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Profiling ESL children: How teachers interpret and use national and state assessment frameworks: Volume 2: The Western Australia case studies

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Profiling ESL Children

**How Teachers Interpret and Use
National and State Assessment Frameworks**

***Volume 2: The Western Australia
Case Studies***

**Michael P. Breen
Caroline Barratt-Pugh
Beverly Derewianka
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DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS.

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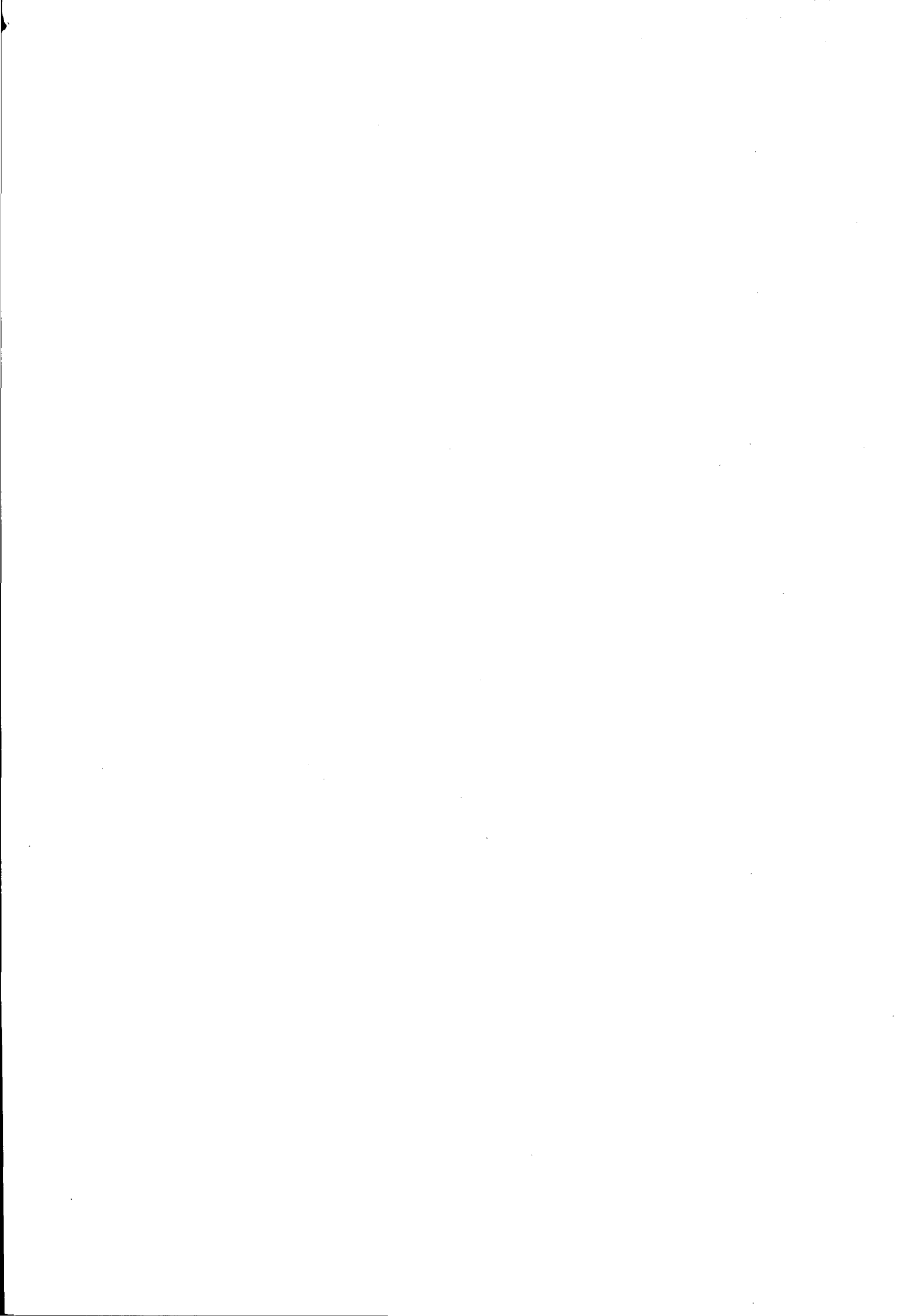
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Australian Education Council (1994) *English - A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools*. Carlton: Curriculum Corporation (St. Nicholas Place, 141 Rathdowne St. Carlton, Victoria, Australia.*

Australian Education Council (1994) *ESL Scales*. Carlton, Victoria: Curriculum Corporation (St. Nicholas Place, 141 Rathdowne St. Carlton, Victoria, Australia.*

Department of Education, Victoria. (1996) *Assessment and Reporting Support Materials: English and ESL*, Melbourne.

Education Department of Western Australia. (1994). *First Steps*. Melbourne: Addison Wesley Longman.

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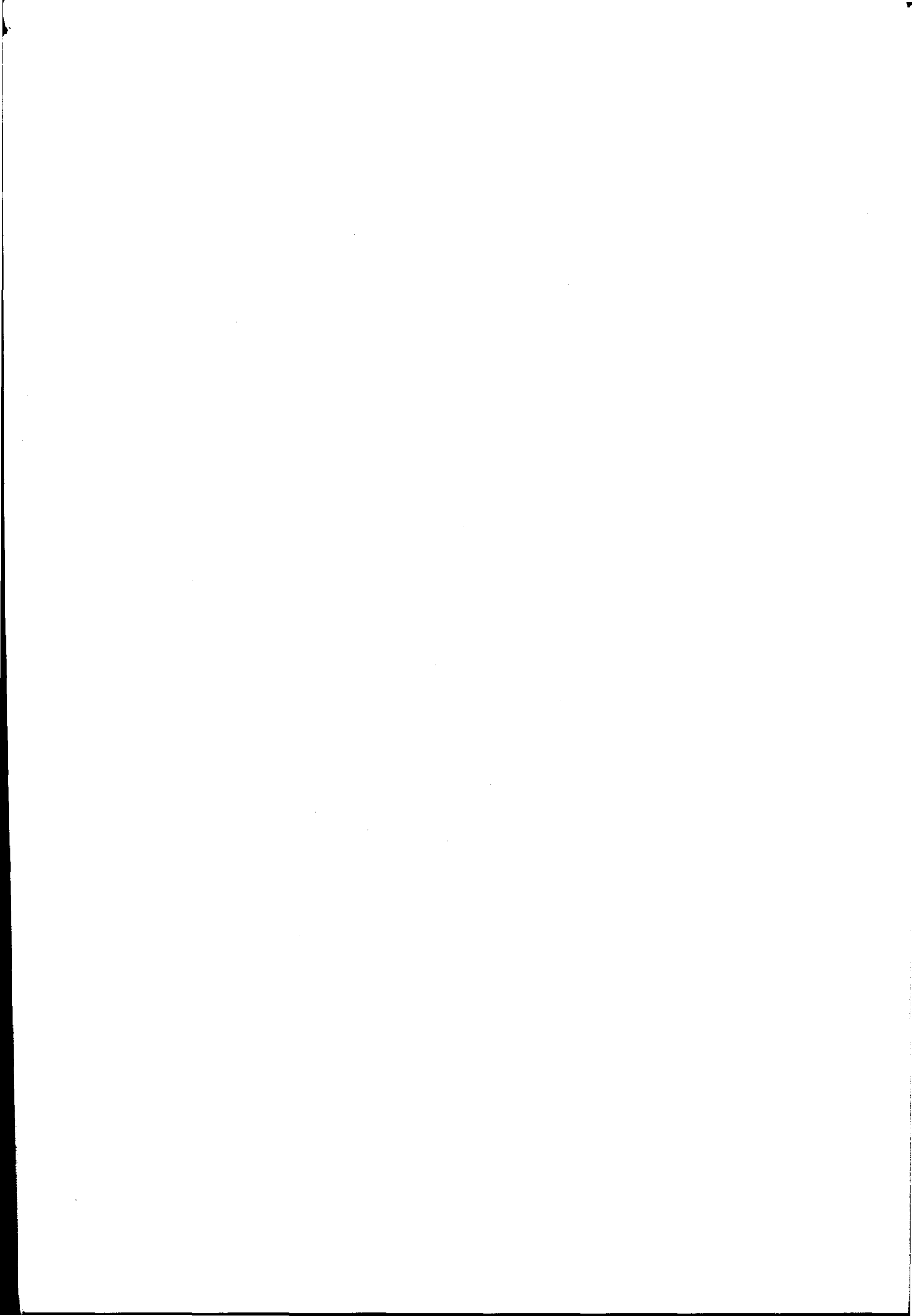
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The Board of Studies in Victoria. (1995) *The English Curriculum and Standards Framework*, Melbourne.

