do you think of that as a way of teachers finding out, asking you what you know?
4. S: No, I think you should be watching you. Like they're teachers and they're meant to be like watching us and what we are doing, they should know.

**techniques**
A code used to refer to assessment techniques, strategies, procedures or data gathering methods that teachers said they used to facilitate the making of literacy judgements.
tests
Any reference made by participants to the word test, tests, or testing. Tests could refer to teacher made tests, informal tests, commercial tests (for example, from the Australian Council for Educational Research - ACER) or students testing each other.

time
A code used to designate the effect that teacher - student interaction over an extended duration has on the teacher's ability to understand the student's literacy achievements.

trans-judgement - transition judgement
Refers to references teachers made to information for transition requirements from post primary schools.

document/segment: K.2.33
respondent: interview with Alexandra (AA)
1st Nov 1995
codes: trans-judgement tests

1. HF: What do you hand on with these year 6 kids?
2. Do you hand on this report that goes to their parents, or do you pass on information?
3. AA: That's the transition form.
4. HF: That's a special different form altogether,
5. AA: which goes to the school
6. HF: The information that goes on that do you take it from this, your report form.
7. AA: Yeah basically, we have to write them now ready, we are writing them now for next year so we would be basing it on June and our testing at the moment, and it varies from teacher to teacher as to how much detail they put in.
8. Some teachers wouldn't do any more than tick boxes, there's comments spaces, I know one teacher who said to me I'm not writing any comments.

trans-tests - transition tests
This code refers to tests teachers said they administered in preparing students for transition to post primary schooling.

wa-first steps West Australian First Steps Programme
Any reference to the West Australian programme First Steps was coded 'wa - first steps'.
APPENDIX Q

Explorative Phase: Second Phase Code Identification and Concept Memo Specification

Seventy-three codes emerged at the completion of the exploratory phase of the analysis. The seven new codes identified are: 'accountability', 'complex interact' - complex interaction, 'cost', 'expense', 'isolation', 'justifiable' and 'person situat' - personal situation. The seven new codes are highlighted in the list below and the concept memos are outlined on the following page.

A. Second Phase Code Identification

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B. Concept Memo Specifications of the Seven New Codes

accountability
When a specific reference was made to an awareness of the pressures of accountability issues on teachers' judgements the code accountability was used.

complex interact
The notion that a teacher's judgements about a student's literacy development is a complex interaction of considerations rather than a simple cumulative process was commented on by teachers and principals in this study.

document/segment : K.25.53
respondent : Michael Wall, Northlands P.S.
12th June 1996
codes : complex interact

HF: Michael is there anything I've forgotten. What influences a teacher's judgement in relation to a student's literacy development? Policy documents, their personality, their knowledge, their ability to articulate, reference to experts, courses, leadership within the school.

MW: Yes, all of those and you know each one you can't live without. Each one is important. It has some relationship with each other and in some ways it hasn't.
I mean you've got to ...

cost
This code refers to the cost of some assessment strategies in terms of the time, efficiency and expediency of use. It does not refer to the monetary cost of the technique.

expense
When a reference was made specifically to the monetary cost of an assessment item as a prohibitive reason for not choosing that technique this code was introduced.

isolation
This code was introduced to reflect a principal's comments concerning the effect of primary teachers' confinement to the classroom. It was implied that this isolation might have an effect on their knowledge of the macro influences on literacy assessment and evaluation.

justifiable
Any reference to the importance of a teacher's judgement being justifiable from the evidence provided to support the decision was coded justifiable.

person situat
This code emerged from a principal's interview. If the personal life of an individual teacher is disrupted then the teacher may not be able, at that time, to make the appropriate teaching and literacy assessment judgements.
APPENDIX R

Participant Member Checking and Peer Review
Re-examination of Data - 31st March 1997

Seventy-five codes existed at the completion of the Member Checking and Peer Review re-examination phase. Codes that were refined as a result of the feedback from the participant member checking and peer review processes are highlighted in the list below. A detailed description of each 'concept memo' (Peters & Wester, 1990, 1993) is contained in Appendix S.

accountability  justifiable
artefacts       kitemap
articulation    know base
authenticity    lap
central policy   learning styles
change          literacy compet
colleague info   moderation
common sense    observation
complex interact observation notes
computer literacy parental influence
context         pd
cost            peer influ (t)
critical        person situat
csf             personality
curriculum      policy doc
define literacy political climate
dse courses     portfolios
efficiency      principal-leader
english profile principal-respon
evidence        profess competence
expectations    profess programme
expense         profess reading
experience      proximity
expert reference recording
external reference reflection
external require reporting
formative assess stud judgement
formative knowledge student-psy
gender          tacit knowledge
inaccessible    teach & ing practice
teach & ing practice
teacher judgement
teacher respon
techniques
tests
time
trans-judgement
trans-tests
wa-first steps
APPENDIX S

Concept Memo Descriptions at the Completion of the Data Specification Phase of the Analysis

A. Code Identification

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B. Concept Memo Specifications

KWALITAN 4.0

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memo file : c:\kwalit40\concept

accountability

Accountability: This code was used as a generic marker for any specific reference to an awareness of the pressure of accountability issues on the judgement/decision making processes of teachers. Refer to: K.20.92.

artefacts

Artefacts: This code was used to mark any conversation where a teacher makes reference to the use of objects or items to assist in the judgement making process. For example, sometimes teachers referred to the use they made of the following items when it came to making literacy judgements about students: students' tubs (a collection of the students' work books), teachers' evaluation files, students' learning logs, learning folios and portfolios of students' work. Refer to: K.2.27.

articulation

Articulation: The code 'articulation' was used to mark teachers' discourse in the transcripts where teachers were positively able to explain why they do what they do. However, articulation was also used to code teachers who were not able to fully explicate reasons for their choices, or decisions. In effect, the discourse marks an example of a negative case. This did not occur very often. Refer to: K.11.7. Articulation is a form of metacognition referring to the teacher's ability to give reasons for her thoughts, ideas, personal philosophies or actions. The literature refers to articulation aiding the process of reflection by affording better access to thought itself.

authenticity

Authenticity: This code was used to mark conversation that referred to teachers looking for assessment strategies and techniques that reflect real life literacy demands. Refer to: K.20.60. In the principals' transcripts, authenticity refers to principals identifying the importance of real assessment and reporting practices. Real refers to literacy assessment practices that reflect real life experiences. Refer to: K.25.49.
central policy