The Board of Studies in Victoria. (1996) *ESL Companion to the English CSF*, Melbourne.

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A Guide to the Case Studies

The Case Studies that follow provide descriptive accounts of the assessment practices of 25 teachers located in fifteen schools across four States. The Studies focus in particular upon the teacher's assessment of the English development of ESL children in K-Year 3 classrooms. The Case Studies are sequenced according to locality as follows:

- Volume 2: The Pilbara, Western Australia
 Perth Metropolitan, Western Australia
- Volume 3: Melbourne Metropolitan, Victoria
 A Regional City in New South Wales
 Cape York and Metropolitan Brisbane, Queensland

The Case Studies in this volume are summarised in the table on the following page which indicates the teacher, the location and type of school in which the teacher worked, the proportion of ESL students in the teacher's class, and the assessment framework(s) which the teacher was using at the time of the study. In the table and throughout the Cases, the names of teachers, schools, and students are given as pseudonyms.

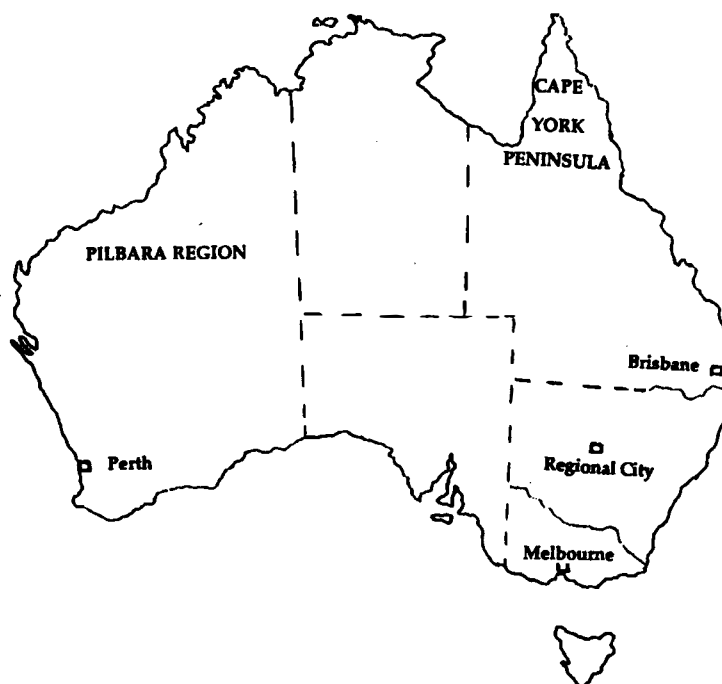
The Data Base

Each Case Study presents a detailed picture of a teacher's approach to the assessment of the ESL students in her/his class with particular reference to the teacher's interpretation and use of one or other of the assessment frameworks which were the focus of this study. The data from the Case Studies derive from close contact between a researcher and the teacher during the second half of 1996. The data informing each Case was based upon several days of observation in the teachers' classrooms over a period of two terms. The researchers also interviewed the teachers for about an hour, usually after each observation. (In circumstances where schools were far outside metropolitan areas, there were fewer observations and interviews because of the difficulties of long distance travel to and from the school. For more detail on the focus and procedures of the interviews, see **The Research Approach** in Chapter One, Volume 1). Teachers talked researchers through their assessment of, in particular, the reading development and written work ESL children. The teachers also provided the researchers with samples of classroom activities and students' work, with assessed tasks, and with assessment and reporting documentation which they had completed. And they commented in detail on all of these data.

Once the researcher had written up each Case in draft form, it was given to the respective teacher to amend, clarify, or add any further information or data which the teacher felt was necessary. During this process, teachers occasionally provided extra relevant data relating to their assessment practices. Drafts were simultaneously circulated among the research team and the project's Advisory Committee for them to seek further clarification from the member of the research team who had written the Case. From this process, researchers wrote up the version of each Case as it is presented in this volume.

The Western Australia Case Studies				
Teacher	Location	Type of School	ESL Learners in Class	Assessment Framework
Leigh: Yr 1/2 (2 yrs exp.)	Weaver Pilbara WA	State Primary Schools Priority Program (PSP) Mainstream	10% ESL plus high numbers Aboriginal English as Second Dialect (ESD)	Student Outcome Statements (SOS) First Steps
Nicole: Yr 2 (4 yrs exp.)	Weaver Pilbara WA	State Primary (PSP) Mainstream	10% ESL plus high numbers Aboriginal ESD	SOS First Steps
Kylie: Pre Primary (8 yrs exp.)	Banksia Pilbara WA	State Primary Mainstream	10% Christmas Islander & Aboriginal	SOS
Joanne: K-2 (6 yrs exp.)	Nyamal Pilbara WA	State Community School Mainstream	All Aboriginal ESL	First Steps SOS First Steps Highgate Continuum.
Linda: Pre Primary (14 yrs exp.)	Harthill Perth WA	State Primary (PSP) Mainstream with an Intensive Language Centre (ILC)	More than 50% ESL	First Steps
Elizabeth: Pre Primary (20 yrs exp.)	Harthill Perth WA	State Primary Mainstream (PSP) ILC Attached	More than 50% ESL	First Steps
Janet: Yr 3-4 (20+ yrs exp)	Greenway Perth WA	State Primary ILC	All ESL	ESL Bandscales. Negotiated Evaluation
Aimee: Yr 1/2 (14 yrs exp)	Southern Perth WA	State Primary Mainstream	Several ESL learners	SOS First Steps
Yuen: Phase 1 (10 yrs exp)	Greenway Perth WA	State Primary ILC	All ESL	ESL Bandscales Negotiated Evaluation
Marion: Phase 2 (20+ yrs exp)	Greenway Perth WA	State Primary ILC	All ESL	ESL Bandscales Negotiated Evaluation
Rose: Yr 1 (4 yrs exp)	Harthill Perth WA	State Primary Mainstream (PSP) ILC attached	50% ESL	First Steps

Location of The Case Studies



The Narrative Organisation of Each Case

Each Case Study in this volume is organised and sequenced so that it provides:

- An account of the school context and the provision for ESL students within it.
- An account of the classroom context in which the teacher worked, including the linguistic backgrounds and proportion of the ESL children in the class and the typical classroom activities which focused upon the learning of English language and literacy.
- A detailed picture of the teacher's assessment practices in relation to the development of English of their ESL students, including their on-going assessment of classroom tasks, how the teacher monitored and kept records of the students' progress, and the ways in which the teachers reported student achievement to parents, the school and the system. This detailed account is illustrated in each Case Study with relevant samples of students' work, samples of the teacher's record keeping, and examples of reporting documentation.
- An account of the interaction between the teachers' assessment practices and their daily classroom pedagogy, including the reasons why the teachers undertook assessment in the ways they did.
- The teacher's views on the assessment frameworks which they had chosen or were required to use, including their preferences regarding appropriate assessment frameworks.

The teachers' accounts of their interpretation and use of the frameworks are the core data of this research. These Case Studies have, in turn, enabled us to identify those key issues in assessing the English development of ESL students which are discussed in Volume 1. We believe that each of the Case Studies that follow are self-standing documents. They include illustrative examples of assessment tasks, teacher records, and reporting documents together with the teacher's and the researcher's comments which elaborate upon how these materials are used. Inevitably each Case Study expresses the individual researcher's understanding and synthesis of a range of assessment practices relating to ESL students. However, we have tried to enable the teachers in this study to speak for themselves and to convey how they manage the task of assessment and reporting in relation to the inevitable demands of the classroom contexts in which they work.

The data that informed each Case Study was gathered in the second half of 1996 and therefore provided only a snapshot of the teachers' assessment practices at a particular period of time. Since then, the teachers and the schools in the study have pursued developments in their assessment and reporting practices and their participation in the research process has made its own small contribution in this development.

Brief Descriptions of the Assessment Frameworks used by Teachers in the Study

The main assessment frameworks used by the teachers in this study are briefly described on the following pages in order to provide the reader with a general picture of the type of documentation available to the teachers and to which they often refer in the Case Studies. If the reader requires a more detailed knowledge of the frameworks, full bibliographical information concerning these documents are provided under the references in Chapter 2.

The descriptions in this section begin with a summary of the main features of the National English Profile as the prototype from which particular State and Territory versions have been derived or developed. This is followed by brief descriptions of the main features of The ESL Bandscales and the ESL Scales as these are generally available and used by some of the teachers in different States. Subsequently, the specific frameworks used by the Case Study teachers which in each State are described in turn. This account of the frameworks is therefore sequenced in the following order:

Generally Available:	The National English Profile The ESL Scales The ESL Bandscales
New South Wales:	English K-6 Syllabus Early Learning Profiles
Queensland:	Queensland English Syllabus Years 1-10 Student Performance Standards in English Year 2 Diagnostic Net Draft Queensland ESL Proficiency Levels
Victoria:	English Curriculum Standards and Framework ESL Companion to the CSF Victorian English Profiles Handbook
Western Australia:	The Student Outcome Statements (Working Edition 1994) First Steps Developmental Continua.

The National English Profile

(Australian Education Council (1994) *English - A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools*. Carlton, Victoria: Curriculum Corporation.)

This framework, designed as a blueprint for the assessment of English across Australia, provides a description of the progression of learning in English typically achieved during the school Years 1-10. The main organisation of the Profile is a matrix based upon a distinction between the language modes of Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing. Within each of these, the content of English is organised in terms of four main strands:

- *Texts*: what the student is doing with what kinds of texts.
- *Contextual Understanding*: understanding about the sociocultural and situational contexts that the student brings to bear when composing and comprehending texts.
- *Linguistic Structures and Features*: how the student uses linguistic structures and features to compose and comprehend texts.
- *Strategies*: how the student undertakes the composition and comprehension of texts.

Using this matrix of modes and strands, the Profile provides a framework for mapping and reporting on student achievement in relation to each mode and strand. Crucially, the Profile indicates progression in terms of Levels. Within each Level of progression, general descriptions of student performance are given appropriate to that Level. Figure 1 on the following pages illustrates the Levels and their statements of achievement, or Level Outcomes, in each of the four strands within the mode of Speaking and Listening:

Figure 1: Levels and Strands within Speaking and Listening

	Texts	Contextual understanding
LEVEL 1	<p>1.1 Interacts informally with teachers, peers and known adults in structured classroom activities dealing briefly with familiar topics.</p> <p>See page 18</p>	<p>1.2 Shows emerging awareness of school purposes and expectations for using spoken language.</p> <p>See page 18</p>
LEVEL 2	<p>2.1 Interacts in more confident and extended ways in structured and spontaneous school situations.</p> <p>See page 34</p>	<p>2.2 Considers how own speaking and listening is adjusted in different situations.</p> <p>See page 34</p>
LEVEL 3	<p>3.1 Interacts for specific purposes with people in the classroom and school community using a small range of text types.</p> <p>See page 56</p>	<p>3.2 Recognises that certain types of spoken texts are associated with particular contexts and purposes.</p> <p>See page 56</p>
LEVEL 4	<p>4.1 Interacts confidently with others in a variety of situations to develop and present familiar ideas, events and information.</p> <p>See page 78</p>	<p>4.2 Considers aspects of context, purpose and audience when speaking and listening in familiar situations.</p> <p>See page 78</p>
LEVEL 5	<p>5.1 Interacts with peers in structured situations, using a variety of text types to discuss familiar or accessible subjects involving challenging ideas and issues.</p> <p>See page 102</p>	<p>5.2 Identifies the effect of context, audience and purpose on spoken texts.</p> <p>See page 102</p>
LEVEL 6	<p>6.1 Conveys detailed information and explores different perspectives on complex issues through interacting with known social groups, principally peers, in structured and unstructured situations.</p> <p>See page 118</p>	<p>6.2 Identifies ways in which listeners' sociocultural backgrounds, knowledge and opinions influence the meaning they obtain from spoken texts.</p> <p>See page 118</p>
LEVEL 7	<p>7.1 Works effectively with others in situations characterised by complexity of purpose, procedure and subject matter and a need for formality in speech and attitude.</p> <p>See page 132</p>	<p>7.2 Considers the inter-relationships between texts, contexts, speakers and listeners in a range of situations.</p> <p>See page 132</p>
LEVEL 8	<p>8.1 Interacts responsively, critically and confidently with both familiar and unfamiliar audiences on specialised topics in formal situations, and consistently achieves a variety of purposes in speech.</p> <p>See page 144</p>	<p>8.2 Shows sophisticated understanding of the power and effect of spoken language when speaking and listening.</p> <p>See page 144</p>
	<p>NOTE: 1. Terms such as 'speak', 'ask', 'talk', 'tell', 'explain' are intended to include forms of communication such as signing and the use of communication aids (boards, Compic, Canon communicators etc.).</p>	

Linguistic structures & features	Strategies	OUTCOMES
1.3 Draws on implicit knowledge of the linguistic structures and features of own variety of English when expressing ideas and information and interpreting spoken texts.	1.4 Monitors communication of self and others.	SPEAKING AND LISTENING
See page 19	See page 19	
2.3 Experiments with different linguistic structures and features for expressing and interpreting ideas and information.	2.4 Speaks and listens in ways that assist communication with others.	
See page 35	See page 35	
3.3 Usually uses linguistic structures and features of spoken language appropriately for expressing and interpreting ideas and information.	3.4 Reflects on own approach to communication and the ways in which others interact.	
See page 57	See page 57	
4.3 Controls most linguistic structures and features of spoken language for interpreting meaning and developing and presenting ideas and information in familiar situations.	4.4 Assists and monitors the communication patterns of self and others.	
See page 79	See page 79	
5.3 Discusses and experiments with some linguistic structures and features that enable speakers to influence audiences.	5.4 Listens strategically and systematically records spoken information.	
See page 103	See page 103	
6.3 Experiments with knowledge of linguistic structures and features, and draws on this knowledge to explain how speakers influence audiences.	6.4 Critically evaluates others' spoken texts and uses this knowledge to reflect on and improve own.	
See page 119	See page 119	
7.3 Uses awareness of differences between spoken and written language to construct own spoken texts in structured, formal situations.	7.4 Uses a range of strategies to present spoken texts in formal situations.	
See page 133	See page 133	
8.3 Analyses how linguistic structures and features affect interpretations of spoken texts, especially in the construction of tone, style and point of view.	8.4 Uses listening strategies which enable detailed critical evaluation of texts with complex levels of meaning.	
See page 145	See page 145	
2. The term 'listen' is intended to include all forms of attending (lip-reading, watching signed language etc.).		
3. The term 'oral' is intended to include forms of communication such as signing and using communicators.		

For assessment and reporting purposes, the teacher applying this framework would, for example, use Level 1.1. statement - *"Interacts informally with teachers, peers and known adults in structured classroom activities dealing briefly with familiar topics"* - as one of four criterial statements against which to assess a student's achievement in Speaking and Listening. Her decision is facilitated by the Profile in its further provision of pointers under each Level statement. Figure 2 illustrates some of the pointers given under the Level 1.2. statement:

**Figure 2: Pointers under Contextual Understanding
for Level 1 Speaking & Listening**

At level 1, a student:

1.2 Shows emerging awareness of school purposes and expectations for using spoken language.

Evident when students, for example:

- Understand purpose and their own roles in routine classroom activities involving speaking and listening.
- Attempt to observe agreed rules in structured classroom situations (raise hand to speak, take turns, answer questions, listen attentively, offer ideas and opinions).
- Cooperate with others on tasks.
- Use talk to establish relationships with others in the classroom.
- Ask, accede to and refuse requests in agreed ways.
- Compare greetings and farewells used at home and at school and discuss those appropriate to different situations ('Good morning' to a teacher in the classroom, 'See ya' to other students in the yard).
- Make connections between first or home language (including signed language) and school English, recognising that all languages serve a communicative function.

Providing pointers for eight Levels of progression in four Strands in the separate modes of Speaking & Listening, Reading & Viewing, and Writing, the Profile is clearly a comprehensive framework for assessing student achievements in English. To further inform a teacher's use of the Profile, at each Level, outcomes are illustrated with children's work samples. Figure 3 following summarises the different parts of the Profile and their relationship in more detail.

ESL Scales

(Australian Education Council (1994) *ESL Scales*. Carlton, Victoria: Curriculum Corporation.)