Central Policy: When teachers specifically mentioned one or more of the following policy documents, curriculum publications or central administration directives as being influential in regards to their literacy judgements, the code central policy was applied:
- Ministry of Education Victoria
- Directorate of School Education (DSE) Victoria
- Department of Education (DoE) Victoria, renamed in 1996
Refer to: K.23.38. for an interesting comment in relation to making or not making comments against DSE/DoE policy.

change

Change: This code refers to an acceptance by the respondents of the influence of change. The code is used to mark any implicit or explicit reference to the need for, the result of adapting to, or the positive influence of change agents. The articulated statements by the respondents imply that they were not threatened by the changing educational environment.
In one principal interview the teachers who experiment and take risks were identified as risk takers and teachers who are not afraid of change.
Refer to: K.25.4.

colleague info

Colleague Information: This code was used to refer to teachers talking about their use of previous student reports from other teachers, and the influence such reports have on their own judgement making.
Refer to: K.2.32.
Colleague Information also refers to teachers who share or take advice from other teachers in relation to the use of literacy strategies and techniques. Refer to: K.25.2.
A further reference was to the influence of team planning at the school level.
Refer to: K.25.12.

common sense

Common Sense: A code nominated by the teachers in relation to an influence on their judgements which was difficult to explicate but referred to a sensible decision. Common Sense is part of the accumulated professional experience previously referred to as tacit knowledge.

complex interact

Complex Interaction: This code is a generic marker that refers to the complexity of any situation involving literacy judgement assessments. Complex interaction implies more than a simple additive notion.
Refer to: K.25.53.
computer literacy

Computer literacy: A code used to mark conversation where a teacher specifically referred to computer literacy when speaking about the concept literacy.

cost

Cost: This code was used to mark an inferred meaning to the cost of an assessment technique in terms of time, efficiency or expediency. It does not refer to the monetary cost of an assessment technique. Refer to K.23.81.

critical

Critical: This code was used to cover the statements made by teachers to indicate a questioning of the usage of certain assessment strategies. For example, if a teacher commented that she didn't believe a strategy could be undertaken as suggested, or described. Refer to K.3.25. Alexandra talking about the fact that Miscue Analysis is too time consuming for teachers to be doing a child each day. She was sceptical of people who say they are doing Miscue Analysis frequently.

csf

Curriculum and Standards Framework: This code marked any conversation that made reference to the CSF- Curriculum and Standards Framework (Board of Studies, Victoria, 1995).

curriculum

Curriculum: This code marked a reference to the fact that the type of curriculum being covered influenced a teacher's decision as to what assessment technique/s to use. Refer to: K.4.25., K.11.8. The 'Curriculum' code also referred to teachers who commented that their expert curriculum knowledge influenced their decisions. Refer to: K.5.29.
define literacy

Define literacy: This was a code assigned whenever participants referred to their own, or other peoples', definition/s of literacy. For example Alexandra defined literacy in the following way:
Alexandra K.2.2.
- reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- successfully communicating with or through those particular aspects.

dse courses

Directorate of School Education Courses: A code that referred to the specific mention of curriculum guidelines published by the DSE (Directorate of School Education, Victoria). The DSE became the DoE - Department of Education, Victoria in September 1996.

efficiency

Efficiency: This code was used to mark comments about choosing assessment techniques on the basis of time effectiveness and efficiency. The fact that some techniques take too long to administer was used as a criterion to mark efficiency.
Refer to: K.4.21.
Refer also to K.20.53. Georgina made comments about the difficulty of arranging parent interviews, therefore this technique was used sparingly.

english profile

English Profile: This code referred to any reference to the document `English - a curriculum profile for Australian schools' (Australian Education Council, 1994a), or to the document `A statement on English for Australian schools' (Australian Education Council, 1994b).

evidence

Evidence: A code used in relation to the students' interviews referring to students' feeling teachers should be able to provide evidence for their literacy decisions or judgements.
Refer to: K.16.51

expectations

Expectations: This code was assigned to conversation indicating judgements influenced not only by the accumulated experience teachers have of the standard of work expected from different students, but also, the use teachers make of external reference points or published benchmarks for the literacy judgements they make.
Expense

Expense: This code is used when a teacher specifically mentions cost (meaning monetary cost) as a prohibitive reason for not choosing a technique of some kind; as for example, a test. Refer to: K.23.101.

Experience

Experience: A code that marked a reference to the word experience (the word maturity was used once) in relation to the criteria used in making literacy judgement/s. Refer to: K.13.11.

Expert reference

Expert reference: This code referred to any comments made by the teachers to books they had read or people who had influenced their thinking. The code marked references to current research in the English language area, external experts who teachers respected, and pd people who came into the school to disseminate new information. Refer to: K.13.3. Refer to: K.16.45. for a student comment in relation to teachers using books as a reference for their judgements Refer to: K.8.19. for an interesting distinction between the influence of internal leaders influence and external experts. As a result of the Participant Member Checking Phase of the study I revised this code. Participants commented that there were both Internal Experts and External Experts that influence the judgement making process. On the 30th March 1997 I recoded Expert Reference to- Expert Reference or Internal Mentor. Internal Mentor refers to a professional colleague based in the same school as the participant, and one who the teachers' respected as a curriculum expert.

External reference

External reference: This code was a generic category that referred to any influence outside the school or education system in which the teachers worked.

External require

External Requirements: This code referred to statements made to external requirements requested of teachers in relation to assessment information. For example transition forms from secondary/post primary schools for the Year 6 students. Refer to: K.5.30., K.5.34., This code does not include 'central policy' requirements. As a result of the Participant Member Checking Phase of this study this code was revised from External Demands to External Requirements (30.3. 1997). All participants felt that External Demands should be called External Influences. The word demands was felt to be too strong. However, since the title of this thesis is "Influences on Teachers' Judgements on Students' Literacy Development" the code 'External Requirements' was chosen to reflect the essence of this influence.
Formative assessment

Formative assessment: This term was used in the literature to refer to continuous or ongoing assessment processes, i.e., it occurs over time. Formative assessment is often informal and closely tied to the teaching and learning programme of the classroom and school policy. As a code in this research, the term has been used to mark any reference made by a participant to ongoing, continuous assessment practices. The term assessment has undergone a conceptual change of meaning in Australia since the early 1990s. Assessment now refers to the process of gathering information about learners and about making value judgements about the significance of the information collected. Prior to this, the term assessment was used to refer to gathering information, and evaluation was used to refer to the making of value judgements about the information.