These Scales were developed by the Australian Education Council to supplement the National Statements and Profiles in the eight key learning areas. Their design therefore mirrors the matrix organisation of the English Profile. Their purpose is to:

- *provide a set of benchmarks against which the full range of ESL learners' achievements in English may be set*
-
- *develop a shared language among teachers of ESL learners in specialist and generalist contexts*
-
- *assist teachers throughout Australia in making consistent formative and summative judgements about ESL learners' achievements*
-
- *enhance students' access to the eight key learning areas*
-
- *help in identifying ESL learners' achievements and needs to assist program and curriculum development. (ESL scales, p.1)*

The ESL Scales are organised, in similar ways to the English Profile, into three modes or strands:

- Oral Interaction (listening and speaking)
- Reading and Responding
- Writing

Each of these modes is further divided into four strand organisers:

Communication

How the student interacts with the English-speaking environment and communicates in the new code of English. In particular, this strand organiser focuses on the ESL learner's communicative competence in terms of communication for social and cultural participation and communication for learning purposes.

Language and cultural understanding

What the student understands about the situational and sociocultural contexts that affects the way English is used and interpreted. The strand organiser deals with the understandings based on language and culture that influence the comprehension and creation of English, including the intentions and effects of an act of communication (i.e. understanding how spoken and written English is realised through linguistic choices for particular purposes and audiences by means of particular communicative strategies) and the different sociocultural contexts and perspectives of language use (i.e. understanding how values and attitudes and world views are conveyed and created through spoken and written language).

Language structures and features

The linguistic structures and features the student uses to create and comprehend texts. This strand organiser includes discourse structures such as texts or elements of language relating to texts and discourse features such as grammar, vocabulary, morphemes and aspects of the sound or writing systems.

Strategies

How the student goes about operating in English and acquiring English. This focuses on two types of strategies (i) those operating strategies that the students may use to communicate in English (tactics and approaches for participating in, sustaining, planning, managing and refining communication) and (ii) acquisition strategies that students use to learn English (approaches and techniques students use to enhance their learning of English, including social, affective, cognitive and metacognitive strategies).

For each outcome described under each of the above strand organisers within a mode like Oral Interaction, for instance, there are a number of different pointers which can be referred to in order to see whether in fact the outcome is being achieved. Before being able to state whether an outcome has been achieved, it would be necessary to observe the student in a number of different contexts, through a variety of activities and work samples, over a period of time, and with reference to several pointers.

The ESL Scales are intended to describe ESL language development at different Levels of achievement. Level 1 of each strand represents beginning knowledge of English for students **with no experience of English**. The Reading and Responding and the Writing strands also include three Beginning Levels relating to those students who have **no experience of literacy in any language**. The highest Levels in each strand reflect the achievement ESL students require for successful independent learning in English in secondary school.

By way of illustration and for comparison with earlier extract from the English Profile (Figure 1), Figure 4 lists the outcomes for the Oral Interaction strand under each of the four substrands. Within the Scales, pointers are provided under each of the following outcome statements.

Figure 4: ESL Scales - Oral Interaction				
	COMMUNICATION	LANGUAGE & CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	LANGUAGE STRUCTURES & FEATURES	STRATEGIES
Oral Interaction Level 1	OIC 1.1 Communicates verbally & non-verbally in simple social and classroom situations, taking cues from immediate context and using gesture, isolated words or well-known formulae.	OIL&C 1.2 Draws on knowledge of how people communicate, showing awareness of classroom conventions that involve routine verbal and non-verbal exchanges.	OI LS&F 1.3 Shows understanding of some familiar simplified spoken English supported by immediate context and uses a few simple spoken formulae or isolated words.	OIS 1.4 Attends to spoken English and attempts communication, relying on non-verbal and very limited verbal resources.
Oral Interaction Level 2	OIC 2.1 Communicates verbally and non-verbally in routine social and classroom situations, understanding controlled English supported by its immediate context and uses learnt formulae, well-rehearsed patterns and short, simple utterances.	OIL&C 2.2 Tunes into the sounds of English and shows understanding of when to use available English acceptably.	OI LS&F 2.3 Shows some understanding of simplified English in familiar, controlled exchanges, and uses simple formulae or short telegraphic utterances.	OIS 2.4 Uses some basic communication and learning strategies to participate in everyday and class routines.
Oral Interaction Level 3	OIC 3.1 Communicates and learns through English in predictable social and learning situations, understanding contextualised English and expressing simple messages in basic English.	OIL&C 3.2 Demonstrates awareness of aspects of spoken English necessary for communicating and learning in school.	OI LS&F 3.3 Responds to controlled English in familiar exchanges and manipulates learned structures and features to make original utterances characterised by simplified language and varying grammatical accuracy.	OIS 3.4 Accesses and incorporates English into own oral repertoire from a range of oral and written sources in order to extend oral skills in English.

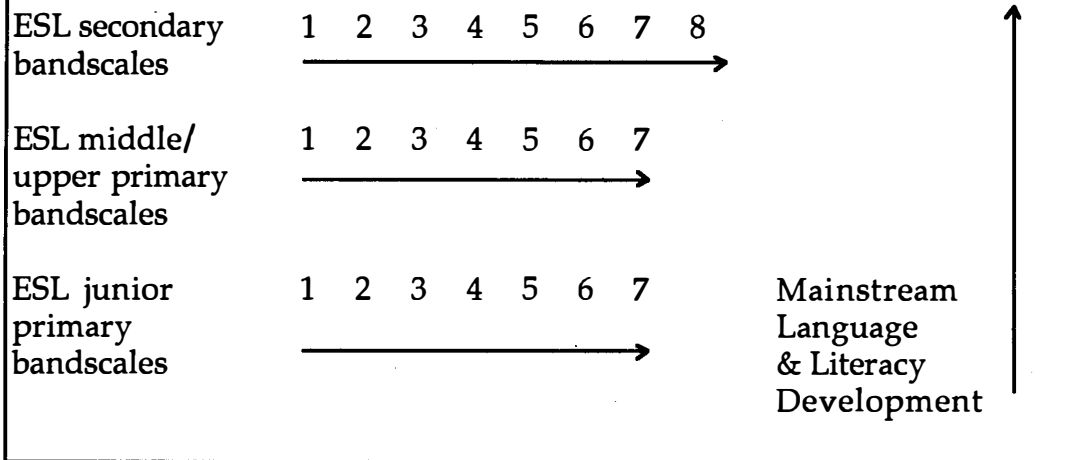
Oral Interaction Level 4	OIC 4.1 Understands the gist of unfamiliar topics expressed in familiar language and communicates in predictable social and learning situations, expressing simple messages in connected speech.	OI L&C 4.2 Demonstrates awareness of basic register requirements of spoken English in familiar formal and informal situations.	OI LS&F 4.3 Responds to spoken English appropriately in predictable situations, and adapts available English repertoire to make expanded utterances.	OI S 4.4 Accesses and incorporates English into own oral repertoire from a range of oral and written sources in order to extend oral skills in English.
Oral Interaction Level 5	OIC 5.1 Communicates in familiar social and classroom situations, extracting relevant information from spoken English and elaborating on some ideas in coherent speech.	OI L&C 5.2 Considers how interpersonal and cultural contexts affect communication in English.	OI LS&F 5.3 Shows understanding of spoken English, cuing in to key organisational and language features and demonstrating control over a basic oral repertoire.	OI S 5.4 Uses knowledge of oral and written English to sustain and monitor spoken English.
Oral Interaction Level 6	OIC 6.1 Communicates in familiar formal and informal registers, interpreting spoken English mainly at a literal level and organising language and ideas drawn from different sources.	OI L&C 6.2 Shows awareness that effective spoken English requires speakers to adapt language according to the perceived needs and expectations of listeners.	OI LS&F 6.3 Interprets and creates spoken texts in ways that show a developing control over subject-specific registers.	OI S 6.4 Uses planning and reflection to improve range, fluency, and accuracy of oral language.
Oral Interaction Level 7	OIC 7.1 Communicates in a variety of social and learning contexts, presenting ideas and information on a range of familiar topics and issues.	OI L&C 7.2 Identifies and incorporates some non-literal language and some key cultural references in speech.	OI LS&F 7.3 Interprets and creates coherent texts with some control and flexibility over key organisational and language features.	RS 7.4 Monitors spoken English for relevance and accuracy to link ideas across spoken texts.
Oral Interaction Level 8	OIC 8.1 Communicates effectively in most formal and informal social and learning situations about familiar and unfamiliar issues of some complexity.	OI L&C 8.2 Shows understanding of how values, perspectives and feelings are expressed through spoken English and reflects that awareness in own language.	OI LS&F 8.3 Interprets complex spoken English used for a range of purposes and creates spoken texts that demonstrate some clarity, cohesiveness and versatility of expression.	RS 8.4 Monitors language patterns and communicative techniques in speech to enhance and sustain communication.

NLLIA ESL Bandscales

(National Languages & Literacy Institute of Australia (1993) *ESL Development: Language and Literacy in Schools*. Vols 1 & 2. Canberra: NLLIA.)

The ESL Bandscales provide descriptions of proficiency development in English as a second language in the four modes of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The Bandscales are intended to cover all phases of schooling from K to Year 12. Developed specifically for ESL students independently of the National English Profile and prior to the ESL Scales, the achievement statements in the Bandscales indicate Levels but are not further subdivided into substrands under each of the modes. The Bandscales are, in fact, made up of **three** scales in order to account for the different ages of ESL students on entering the school system. As Figure 5 indicates, the framework provides Bandscales for different Year levels in the system. It also shows the relation between a student's progress through the Levels of the Bandscales and progress in mainstream language and literacy development.

Figure 5: The Relation between the ESL Bandscales and Mainstream Language & Literacy Development



To illustrate the Bandscales, Figure 6 lists the descriptions of achievement at all the Levels in the three strands under the mode of Speaking. When compared with the equivalent statements of achievement in the English Profile and the ESL Scales, these descriptions appear to offer greater detail.

Figure 6: ESL Bandscales - Speaking

	Junior Primary	Middle & Upper Primary	Secondary
Speaking Level 1	Will label some objects and use occasional isolated words. Vocabulary limited to that necessary to express immediate needs. Often echo words and phrases of other learners and adults. Use gestures to indicate meaning, particularly needs, likes and dislikes; need an attentive interlocutor who is prepared to predict meaning from gestures and context.	Will label some objects and use occasional isolated words. Vocabulary limited to that necessary to express elementary needs. Often echo words and phrases of other students and adults. Use gestures to indicate meaning, particularly needs, likes & dislikes. Need an attentive interlocutor who is prepared to predict meaning from gestures & context. Can respond non-verbally & copy actions of others in academic learning activities such as in language arts, maths, science, etc (e.g. picking up & moving objects appropriately (e.g. in science experiments); participating in excursions in social studies).	Uses non-verbal gestures and/or single words to express immediate needs. May have some learned courtesy formulae (e.g. <i>sorry, excuse me</i>). May be able to name some objects. Either through complete lack of experience with English (e.g. a very recent arrival in Australia) or through choice ('silent period') may not say anything in English.
Speaking Level 2	Beginning to use routine and formulaic social language including familiar courtesies e.g. yes please, lunch-time?. Beginning to combine words creatively e.g. me turn, not come here, no like Australia. Have some control over aspects of the environment as language develops e.g. directing others (I'm <i>dobbing</i> on you! Mine!) Are able to join in with repetitive language of stories, poems & songs. May repeat questions or statements of others.	Can participate in guided face-to-face conversations with a familiar, supportive adult. Rely heavily on chunks of language & routine phrases and substitute new words or phrases as they are acquired. Will rely on gesture & help from the listener. Have some control over aspects of the environment as language develops (e.g. directing others (' <i>That's mine! I'm dobbing on you!</i> '))	Can participate in predictable face-to-face interactions (ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements,) in personal informational exchanges, and in routine areas of immediate need (e.g. simple transactional exchanges such as in shops and in public transport, in sport and classroom interaction). With intensive context-enriched ESL support (e.g. pictorial support, labels, charts, hands-on activities) can participate in basic classroom discourse e.g. simple interactive tasks in pairs and groups requiring predominantly formulaic learned spoken utterances.

Profiling ESL Children

<p>Speaking Level 3</p>	<p>Can participate in routine exchanges (e.g. greetings, simple routine classroom responses) without great difficulty. Can participate in and initiate face-to-face interactions on familiar personal topics with familiar peers and adults, but will rely heavily on interlocutor and contextual support (e.g. interlocutor allowing time for the learners to process thoughts and express themselves in English, giving supportive gestures and facial expressions, rephrasing questions, using objects/ pictures). Can respond with short responses to teacher's guiding questions in classroom activities. Will speak with frequent breakdowns in fluency and meaning due to limited English resources.</p>	<p>Can participate in face-to-face interactions on familiar personal topics but with frequent breakdowns in fluency & meaning due to limited English resources. Are able to generate own language beyond formulae and two or three word sentences. Are able to participate in class interactions on familiar topics where teacher directs questions towards them individually, using contextual support, repeating & rephrasing & elaborating; but will have difficulty participating in discussions between teacher and learners at native-speaker speed. Can participate in group learning activities with mainstream peers only with a clear role definition (e.g. as the time keeper) which does not require much speaking in English.</p>	<p>Can participate in contextualised interactions (i.e. mostly in face-to-face interactions with strong support from interlocutor) in a range of circumstances beyond immediate needs. Can contribute with relevance and reasonable comprehensibility to short dialogue/ classroom interaction on a familiar topic. Can communicate most routine social and school needs.</p> <p>Can communicate ideas in classroom interaction with relevance and reasonable comprehensibility by combining and expanding simple holistic phrases on taught/ familiar topics and by experimenting with their limited English resource to express more complex content. However utterances will be fragmented (e.g. <i>Sun is made of gas and earth is has air and water anything ... and moon in no water and no air</i>).</p>
<p>Speaking Level 4</p>	<p>Are able to communicate in a growing range of social & learning situations with interlocutor and contextual support. Can sustain a conversation with an attentive adult on a familiar topic (e.g. on autobiographical information; describing past & present events). Can give a short morning talk about a familiar item. Can answer questions (<i>What's that? What sort of ... is this? What happened then? Why are you doing that?</i>) about an item being studied e.g. a classroom pet. Extended discourse will be fragmented and approximations to standard forms will be evident.</p>	<p>Are able to interact socially with peers & familiar adults in most informal school contexts (e.g. teacher on playground duty; with peers in playground games; with peers in the classroom in informal learning contexts (e.g. art & craft, games, organisational language in group work)). Can give personal information, and describe past & present events without great difficulty; able to use words & phrases in strings to participate in longer speaking turns. Are able to recount an event or a series of events orally (e.g. in individual presentations such as morning news). Can participate in academic learning activities on familiar topics if teacher and contextual support (modelling, scaffolding, recycling of language, etc) and time are provided. ESL features still occur but will not generally impede overall meaning. Can give a short prepared formal spoken report with heavy word-for-word reliance on their written text & with little ability to respond to questions beyond giving yes/no answers.</p>	<p>Are able to participate in expanded interactions with supportive interlocutor (e.g. interview with school counsellor) and can handle with confidence giving detailed autobiographical information and describing past and present events, though this may be given in shorter rather than longer utterances. May attempt to express complex thoughts and feelings in English, but rely on attentive interlocutor asking for clarification, paraphrasing, etc. to do so successfully.</p> <p>Have some ability to contribute to classroom interaction and to answer questions within subject areas, where taught and with an ESL-informed, supportive teacher. Can give opinions on familiar topics (depending on cultural and /or literacy background, personality) but express limited supporting factors/ ideas. Can express simple ideas in groups.</p>
<p>Speaking Level 5</p>	<p>Are able to sustain participation in interactions, and express ideas during class discussions. Can contribute own ideas and opinions. Can participate in regular mainstream classroom activities on familiar topics, but do not have the 'depth' of language needed to relate more complex ideas needed in learning through English.</p>	<p>Are able to sustain participation in interactions in English in an expanding range of contexts expected at their phase of schooling. Are fluent in social speech with few breakdowns in communication. Are able to participate & collaborate in mainstream class and group learning activities with other mainstream learners, but do not have the 'depth' of language required to relate more complex ideas which are needed in certain academic learning activities in English (e.g. in a persuasive text in Social Studies; in an explanation of a scientific process).</p>	<p>Able to participate effectively in social and school contexts, if staying within own particular interest and ability areas and within routine areas of interaction (e.g. talking in home class, talking with ESL teacher at break, sports field). Are able to initiate and stage interactions and use longer utterances, though with uneven accuracy in more complex discourse.</p> <p>They are able to use a growing amount of spoken language in academic classroom contexts (e.g. talking to peers & teachers, handling the library, problem-solving with a peer in science, discussing maths problems with a teacher). Have acquired more technical vocabulary and discourse features of different subject areas; have problems in using sub-technical vocabulary (e.g. <i>accommodate, inflate, device</i>).</p>