Formative knowledge

Formative Knowledge: A generic code that referred to knowledge based on ongoing, continuous assessment practices. Refer to: K.13.42.

gender

Gender: This code marked specific comments in relation to the influence of gender. For example, if gender was referred to as being influential in the process of a teacher making a literacy judgement about an individual student. Refer to: K.5.45.

inaccessible

Inaccessible: A code that marked references to assessment strategies not being used because of the difficulty of organising them. For example, parent interviews are difficult to organise so these are used infrequently. Inaccessible is a subset of 'efficiency'. Refer to: K.20.5.

Indiv diff

Individual differences: A code that marked an implicit or explicit reference to the awareness of the importance of acknowledging individual differences in relation to assessment and curriculum delivery and assessment. This code was also used in reference to the use of different assessment strategies for diagnostic purposes.
internal mentor

Internal mentor: This code was devised after the Participant Member Checking phase of the project (30.3.1997). There was a request by the participants to split the Expert Reference into two codes. Expert Reference referring to outside the school experts and Internal Mentors referring to inside the school respected curriculum leaders. Refer to K.8.19. for an example of this division. K.8.22., K.24.5., K.24.11., K.25.2.

intuition

Intuition: This code is a subset of tacit knowledge. It was used when a teacher made an explicit reference to the word intuition or intuitive knowledge. Refer To: K.6.5.

isolation

Isolation: In one Principal's interview the concept of confinement was implied as an influence on teachers' judgements. The implication appeared to be that primary school teachers who are confined to one classroom may be influenced by their isolation. Confinement restricts the teachers' access to information and therefore may influence their judgements by limiting the depth of their knowledge. Refer to: K.24.34. However, as a result of the Participant Member Checking Process this code was eliminated. When the data was revisited the Principal thought I may have misinterpreted her meaning and therefore the code did not reflect her original intention.

judgement-criteria

Judgement-criteria: This code referred to statements teachers made about what benchmarks, developmental continua or literacy criteria, they used to make their judgements about students' growth, success or achievement in literacy. This is a generic code referring to any reference to criteria such as the Curriculum and Standards Framework (BOS Victoria, 1995), the older Literacy and English Profiles (Ministry of Education and Training Victoria, 1991), or the new English Profiles (Australian Education Council, 1994a, 1994b).

judgement-theory

Judgement theory: A code used to mark a reference to the theoretical constructs underlying the choice of assessment techniques, strategies or methods. Refer to K.4.21.
judgement-training

Judgement-training: This code referred to any reference participants made to the training programmes they had undertaken to assist them to make literacy judgements.

justifiable

Justifiable: The meaning of this code can be found in the statements that participants made in reference to the belief that a judgement must be justifiable from the evidence provided to support the decision made. This code is closely related to the codes 'evidence' and 'authenticity'. Refer to: K.23.19.

kidmap

Kidmap: The kidmap code marked any reference to the computer software programme KIDMAP in the interviews. KIDMAP is a computer software programme recommended by the Department of Education, Victoria. Initially the KIDMAP programme was to be used to facilitate efficient and effective record keeping in schools. The KIDMAP programme contains the CSF that school have been asked to use for reporting purposes. All state schools were to receive (in 1996) computer hardware and computer software to run the KIDMAP programme.

know base

Knowledge Base: This is a generic code marking specific references to a teacher's knowledge base as being an influential consideration in her decision making processes.

lap

Learning Assessment Project: A code marking any reference to the Victorian Learning Assessment Project (LAP). This is a testing programme authorised by the Department of Education, Victoria. The LAP tests students in Year 3 and Year 5 once a year in specifically designated Key Learning Areas (KLA). The test always involves English and Mathematics. However, each year one other KLA is chosen to be tested.

learning styles

Learning Styles: This code was designated to any articulation by teachers that different students have different learning styles. This knowledge was used in curriculum design and the selection of teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of individual students. Refer to: K.4.11., K.20.27.
literacy compet

Literacy Competence: This code referred to teachers talking about their knowledge of the structure of the English language and their own confidence in their ability to teach this knowledge to students.

moderation

Moderation: Moderation was a code used to mark conversation where teachers commented that they talked to other teachers to check, confirm or disconfirm their literacy judgements. It was also a code used to identify a teacher implicitly or explicitly referring to counselling, or checking herself, in relation to judgements she had made about a student's literacy achievements. This code also marked a statement made by a teacher who said she did not use moderation with her peers as an informing strategy. Refer to: K.5.2.

observation

Observation: This term referred to any explicit reference to the word observation, or implicit reference to the act of observation in the conservations transcribed. For example, the following references illustrate this code: Refer to K.3.49. Alexandra is talking about how much observation she keeps in her head. Refer to: K.14.23. Veronica is talking about carefully working and observing each student. Refer to K.14.2. This is another good example from Veronica of her practice of continual observation. Refer to K.22.11. This example illustrates a student commenting on teacher observation as an assessment practice.

observation notes

Observation notes: This is not a code for implied influences on teachers' judgement but a code to mark the notes I made in relation to observations I made.

parental influence

Parental Influence: This was a code used to mark any reference a teacher made to the influence that parents had on their decision to do, or not do something in relation to literacy assessment. This code was also used to mark any contact with parents. For example, requests to come and talk with the teacher or parent-teacher interviews at reporting time. Refer to: K.12.28. This code reflected not only parental requests and parental pressure but also parental wishes. Refer to K.19.1. Veronica talking about homework policy and parental interviews.

pd

Professional Development: The pd code was used to refer to any literacy inservices or professional development programmes teachers say they had attended. This code also referred to any University courses teachers may have completed to upgrade their qualifications. A good example can be
found in K.6.10. - Alexandra is discussing how her 4th year of study was the most influential on her thinking.

peer influ (t)

Peer Influence - Teacher: This code referred to the influence a fellow teacher had on the actions, understandings, attitudes, skills of another teacher. This code was used to mark general curriculum knowledge and general teaching and learning strategies.
Refer to: K.20.38.

person situat

Personal Situation: This code referred to the personal situation of the teacher, i.e., in her personal life. If there is a personal situation in the person's life then she may not be on top of his/her teaching. This code emerged from one the principal interviews. The principal was giving an example of a situation that had occurred at the school.
Refer to: K.25.18.

personality

Personality: A code marking an expression by participants that there is a certain personality type that is more open to change than others. The characteristics of this personality type encompassed a willingness to listen and a willingness to take on a leadership role.
Refer to: K.8.22., K.25.6.