Speaking Level 6	Able to take an active and productive part in all social and learning activities for their age and phase of schooling. Can participate in an interaction expressing own ideas and opinions with little help from teachers or peers. Some difficulties in expressing precision of meaning still persist. Are able to express more complex ideas (at their level of cognitive development) on both familiar and new curriculum topics as long as the content is well grounded. Similarly, are able to explain things to other learners.	Are able to take an active and productive part in all social and academic learning activities (within the range of ability expected at their phase of schooling) though some difficulties in expressing precision of meaning still persist. Will be able to take an active and productive part in group activities around academic topics.	Are able to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on personal, social and school topics; no longer rely on undue support from the interlocutor/s to maintain the interaction in informal contexts, though some ESL features remain. Are able to participate effectively in discourse in most classroom contexts on known and new topics; swift interactions in classroom academic discussions involving changes of topic and detailed argument will still be a problem. Have growing ability to participate in exchanges and collaboration with English-speaking peers, but may need additional support to substantiate argument/ points of view appropriately on academic topics.
Speaking Level 7	Are able to communicate fluently and accurately for the range of purposes and in the range of social and learning contexts expected at their age level and phase of schooling.	Are able to communicate fluently and accurately (with the range of ability expected at their phase of schooling) for the variety of purposes and audiences and across the range of social and academic contexts expected at their phase of schooling.	Are consolidating their ability to use the language appropriately for most purposes across a range of personal, social and general school contexts. Are very fluent speakers of English. Will make occasional second language slips in structure, choice of vocabulary, stress and intonation, socio-cultural references, etc. Are able to use the language to perform sophisticated and demanding school tasks with independence, though with some remaining ESL features. Can give a long, extended talk independently and effectively in terms of stress, intonation and pausing (e.g. a report) but may take more time in preparation (e.g. writing out word for word beforehand; checking with others that stress and pronunciation is right, considering appropriate phrasing, etc.)
Speaking Level 8	—	—	Can use the language appropriately, flexibly and with facility for all purposes across the range of personal, social and general school contexts expected at their age and phase of schooling. Can participate in all types of spoken discourse in own subject areas at the level expected at their phase of schooling.

The ESL Bandscales also describe particular achievements under each main Level statement, not dissimilar to the pointers in the ESL scales. And the support material also includes exemplar assessment activities, reporting formats, and observation guides listing broad categories and aspects of language use that a teacher may consider when assessing students.

New South Wales English K-6 Syllabus

(New South Wales Board of Studies (1994) *English K-6 Syllabus and Support Document*. Sydney: Author.)

The English K-6 Syllabus, developed by the NSW Board of Education, was the first syllabus documents in Australia to incorporate outcomes from the National English Profile. The outcomes statements within the syllabus are organised in terms of three strands: Talking and Listening, Reading, and Writing.

A fourth strand, Values and Attitudes, is included but not elaborated in terms of specific outcomes at different levels.

Similar to the English Profile, the organisation is a matrix in which the three major strands are themselves divided into three substrands:

- Text and Context
- Strategies for Talking and Listening/Learning to Read/Learning to Write
- Grammatical Patterns

Across these strands and substrands, eight Levels of outcomes are identified. These levels are not tied to any particular age or stage of schooling.

Following the design of the English Profile, each of the outcomes in the strands is accompanied by a number of pointers illustrating achievement at a particular level. There are also a number of annotated work samples and a range of support materials.

Following a review of the outcomes and profiling approach in NSW, a revised version of English K-6 will be implemented in 1998. This version will have fewer outcomes and will be organised in terms of Stages rather than Levels. The stages will be tied to particular Years or grades (i.e. Early Stage 1 - Kindergarten; Stage 1 - Years 1-2; Stage 2 - Years 3-4; Stage 3 - Years 5-6).

New South Wales Early Learning Profiles

(New South Wales Department of School Education (1994) *Early Learning Profiles*. Sydney: Author.)

Because Level 1 of the English K-6 Syllabus was considered not to be taking sufficient account of learning taking place in the very early stages of schooling, the Department of School Education developed these Profiles in English and Mathematics to supplement the syllabus. The Profiles outlined two Levels prior to the original Level 1: Foundation Level and Transitional Level.

The Profiles include a five-page section on the implications of such an assessment framework for ESL learners. Here teachers' attention is drawn to the specific use of the ESL Scales as a companion framework for the Early Learning Profiles, thereby acknowledging the intention underlying the design of the ESL Scales as a parallel document to the National English Profile.

Queensland English Syllabus in Years 1 to 10

(Department of Education, Queensland (1994) *English in years 1 to 10 Queensland Syllabus Materials*. Brisbane: Author.)

The Queensland English Syllabus for Years 1 to 10 draws on five major curriculum concepts to provide coverage and coherence:

- cultural heritage
- skills
- developmental and whole language
- functional linguistics and genre theory
- critical literacy

The syllabus provides a perspective on issues such as the needs of individuals and groups, the teaching of language in use, and the related underlying attitudes, thinking processes, skills and knowledge. The syllabus requires the explicit teaching of the knowledge and understanding of language and language learning which are seen to assist the young school leaver to become an independent learner. This explicit teaching about language and language learning also provides teachers and students with a metalanguage with which they can explore this area of study.

The English Syllabus argues for the development of school programs which are coherent, balanced and have a range of learning experiences. The various components of the school program should be interrelated in such a way that they provide continuity of learning throughout years 1 to 10 to deliver language learning which is purposeful and related to the needs of the learner. The syllabus further argues that the planning for the development of effective school and classroom English programs is informed by comprehensive assessment practices.

The Syllabus for Years 1 to 10 has a number of support guides designed to assist teachers. These are guides to genres in English, to analysing texts in English, to classroom practice in English, to teaching in English and to using English syllabus materials.

Queensland Student Performance Standards in English

(Department of Education, Queensland (1994) *A Guide to Using Student Performance Standards in English*. Brisbane: Author.)

Student Performance Standards were developed as a reporting framework based on the National Profiles and Statements. They are therefore closely related to the English Syllabus for Years 1 to 10. The Standards are arranged similarly to the National English Profile as three main strands or modes of Reading and Viewing, Writing, Listening and Speaking. Within each of these there are substrands referring to: Contexts and Purposes, Texts in Use, Cultural and Social Understandings, Textual Features and Procedures. Under each of these there are eight Levels of achievement. The Performance Standards are also used in Catholic schools in Queensland as the framework for outcomes-based reporting.

The Queensland Year 2 Diagnostic Net

The Year 2 Diagnostic Net undertaken during the period of this study is a process of assessment and intervention to support children's literacy (Reading and Writing only) and numeracy development during the early years of schooling in the State. The assessment is aimed to identify those children who are experiencing difficulties in literacy and numeracy in order to provide focused support.

The Net process of diagnostic assessment is based upon the Western Australian First Steps Developmental Continua with minor modifications (see below) and involves a four-step procedure in which teachers:

- observe and map children's progress using the Developmental Continua for literacy and numeracy;
- validate observations with specifically designed assessment tasks and identify those children who require intervention;
- provide support those children requiring additional assistance;
- report to parents.

Teachers are encouraged to interact on an individual basis with each student as part of the process of monitoring and assessment. Schools, in consultation with the parents, have the option of exempting ESL students who are at Level 2 or have been assessed already with reference to the Draft Queensland ESL Proficiency Levels (see below).

As part of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net, teachers in Years 1, 2 and 3 are provided with Developmental Continua in the focus areas of literacy and numeracy. The literacy Continua focus on Reading and Writing. The numeracy continuum is Number. In Catholic Schools in Queensland, the *Early Years Diagnostic Net* is a very similar diagnostic process addressing literacy and numeracy needs of Year 1-3 students.

Draft Queensland ESL Proficiency Levels

(Cultural Equity Unit, Department of Education Queensland (1995) *Draft Queensland ESL Proficiency Levels*. Brisbane: Author.)

These proficiency levels were developed by an ESL working group investigating needs-based resourcing in collaboration with ESL teachers and program managers. The five Level statements are intended to describe broadly different stages in English proficiency for ESL students in order to identify degrees of need for ESL support for students particularly at lower Levels. It is understood that ESL teachers would use their professional judgement, informed by their usual classroom assessment strategies, to assign levels of need.