class policy
class policy

Policy Document: A code used to refer to any cross checking between what the teacher is talking about and the policy documentation of the school. For example, what is outlined in a School Charter and what techniques the teacher is using to assess or report literacy achievement. Refer to: K.2.44. The 'policy doc' code was also used to refer to a whole school influence for teachers to include or not include certain curriculum, assessment techniques, and teaching and learning strategies in their classroom practices. Refer to: K.12.34. for a specific reference to the code being used in this fashion.

political climate

Political Climate: This was a new code introduced at the beginning of the reanalysis phase (initial coding - member checking - peer review - audit process - reanalysis, 24.3.1997). This code emerged initially from the principals’ interviews. See document K.24.21. This code referred to the notion that the current prevailing political climate is influential in teachers' decision making. The change in government in Victoria from a Labor to a ruling Liberal Party and the consequential economic rationalist policies of the incumbent government. One principal referred to the 'cultural changes', and the 'climate of control' that has resulted from the current political climate. In the peer review reports one of the peer reviewers made a similar
comment. Originally I had coded for the micro level political influences on teachers' judgements. However, the code 'political climate' became a generic code introduced to classify the macro level influences.

portfolios

Portfolios: The code portfolio referred to any comment made published pieces), classroom tests, projects undertaken over a period of time, or hand writing samples being used in the assessment process. Portfolios refer to collections of sources of evidence on which teachers make their judgements about students' literacy development. The code has been used to denote any explicit reference to portfolios. In addition the code has been used to mark any implicit, or indirect reference to the use of collected pieces of literacy evidence. For example, student files, work samples or evaluation folios. "Collections of artifacts of students' learning experiences assembled over time." (Forster & Masters, 1996a, p.1)

principal-leader

Principal-Leader - a code which means Principal-leadership: This code was used when a specific mention was made to the power or influence of the principal over what goes on in the school. More specifically, it referred to the influence a principal had by right of being a recognised curriculum leader, a senior administrator and as such holding the respect of the educational community. Part of this description may include leadership positions, curriculum coordinators ...

Refer to K.8.19.
This code is also used in the principal interviews when a principal specifically mentions what s/he believed should be happening.

Refer To K.8.5.

An interesting implicit reference to the principal influence can be found in K.14.28. The conversation relates to a decision to grade students internal to the school so as to mix up the ability groupings for the new year class structuring.

Principal-leader may also cover senior personnel as a subset.

Refer to: 25.34

In the light of the Participant Member Checking in December 1996 this code was reworked from the initial code Principal Influence and two codes were devised. The code was renamed Principal-leadership - The influence of the principal through her/his right as an acknowledged educational leader. And a new code Principal Responsibility - The influence of the principal because s/he must carry out and thus impose on teachers the requirements of the DoE. A good example of this difference is the principal requesting teachers to administer the LAP.

principal-respon

Principal Responsibility: This code was introduced following the Member Checking Phase of the research process. The participants made a distinction between the principal as an educational leader whose decisions were respected by the staff and who therefore had curriculum leadership authority. (Coded - Principal-leader) The new code principal-responsibility referred to the principal's role as an authority position of the
DoE and who therefore had to tell staff to do certain things by right of the authority invested in the position. The imposition of the LAP tests is a good example of the different perceptions of the principal's role.

profess competence

-----------------------------------------------

Professional Competence: This referred to teacher talk that implicitly indicated their professional competence in relation to curriculum issues, especially assessment issues. It marked conversation that demonstrated the teacher's ability to discuss matters in an informed manner. It also marked conversation that explicitly demonstrated the teacher's knowledge about key curriculum issues.
Refer to: K.2.30., K.13.36.
It also referred to not transferring knowledge from one KLA to another. For example, refer to K.2.45. Alexandra talking about self evaluation in Social Education but not English or Maths.
It may also refer to teachers doubting their own confidence or abilities.
Refer to: K.11.20. Veronica talking about her self doubts
Another good example of Veronica talking about change and adapting to change Refer to: K.13.13.

profess programme

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Professional Programme: This code marked two related components. First, the code indicates any reference made by participants to a professional development package used in the course of their teaching, for example, SRA kits. Secondly, this code refers to any professional development programme that the teachers might have attended. For example, Brian Cambourne's Frameworks Programme, or the old ELIC (Early Literacy Inservice Course) programme.

profess reading

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Professional Reading: This code was used to mark any reference to anything teachers says they had read in relation to making literacy judgements.

proximity

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Proximity: This code referred to comments teachers made about the fact that as primary teachers they see and are close to their students for extended periods of time. In addition, they have constant and close physical proximity with their students because they are in the same room with the students most of the day. This 'proximity' implies greater or more indepth knowledge about the whole student.

recording

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Recording: This code refers to any method or strategy teachers used to record their assessment and evaluation decisions. For example, Alexandra's 'Pupil Assessment Book', school progress reports, Georgina's 'evaluation book'.
Refer to K.1.1.
reflection

Reflection: This code is used when a teacher actually nominated that she uses personal reflection to judge her curriculum programmes, assessment judgements, etc. This code was used when the teachers commented that they reflected on their own ability, teaching strategies or ways of operating in their teaching practices.
Refer to: K.14.33. for an example

reporting

Reporting: The term reporting is used in the literature to refer to the process of communicating the results of the assessment process to any interested parties in a form appropriate to the inquirer/s. In this research, the code has been used to mark any reference made by a participant in relation to the need to pass on information about students' literacy development to other people - parents, students themselves, other teachers, other schools, or to the Department of Education, Victoria.

stud judgement

Student Judgement: This code referred to the students in this study making evaluative comments about the assessment techniques their teachers used.
Refer to: K.15.66. for Karen and Jasmine commenting on the necessity for reasons to be given when their teacher made evaluative comments about their ability in one of the KLAs. Student Judgement also referred to students making judgements about their own ability as gauged by various techniques. Sometimes the students have a great deal of difficulty in articulating reasons for their judgements.

stud&teach assess

Student and Teacher Assessment: A code used to refer to statements made by the participants in reference to one or more of the following situations:
i) teacher and students discussing together some form of assessment practice;  ii) teachers discussing their assessment judgements with students;
iii) in a sense a conference between a student and a teacher in relation to assessment;
iv) negotiating student assessment with students. This code was renamed from 'collaboration' as a result of the Participant Member Checking Phase of the research process."Partnership" or "Interaction" were suggested as possible substitute terms by two of the teachers.
student-psy

Student Psychology: A code referring to considerations teachers make taking into consideration such factors as student feelings. The psychology of negative comments on a student's self esteem.
Refer to: K.20.32.