When the Year 2 Diagnostic Net process was trialed, it was agreed that students described as being at or below Level 2 on this framework could be considered for exemption from the Net process because of their limited English proficiency at that point in time.

Similar to the Draft Proficiency Levels, an *ESL Scale of Need - Draft 3* was developed as an instrument for Catholic schools in Queensland to identify ESL students in need of particular support. The intention of the document is also a diagnostic framework to inform allocation of funding at the system level.

Victorian English Curriculum and Standards Framework

(Board of Studies. 1995. *English Curriculum and Standards Framework*. Melbourne: Author.)

The Introduction to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework states:

'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. Its content is divided into eight key learning areas agreed nationally. The CSF will be used by schools to plan their curriculum and to refine their assessment and reporting procedures.' (p. 2).

The CSF was produced by the Victorian Board of Studies and is based on work done nationally in the process of developing the National Statements and Profiles. It brings curriculum statements and descriptions of outcomes into one document.

Each key learning area is divided into matrices. English is divided into three modes: Speaking and Listening, Reading, and Writing. Within each of these, there are four strands that closely mirror the National English Profile:

- Texts (texts are any form of communication involving language; this strand describes the texts students encounter at particular levels and what they do with them)
- Contextual understanding (this includes two categories of knowledge: the situational context and the sociocultural context)
- Linguistic structures and features (this refers to the characteristics of organising texts and to the knowledge and use of grammar, both spoken and written)
- Strategies (this strand describes techniques and approaches students may use to become effective users of language).

There are seven Levels for reporting students' achievement. The lower levels are associated with the following years of schooling in the primary school:

- Level 1 End of Prep Year
- Level 2 End of Year 2
- Level 3 End of Year 4
- Level 4 End of Year 6

For each level of each strand there is a two-page description. The first page describes the curriculum focus. The second page lists a set of learning outcomes describing what students will be able to do within each of the modes at the completion of that level. This page provides a summary statement (usually a single sentence) for each mode, for example: Level 1, Texts - Speaking and Listening: *'Interacts with teachers, peers and known adults in both structured and informal classroom activities dealing briefly with familiar topics.'*

This is followed by a set of indicators suggesting the kinds of behaviour teachers may look for as evidence that a student has achieved that level. For example, two of the nine indicators listed for this level, strand and mode are: (i) *Uses appropriate greetings introductions and farewells, for example, when using the telephone or introducing parents to the teacher;* (ii) *Joins in poems, action verses and refrains recited by the class or read by the teacher.*

Victorian ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework.

(Board of Studies. 1996. *ESL Companion to the English Curriculum and Standards Framework*. Melbourne: Author.)

The ESL Companion to the English CSF was developed by staff in both the Victorian Board of Studies and the Directorate of School Education and is based on the ESL Scales. The motivation for its development is stated in the introduction to the document:

'Many students in Victorian schools are learning English as a second language (ESL). They are at all stages of learning English and of different ages, and have varying backgrounds in their first languages. While the broad objectives of the English curriculum ultimately will be the same for all students, those learning English as a second language need targeted teaching and extra time, support and exposure to English before reaching the learning outcomes described in the English Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF). The ESL Companion to the English CSF will provide the framework for the development of appropriate ESL programs for such students.'

page provides a summary statement (usually a single sentence) for each mode, for example:

Stage A1, Communication - Listening and Speaking: *'Use learned formulas, well-rehearsed patterns, short, simple utterances and non-verbal language to communicate in routine social and classroom situations, understanding controlled English supported by the immediate context.'*

As with the English CSF, this is followed by a set of indicators suggesting the kinds of behaviour teachers may look for as evidence that a student has achieved that level including:

Receptive examples

- follows simple instructions
- relying on key words
- non verbal language
- context

Communicative examples

- give some basic personal information on request
- using learned formulas or brief answers eg My name is ..., I'm a boy/girl

Victorian English Profiles Handbook.

(Ministry of Education and Training (School Programs Division). (1991) *Victorian English Profiles Handbook*. Melbourne: Author.)

This was the first document using outcomes-based profiles as part of an assessment procedure published in Australia. The introduction states:

'Profiles are a means of summarising and reading information from a variety of assessment tasks. Profiles are not assessment instruments. They are scales of achievement on which a student's progress can be charted.'

The English Profiles Handbook contains three sets of Bands, for Spoken Language, Reading and Writing, with each set containing descriptions at nine Levels, labelled A (beginning) to I (most advanced).

At the beginning of each set of Bands is a single page summary of each Band Level. On the double page that presents each Band level in more detail, a set of ten to fifteen statements describing language use are given. For Spoken Language, these are divided into Use of Oral Language (e.g. Spoken Language Level B *'Makes short announcements clearly'*) and Features of Oral Language (e.g. Level B *'Reacts (smiles, laughs etc.) to absurd word substitutions'*).

For Reading, the descriptive statements are divided into Reading Strategies (e.g. Reading Level B *'"Reads" books with repetitive patterns'*) and Responses (e.g. Level B *'Selects own books to "read"'*), with Interest and Attitudes at some Levels (eg. Level A *'Shows preference for particular books'*), and Concepts about Print at the first level (e.g. Level A *'Holds book the right way up'*).

For Writing, the descriptive statements are divided into the categories: What the Writer does (e.g. Writing Level B *'Reproduces words from signs and sources in immediate environment'*), What the Writing Shows (e.g. Level B *'Use of vocabulary of print - letters, words, question marks'*) and Use of Writing (e.g. Level B *'Writes own name'*).

Western Australian English Student Outcome Statements

(Education Department of Western Australia (1994 Working Edition; 1997 Final Draft) *Student Outcome Statements: English*. Perth: Author.)

The Student Outcome Statements are described by Campagna-Wildash (1997), a major contributor to the development of the National English Profile, as "a next generation version" of the national document. The version of the English Outcome Statements which was available to the Western Australian teachers who took part in the study was the 1994 Working Edition which, through a two year trial, was being refined during the time of the study with a final draft being released in August 1997.

The authors of Student Outcome Statements define them as reflecting "*the knowledge, skills and processes that the Western Australian Government school system considers to be essential for all students*" (Introduction p.5). A draft policy statement quoted in the document states that the Student Outcome Statements are intended to be used as "*the focus of school development planning*" and to "*demonstrate educational accountability*" (Introduction p. 8). According to the document, the English learning area, which embraces ESL programs, aims to develop Speaking, Listening, Reading, Viewing and Writing in a wide range of contexts. This entails the students' knowledge and use of linguistic structures and features, knowledge of language variation; of literature; the discussion and critical analysis of texts; and appreciation of the ways in which the interpretation of texts may vary for individuals. Although the document focuses on "*outcomes and experiences typically available to all students within the classroom and school*" (p. 2), there is acknowledgment in the rationale for the framework that students come from "*diverse socio-cultural and language backgrounds*" and that one issue which should be monitored is "*the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the outcome statements in relation to the performance of ESL and NESB students, including Aboriginal students*" (p.2).

In the Working Edition, the English Student Outcome Statements are grouped into three strands: Writing, Reading and Viewing, and Speaking and Listening. Within each strand the outcomes are further grouped into three interdependent substrands: Texts; Contextual Understanding; and Linguistic structures and Features. Processes and Strategies are not considered to be outcomes in this document, but are included within each strand in order to provide teachers with behaviours which are "*typical of the development of skills, abilities and knowledge*" at each level. Student Outcome Statements, mirroring the national Profile, describe eight levels of achievement which cover eighteen month- to two-year periods in a student's school life.

As can be seen in Figure 8, The Student Outcome Statements are organised very much like the National English Profile although the descriptors of achievement are specific to this framework. Each Level of development is described in terms of major outcomes and, under each of these, an outcome is illustrated by pointers which are examples of achievement. In addition to being illustrated by pointers, Levels are also elaborated upon through annotated work samples.