tacit knowledge

Tacit Knowledge: This concept has historically referred to some undefinable ability that teachers have to know because they know. The tacit knowledge code has been used in this research study to mark conversation that reflects experience, a teacher's professional knowledge or competence, accumulated wisdom and experience. Other codes used in this research that relate to this influence have been called intuition, experience and common sense.
Refer to: K.3.36. Alexandra uses the term "I might internalise somethings about the kids...."
Refer to: K.2.11. "... it is what's in my head".
Refer to: K.11.14. Veronica commenting, "I know up here" (indicating her head).

teach&Ing practice

Teaching and Learning Practice: This code marked comments in the interview discourse to understanding how students' learn, and the relationship this has to assessment judgements. This code was originally called learning theory. However, during the participant member checking phase of the research process the participants expressed a concern that the code title seemed to be too theoretical. The code was changed to teaching and learning practice to reflect the teachers more practical classroom orientation.
Refer to: K.4.6. and K.4.20.

teacher judgement

Teacher Judgement: This code was used as a generic judgement marker. It marks any reference made in the teacher interviews as to how the teachers make their literacy judgements.

teacher respon

Teacher Responsibility: This is a code used in the students' interviews, it referred to students who believed that teachers should know about them. The students believe that it was just their teachers' responsibility to know some how.
Refer to: K.16.12.
Techniques

Techniques: A code used to refer to any assessment and evaluation technique, strategy, procedure or data gathering method a teacher identified as one used in the assessment process. This code marks conversation where a teacher describes the various techniques that she used to make literacy judgements about individual students. An interesting discussion is recorded in K.4.22. and K.4.23. where one teacher distinguished between techniques, strategies and activities.

tests

Tests: The code tests was used for any reference made by the participants to the words test, tests, teacher constructed tests, informal tests, commercial tests (published tests available from ACER for example), students testing each other, scholarship tests or testing.
Refer to: K.2.36.; K.2.40. scholarship tests; K.3.40. reference to informal constant testing; K.12.24. reference to students testing each other.

time

Time: This code has been used when teachers refer to the effects that teacher-student interactions over an extended duration, i.e., time, has on their ability to understand the students' literacy achievements.
Refer to: K.3.32., K.8.25.

trans-judgement

Transition Judgement: This code marked references teachers made to information for transition requirements from post-primary schools. The code referred to transition judgements that teachers would pass on to secondary schools voluntarily.
Refer to: K.2.33. K.14.43.

trans-tests

Transition Tests: This code was used specifically for references to tests used for transition to post primary schools. Students going to Year 7 at a secondary school sometimes are required to supply test information. For example, scholarship information for private schools.

wa-first steps

Western Australia First Steps: A code used to mark any reference by the participants in this study to the Western Australian programme know as First Steps.
APPENDIX T

Examples of the English Section from the 1995 Year 5/6 Report Forms from Eastlands P. S., Westlands P. S. and Northlands P. S.

EASTLANDS P. S.

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<td>• Fluency</td>
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<td>• Interest in books</td>
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<td>Writing</td>
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<td>• Interest in writing</td>
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<td>• Organisation of ideas</td>
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<td>• Punctuation</td>
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<td>• Sentence formation</td>
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<td>• Spelling</td>
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<td>Speaking</td>
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<td>• Formal skills</td>
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<td>• Informal skills</td>
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<td>• Listening</td>
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<td>MATHEMATICS:</td>
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<td>• Chance &amp; data</td>
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<td>• Measurement</td>
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<td>• Number &amp; algebra</td>
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<td>• Space</td>
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<td>• Works mathematically</td>
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<td>• Art</td>
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<td>• Computers</td>
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<td>• Drama</td>
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<td>• Health Education</td>
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<td>• Library</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>• L.O.T.E.</td>
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<td>• Music</td>
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<td>• Physical Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Science &amp; Technology</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Society &amp; Environment</td>
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</table>

COMMENTS

... has continued to read most effectively during this half of the year. Comprehension activities indicate excellent understanding and she completed an extremely detailed book review during this term.

... continues to contribute to class meetings and presented her ideas extremely well in a class debate during Term 3. She continues to listen attentively.

Maintains concentration and interest over an extended period of time. Continued to work skillfully and with good application.

Displays a strong, clear voice with developing expression. Displayed team spirit and cooperation in life. Bell & Enthusiastic to borrow, return, books and games from the computer catalogue.

... has worked consistently, improving her oral and written skills. Skillfully explores ideas and feelings through music work.

... has maintained her excellent standard of participation and work in this area. She includes a high level of creativity in project presentations.
In discussion times, has given feedback to other students and asked appropriate questions. He is able to analyse characters in the set literature books. Should always read these books ahead of others so that he can complete his tasks requirements. Response is one of thought and成熟.

He helped to write and perform. He published his story. On the Road to Health. He is good at reading more carefully and can continue to write so.

He worked well with to draw up a housing scheme. He asked students to write and say something in a variety of contexts. He is very well organized and planned. His presentation was very good. His written work was well-organized and well-explained. He was dressed appropriately for the task in hand. His work was neat and his presentation was very good. He managed to get points across clearly and concisely.
NORTHLANDS P. S.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name ___________________________ Grade _______ Date ____________

LANGUAGE
Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, Writing

... is a confident and enthusiastic speaker. She is listening more attentively now and is able to contribute constructively to discussions. ... is able to report back from group activities. ... listens and takes notes from videos viewed and can write both questions and answers from her notes. She is making a concerted effort to sell correct incorrect grammar in her speech, for example did/done, them/those. Keep it up ...!

... is a fluent and avid reader. She has completed a variety of reading workshop activities specifically related to the books she has read. ... reads for a variety of purposes and can interpret written information from a range of different text types.

... handwriting goal for the rest of the year is to make it neater and I agree! Her handwriting is usually printed and of an inconsistent size and shape. She must improve her handwriting to make it a consistent style, size and readable.

... has demonstrated that she can write a variety of styles depending on the purpose and intended audience, including descriptive, imaginative, reports, letters, poetry and persuasive writing. Her proofreading and spelling are improving and with extra diligence in self correction, this skill will further improve. ... has developed a range of strategies to help her spell new words but must use these strategies all of the time.

INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

... has worked well on our integrated curriculum unit of Early Australia during term one and two. ... gold project was completed within the set time and demonstrated her understanding of the topic. Her project was well presented and researched.

... is able to take notes and summarise written and visual information and can present this in a variety of forms.

... homework and Yearbooks are always completed within the set time and demonstrate that she can follow written instructions and locate information from a variety of sources.

She has used the both her home computer and the classroom computer to assist her with publishing and is developing a greater understanding of how the computers work.
APPENDIX U

Directorate School Education (DSE) Victoria
Executive Memorandum No. 96/021

EXECUTIVE MEMORANDUM NO. 96/021

To: Principals of all Government Schools

From: Acting Director of School Education

Subject: Implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Framework

Date: 24 June 1996

This memorandum provides information relating to the expectations of schools regarding the implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) and future directions for the CSF.

Background

The CSF is the policy framework within which all schools are to develop teaching and learning programs designed to meet the individual learning needs of students.

The CSF was developed by the Board of Studies following extensive consultation throughout Victoria commencing in late 1993. This culminated in a draft CSF which was the subject of intensive consultation and subsequent amendment during 1994. The CSF was then provided to schools in February 1995. At that time a program of support was also announced. This included the Using the CSF series developed by the Board of Studies, the further development of Course Advice by the Directorate of School Education and a range of professional development activities.

During Terms 1 and 2 1995, the Board conducted a program of CSF familiarisation meetings on a statewide basis. The first phase of implementation for schools was a recognition of eight Key Learning Areas, broad familiarisation with the structure and content of the CSF document, and an audit of curriculum provision to clarify the extent to which existing practice matched the curriculum framework outlined within the CSF.

Support for Implementation of the CSF

Throughout 1995/96 an increasing range of support strategies has been provided to assist schools.

- The Board has developed and published support materials in all Key Learning Areas except LOTE, and has released a number of support documents under the banner of Using the CSF including advice on Assessment and Reporting. Sample programs for
primary Science have been published. Sample programs for Mathematics years 9 and 10, integrated programs P-2, and Study of Australia are about to be distributed.

- Substantial sections of the Course Advice have now been provided to schools. It is anticipated that schools will have received a complete set of Course Advice in all key learning areas (KLAs) by early 1997. The current situation regarding distribution of Course Advice including an indicative timeline for future publication is set out in Attachment 1.

- A district-based CSF teacher network strategy was put in place in Term 2 1995 which saw the establishment of 700 largely KLA-based teacher networks. These networks provide collegiate support for teachers as they implement the CSF.

Over 30,000 teacher attendances were recorded at district-based professional development network activities in Terms 2, 3 and 4 1995.

The strategy has been strengthened and statewide conferences are being held for all network leaders in all KLAs with a focus on the use of Course Advice to support implementation of the CSF. Regions and districts continue to support the CSF teacher network strategy. This strategy is being supported by Board staff and professional association consortia.

- Regions have offered a number of conferences and professional development activities for principals and teachers. The Bringing It All Together program and associated support materials contain a curriculum implementation component focusing on school planning and assessment and reporting in the context of CSF implementation.

To support CSF implementation, schools have been provided with the KIDMAP software and are assisted at the local level by KIDMAP District Support People.

KIDMAP is a tool which makes the tasks of curriculum planning, monitoring of student learning and the reporting of student achievement to parents easier for teachers and schools. KIDMAP enables efficient and effective curriculum record keeping within the school. It also assists schools in the preparation of their annual reports since data related to strand level achievement can be imported into CASES.

In July 1996 schools will be provided with a further upgrade which will enhance the curriculum planning and reporting functions of KIDMAP. This will include the capacity to report student achievement at the strand level.

To further support CSF implementation, CASES Version 1.7 has been enhanced to allow the recording of student achievement data either directly through the CASES Student Achievement Module or, at the school's discretion, by a data import facility from KIDMAP.

To assist schools in communicating aggregated information on student achievement to the school community, data recorded in CASES will be reported using the CASES Management Information System (CMIS) Version 2. CMIS 2 is scheduled for release to schools in Term 4, 1996.
From 1996, however, all schools are required to use the CSF for reporting levels of student achievement in English and Mathematics in their annual reports. Schools are required to report as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOLS</th>
<th>ENGLISH MODES</th>
<th>MATHEMATICS STRANDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRIMARY</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Number</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Speaking and listening</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECONDARY</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Chance and data</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking and listening</td>
<td>Mathematical tools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is expected that schools will choose to report as well on other key learning areas on a cyclical basis and in accordance with the priorities in their Charter.

**Triennial Reviews**

In the triennial review process consideration of student learning achievement will be undertaken using the levels, strands and modes of the CSF. The timeline for triennial reviews is as follows:

- 59 intake 1 schools Terms 3 & 4 1996  
- remaining intake 1 schools Terms 1 & 2 1997  
- intake 2 schools Term 3, 1997—Term 2, 1998  
- intake 3 schools Term 1, 1998—Term 4, 1998  
- intake 4 schools Term 3, 1998—Term 2, 1999

Following participation in triennial reviews it is expected that schools will frame Charter goals and priorities related to student achievement in terms of CSF levels, strands and modes.

**The CSF and Information Technology**

The knowledge revolution and rapid advances in information and learning technologies continue to provide key challenges for schools. Over the past three years opportunities for students to extend their learning have expanded through increased use of computers across the key learning areas and initiatives such as telematics, video conferencing, and the introduction of SOFNet and SOFWeb. Science and Technology Centres, Navigator Schools and the Global Classroom project are providing us with important knowledge and understandings about teaching and learning, the work of teachers and the ways in which the curriculum can be delivered.
Current training programs for schools in the use of the CASES Student Achievement Module will continue, and training in CMIS 2 is scheduled for Terms 3 and 4, 1996. A new CMIS Quickguide will accompany the release of CMIS 2.

- STEPS and the PALS and SALS programs which support CSF implementation in primary Science and Technology, and primary and secondary LOTE continue to be provided on SOFNet.

- In 1996, SOFWeb has offered increasing numbers of resources through which student learning can be enhanced.

**Implementation of the CSF in Schools**

Full implementation by schools of the CSF involves the following:

- completion of an audit and review of curriculum provision and the development of a curriculum improvement plan

- development of sequential teaching and learning programs in each key learning area to reflect the strands, modes and levels of the CSF

- development and implementation of procedures and practices for assessment and reporting of student achievement in relation to the levels, strands, modes and learning outcomes within the CSF

All schools are now well advanced in using the CSF for the review, planning, implementation and evaluation of teaching and learning programs in all key learning areas. This process should be completed by the end of 1996 ready for full implementation in 1997

**It is expected that schools by the end of 1996 will have established an appropriate CSF implementation plan which would include professional development activities for teachers.**

The assessment of student achievement against the CSF and the reporting of that achievement to parents should occur in English and Mathematics by the end of Term 2, 1997 and in the other key learning areas by the end of 1997.

**Accountability Framework**

**Annual Reports**

Reporting levels of student achievement through the annual report is an important aspect of a school’s accountability to its community and to the DSE. For 1995 reporting levels of student achievement against the CSF in the annual report was optional.
It is essential that students in our schools have the knowledge, skills and understandings to use computers as tools for learning. There is compelling experience and research evidence that the appropriate incorporation of information technologies into teaching and learning can result in significant learning improvements for all students.

The use of learning technologies must be an integral part of schools' curriculum provision. All teachers require the knowledge, skills and confidence to accommodate successfully new learning technologies into their classrooms.

As a key step forward the Board of Studies is exploring the question of how information technology can be integrated throughout the CSF to ensure that the use of learning technologies is an integral part of each key learning area.

Professional Development and Information Technology

Work has commenced on the development of a $56m professional development and training program for teachers including programs to support the use of learning technologies to improve student learning over the next four years.

Implementation of the CSF is a key responsibility of Schools of the Future. It is essential that all schools ensure that this objective is maintained and that appropriate strategies for its realisation are in place.

For further information please contact Ross Kimber, Team Leader, CSF/Course Advice Project Team on (03) 9628 3879.

FRANK C PECK
APPENDIX V

Belief Statement Executive Committee TAWL (Melbourne)

| WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY is continually developing. It draws upon research from many areas including psycholinguistics, sociopsycholinguistics, linguistics and cognitive psychology. It is a set of underlying principles which inform practice. It is not only a philosophy of language learning; it embraces all learning. Whole language is about whole learning. |
| WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY is based on the centrality of meaning. Language is used to express meaning. Whole language philosophy therefore implies that the teaching of language occurs in contexts that are meaningful to learners. Teachers and students are engaged in authentic language use. |
| WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY values the language, culture and lives of students and whole language practice empowers students to take control of their lives and to be socially critical members of their society. |
| WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY recognises that when students are engaged in authentic language use, three things happen simultaneously: they learn language, they use language to learn and they learn about language. |
| WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY views listening, speaking, reading and writing as integrated, not separate, domains. |
| WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY recognises that individual learner’s knowledge is socially constructed through collaboration with others. |
| WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY recognises that all language is used in context. The context changes according to the subject matter and the purpose of the communication. As the context changes, so does the language. Language is always used for a purpose and it is the purpose which shapes the text, or determines the genre. |
| WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY recognises that students are active in their learning. From their experience with language, children form hypotheses about how language works. They try out these hypotheses while actually using language. With further experience they text (sic) and refine them, forming rules or generalisations. These personal hypotheses are refined according to the social conventions of the language community of which the individual is a member. |
| WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY recognises that students learn the subsystems of language (e.g. phonics, syntax, punctuation) as they engage in whole language use. It is only while students are using language that the teacher can observe the students’ control of sub-systems, the needs they may have, and plan appropriate strategies to assist them. |
| WHOLE LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY recognises that teachers are professionals who continue to learn. They learn by observing students closely, they learn from each other and they learn by engaging in on-going professional development. Whole language teachers are able to articulate and develop their beliefs and are thus empowered to make informed curriculum decisions best suited to the needs of the students they teach. |

(Teachers Applying Whole Language, 1995)
APPENDIX W

1998 LAP CORRESPONDENCE

A. Department of Education (DoE) Victoria, Directive Regarding the LAP Testing Programme: Executive Memorandum 98/023

EXECUTIVE MEMORANDUM 98/023

TO: Principals of Primary and P-12 Schools

FROM: Peter Allen, Director of Schools

SUBJECT: Implementation of the Learning Assessment Project - 1998

DATE: [Date]

The 1998 Learning Assessment Project is due to commence in the week commencing 16 March 1998. Schools will by now have received from the Board of Studies the 1998 Guide to Administering the Learning Assessment Project.

As you are aware, the LAP is a valuable source of assessment information directly related to student achievement in relation to the Curriculum and Standards Framework. It builds on and adds a further dimension to the work already done by teachers in assessing and reporting on students’ performance. It presents, in a detailed and clear manner, additional information for schools, teachers and parents about individual student achievement.

This year’s LAP will continue to provide significant information to teachers and parents about student learning. The 1997 LAP provided for the first time data about the performance of primary students in relation to History and Geography (SOSE). In Years 3 and 5 more than 91% of students were working at or above the expected level. A comparison with 1996 results indicated that slightly more students are working at a satisfactory or better level in English and Mathematics than in 1996. This is a clear indication of the continuing hard work and commitment of teachers in primary schools.

Reading and Writing as essential literacy skills will continue to be assessed in 1998. A modification of the numeracy assessment will alter the LAP assessment to include all fundamental areas of the Mathematics curriculum, rather than selected parts of the curriculum that have featured in the LAP to date. Changes in this area will allow a more comprehensive measure of Mathematics skills to be obtained. Schools will therefore receive information about achievements in all areas of Mathematics, not just selected parts.
In 1998, the teacher assessed tasks in English (Writing) and Mathematics (Chance and data) will be conducted for all years 3 and 5 students in the period 16 - 30 March 1998. Centrally assessed tasks will be undertaken in English, Mathematics and Science on 31 March 1998 and 1 April 1998.

It is expected that all years 3 and 5 students who attend school on those days will participate in the LAP except those who have been granted exemption on the basis of disability, impairment or non-English speaking background. There are no other grounds for exemption. Principals are therefore instructed to make arrangements for the conduct of the LAP in this three week period. In doing so principals should ensure that Board of Studies procedures and guidelines for the implementation of the LAP are followed.

Can you please ensure that teachers and parents are fully informed about the LAP and its importance in each child’s education. Information about the LAP, including details about the conduct and administration of the LAP and the reporting of LAP results to parents, should be provided for School Council, and all parents and teachers. Information from the Board of Studies should assist you in carrying out this responsibility, particularly that contained in the Guide to Administering the LAP, 1998 (pp 34 and 35).

Principals are also reminded of the Department’s policy contained in section 6.14.12.2 of the Schools of the Future Reference Guide concerning the use of the Department’s resources and the use of students to distribute material originating from other organisations.

It is not expected that any industrial action will take place concerning the implementation of the LAP. On the 14 March 1997, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission issued an Order which stated that:

"Industrial action by the AEU in the State of Victoria, or industrial action by the members of the AEU to whom the order applies, being industrial action, and in particular stop works or refusal to perform work about or related to the implementation of the Learning Assessment Project, shall not occur, or where such action has occurred or does occur, shall stop."

This Order remains in place until 13 June 1998.

If there are any issues which arise in relation to implementation of the LAP in 1998, please contact your General Manager (Schools) for assistance.

Peter Allen
Director
B. School Principal's LAP Letter to Parents

LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROJECT – 1998

Dear Parents of Year 3 and Year 5 Students

As you are aware it is Government policy for all schools to administer the Learning Assessment Project (LAP) to students in years 3 and 5 each year. The LAP will be taking place during the period 16th March to 1st April this year.

The LAP is administered in two sections:

1. Teacher Assessed Tasks
   Classroom teachers have two tasks
   • English (Writing)
   • Mathematics (Chance and Data)
   to administer and assess between the 16th and 30th March. Each teacher makes an assessment of the student’s performance in these two set tasks and the information is sent to the Board of Studies.

2. Centrally Assessed Tasks
   There are four tasks to be administered by the classroom teacher. These are:
   • Mathematics
   • Science
   • English (Reading and Writing Conventions)
   • English (Writing)
   These four tasks will be administered on the 31st March and 1st April. These tests are completed at school in test booklets and then sent to the Board of Studies for marking.

The results from the LAP will be sent to schools in June and it is our intention to include the LAP results with our Student Reports and parent/teacher interviews at the end of the semester. The results from the LAP and our own detailed achievement reports should provide a sound basis for determining ways to improve student learning outcomes.

It is expected that all Year 3 and 5 students will participate in the Learning Assessment Project testing.

Any parents who wish to discuss any aspects of the LAP testing or their child’s participation in the tests are welcome to speak to me. You may like to phone or make an appointment to see me.

Acting Principal
C. Australian Education Union (AEU) LAP Letter to Parents

LAP LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents,

The Victorian Government plans to test all children in Grades 3 and 5 - and Years 7 and 9 - in March this year. Your child will be asked to do tests over a three week period as part of the Learning Assessment Project (LAP) in primary school or the Victorian Student Achievement Monitor (VSAM) in secondary school. The LAP was introduced in 1995 and there have been substantial problems with the tests. 1998 is to be the first year of VSAM's operation.

You can choose whether or not you want your child to be tested in the LAP.

Parents and teachers are opposing the tests because they believe that the LAP provide poor quality information. There is also great concern that the data will be misused.

In relation to LAP, there have been many problems with the quality of the questions, the level of difficulty, the length and number of the tests and also the relevance to the school curriculum. It has not been a positive learning experience for children and only a tiny fraction of the curriculum has been tested.

The LAP tests assume that all children are the same and so they do not cater for the diverse educational, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children throughout Victoria. As a result, many groups of children could be disadvantaged by this test. Testing programs such as the LAP also have the ability to damage students' self esteem and motivation by labelling them as failures.

This government prefers to allocate scarce resources to testing, rather than to educational programs which would benefit students.

If you are concerned about the impact that LAP may have on your child, we urge you to send a letter to the principal of your child's school, saying that you do not want your child to participate in the Learning Assessment Project or the Victorian Student Achievement Monitor. A sample letter is set out below. If you take this action, it is likely that your school Principal will approach you requesting that you withdraw your instruction. You can disregard this advice as it is your right to insist that your child not undertake the LAP, if you so wish.

If you want more information contact AEU Executive members

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

SAMPLE LETTER
Below is a letter which you may wish to tear of and send to your school. Alternatively you may want to use this note to assist you in drawing up your own letter.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

To the Principal

I do not want my child to take part in any aspect of the Learning Assessment Project. Please ensure that all relevant teachers are informed of my wishes and that my child continues to participate in the established school program.

Yours sincerely,

Name of parent/s

Name/s of children

Grades/s of Children
APPENDIX X


A brief overview of the status of the acceptance and implementation of the national English Statement and Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994a, 1994b) in the Australian states and territories.

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<tr>
<td><strong>New South Wales</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>K - 6 English Syllabus</em> incorporated the outcomes from the national profile.</td>
<td><em>K - 6 English Syllabus</em> incorporated the outcomes statements from the nationally developed English Profile. It also included additional NSW outcomes.</td>
<td>Revised syllabus being written ready for 1998. The NSW Board of Studies is no longer required to incorporate the national profiles directly into the NSW syllabus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victoria</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Victorian BOS English KLAC (Key Learning Area Committee) consulted on a draft CSF based on the national profile. The BOS matched the years of schooling to seven levels of achievement in the CSF.</td>
<td><em>Curriculum and Standards Framework</em> document produced based on the national English Statement and profile. The CSF contains seven levels which are related to year levels.</td>
<td>From 1996 onwards all government schools are required to use the CSF for reporting student achievement in the school annual report. Parents will receive a report of their child's achievements in (English and mathematics) against the CSF by the end of Term 2, 1997.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Queensland</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The English in Years 1 - 10</em> Queensland syllabus materials includes Queensland Student Performance Standards in English, which were closely based on the English Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools. Schools were invited to experiment with the student performance standards in relation to their use as a reporting framework.</td>
<td><em>The English in Years 1 - 10</em> Queensland Syllabus materials included the Queensland Student Performance Standards in English which are closely based on the national English Profile.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1994

**South Australia**
A year of familiarisation with English statement and profile.

**1995**
All schools were implementing the national profile and statement.

**1996**
SA continues to the implement the English Profile and Statement. Schools are expected to report student achievement in English against the profile.

**West Australia**
1994 - 1995 was a period of familiarisation with *Student Outcome Statements* which are a version of the national profile.

**1995**
WA implemented the Student *Outcome Statements* which are a version of the national English Profile.

**1996**
Following the two year trial a working edition of the English *Student Outcome Statements* was released. Basically a modified version of the national statement and profile.

**Tasmania**
Familiarisation year with national English Profile.

**1995**
Implementation of the English Profile.

**1996**
Implementation of English Profile continued. From 1996 - 1998 support will be provided in the form of professional development programmes and the publication of English guidelines.

**Northern Territory**
Period of familiarisation with national profile. The *NT English Subject Curriculum* relates directly to the English Profile.

**1995**
*NT English Subject Curriculum* relates directly to the English Profile.

**1996**
The NT BOS reviewed the national profiles and decided to develop NT profiles for the Territory context. The draft version was released in July, 1996.

**Australian Capital Territory (ACT)**
Two year trialing process with the national English Profile.

**1995**
Trialling the national English Profile.

**1996**
Schools continue to work with the national English profile. ACT schools also use the *ACT English Curriculum Framework* document published in 1994.