Figure 8: An Extract from Level 1 of the English Student Outcome Statements

LEVEL 1	Reading & Viewing	
Texts	Contextual Understanding	Linguistic Structures and Features
The Student:		
<p>1.1a Role plays being a competent reader and consistently interprets some familiar written symbols.</p> <p>1.1b Constructs meanings from visual texts with familiar content, particularly designed to be viewed in segments.</p>	<p>1.2 Makes connections between own knowledge and experience and the ideas, events and information in texts viewed and read aloud by teacher.</p>	<p>3 Demonstrates emerging awareness and use of symbols and conventions when making meaning from texts.</p>
<p>This will be evident when students, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in reading-like behaviour (hold book, turn pages and relate story or information as if reading the words). • Mimic teacher's role in a shared book session by pointing to and 'reading' the text of a familiar big book largely from memory. • Point to text on signs and provide a relevant meaning according to the context. • Recognise the meaning of familiar print (advertising logos, labels, classroom signs, street and traffic signs, names and labels on classroom equipment). • Begin to provide consistent messages from printed texts. • Recognise own name. 	<p>This will be evident when students, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recall and briefly describe an event in television programs whose segments are constructed with young children's interests and concentration spans in mind. • Comment on parts of television programs aimed at a general viewing audience. • Take part in class discussion about possible interpretations of a picture (stories that can be inferred from a newspaper photograph). • Discuss television programs viewed at home (express reasons for preferring certain programs; offer some reasons for a character's actions). • Discuss favourite aspects of films and videos and identify features that appeal to them (action segments, scary parts, particular characters). <p>Students in an education support setting will signal progress towards Level One when they, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate reading behaviours, such as -holding book correct way up -turning single pages in order -tracking from left to right. • Maintain focus when looking at books, advertising material, magazines. • Listen to stories. • Request stories. • Listen, watch and enjoy a story when given a choice. • Show positive or appropriate response to pictures and text. • Indicate main idea of a picture. • Match words with pictures 	<p>This will be evident when students, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare personal knowledge and experience with information in texts (make comments such as, 'That's like...' or 'When I did that I ...' or 'My silkworms didn't look like that...'). • Express personal views about a character's actions and speculate on their own behaviour in a similar situation ('If I were...I would have...'). • Reflect on their own experiences compared with those in texts viewed or heard read through talking, drawing, roleplay, craft (draw a picture showing when they felt the way a character did). • Compare the way familiar people live with those in visual and printed texts (how the families represented are like or unlike their own). • List and discuss new things learned or questions raised through viewing or listening to a text read aloud (new information gained through shared reading of an informational book). <p>Students in an education support setting will signal progress towards Level One when they, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify familiar features in pictorial texts. • Indicate connections between features in texts and own experience.

English Outcome and Pointers p.2. Student Outcome Statements 1994 Working Edition, EDWA

A recommendation from the two-year trial of the document was that outcomes, pointers and work samples should be reviewed and re-written in order to reflect the wider diversity of the student population (Education Department of Western Australia, 1996; Meiers, 1996). At the time of publication of the present report the final draft of the Student Outcome Statements for English was being prepared on the basis of feedback from the trial. This document will contain the following modifications: revision of layout; the separation of Reading and Viewing into two distinct strands; the inclusion of Processes and Strategies as a fourth substrand; revision of pointers; and the inclusion of Strand Level Statements.

Western Australian First Steps Developmental Continua

(Education Department of Western Australia (1994) *First Steps*. Melbourne: Addison Wesley Longman.)

The First Steps framework is made up of four Developmental Continua which echo the modes in the National English Profile but with an emphasis upon the learning of literacy. These Continua refer to Oral Language, Reading, Writing, and Spelling. The Continua were designed by the Education Department of Western Australia to assist teachers in monitoring students' language and, particularly, their progress in literacy. They were also designed to inform teachers' planning in order to enable further development. Each continuum is presented in a single book which consists of four parts: the foundations or rationale of First Steps; information about the given aspect of language or literacy; an account of phases of development; and profiles of development. At the beginning of each book there is an overview of the specific Developmental Continuum. Each Developmental Continuum consists of a number of Phases. For example there are 6 Phases in the Writing Developmental Continuum:

- Phase 1: Role Play Writing.
- Phase 2: Experimental Writing.
- Phase 3: Early Writing.
- Phase 4: Conventional Writing.
- Phase 5: Proficient Writing.
- Phase 6: Advanced Writing.

Each Phase is described and then illustrated through the use of indicators of progress. The indicators describe language and literacy behaviours which are seen as typical of that Phase. For example, in the Writing Developmental Continua, Phase 1: Role Play Writing consists of the following key indicators:

Phase 1: Role Play Writing

Children are beginning to come to terms with a new aspect of language, that of written symbols. They experiment with marks on paper with the intention of communicating a message or emulating adult writing.

Key Indicators

- Assigns a message to own symbols.
- Understands that writing and drawing are different, e.g. points to words while 'reading'.
- Is aware that print carries a message.
- Uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language.
- Shows beginning awareness of directionality; i.e. points to where print begins.

In order to place each child in a particular Phase, the teacher collects a wide range of evidence for each child from a number of number of different activities. Observation, recording and analysis of work samples may reveal that some children display indicators from different Phases. Cumulative evidence in relation to the indicators within and across Phases are used to locate children in that Phase in which they have attained most of the indicators. Progress is seen as a consequence of the teaching and learning context and individual differences. Therefore children are not necessarily expected to progress through the phases sequentially. Each developmental pathway may be different and the pace of development may differ from student to student.

Teachers are encouraged to involve parents and children in the mapping process. Parents' knowledge and understanding of their child's literacy behaviours at home can be used to complement the teacher's observations. Each phase has information and suggestions as to how parents can help their child with literacy at home.

A key aspect the First Steps framework is its pedagogic recommendations. Particular teaching emphases are related to each Phase in order to help teachers plan and focus their work and particular teaching strategies are identified in each Phase which the designers of the framework regard as helpful and appropriate in enabling students to progress in that Phase and beyond. Having placed their students in particular Phases, therefore, teachers are encouraged to link their assessments with their teaching practices by focusing upon the major teaching emphases related to each Phase and by adopting particular strategies to enable students to achieve indicators within it.

In addition to tracing the progress of individual students in relation to the Phases, teachers may use the Whole Class Profile sheet provided in the Continua as a means of plotting the development of the class or to report to the school or to parents. In this process, once or twice a year, key indicators are highlighted and dated as they are observed to occur for each child thereby giving the teacher an overall record of each child's progress. The reader will see this process illustrated and teachers' particular use of the Continua in some of the Western Australia Case studies that follow.

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THE PILBARA CASE STUDIES

Joanne at Nyamal School

Leigh at Weaver Primary School

Nicole at Weaver Primary School

Kylie at Banksia Pre-Primary

Joanne at Nyamal School

Michael P. Breen

The School Context

Nyamal is a small community 300 kilometres south east of Far Harbour on the western edge of the Great Sandy Desert. Approximately 150 people live there, almost all belong to the Yirrungadgi community except for a handful of gold prospectors, the shopkeeper and service workers and their families in addition to the teachers at the school. Access to Nyamal is by unsealed roads which often become impassable during the summer wet season.

The school is located in a cluster of buildings shaded by trees which include a community hall, a library, a nursing post, a small hotel, a store and a few houses. These include the teachers' houses on the school site where separate prefabricated classrooms surround the edge of the playground. The Aboriginal community live about 1km from the school. The school has 48 students on role from years K-10 divided into three classes. Joanne is responsible for the K-2 students aged 5 to around 7. She has 12 children on the roll but their attendance often fluctuates and some children, travelling between communities with their families, come and go for short periods.

All Joanne's students are from the Aboriginal community except for the daughter of the policeman, who is the only non-ESL child in the class, and the disabled son of one of the local prospectors whose first language is French. The majority of children speak Kartujarra which is the dominant language in this part of the Pilbara, although some children passing through may speak different dialects and, sometimes, a different language. Older members of the community may also speak Nyangumarta, Manyiljarra, and other languages or dialects in addition to occasionally using Aboriginal English. In the playground and with each other in the classroom, Joanne's young students communicate in Kartujarra.

The Classroom Context

Joanne's classroom is spacious and bright and, with its air conditioning, provides relatively cool relief from the stark sunlight out of a clear sky and spring to autumn temperatures regularly over 40 degrees. The room has charts and pictures with an emphasis on the alphabet, names of things, and number. She has the support of a teacher's aide and an aide for the disabled child much of the time and an Aboriginal Education Worker also provides valuable support each morning. Such support enables Joanne to involve these adults as much as possible in small group, pair and individual student work and it is clear that her aides are familiar with the procedures and tasks for each day. Joanne sometimes negotiates with them concerning the appropriateness and timing of classroom activities and her aides share with her the on-going process of evaluation and assessment of students work which Joanne has established.

A typical day in Joanne's classroom begins with a breathe, blow, and cough routine in order to help the children combat otitis media and the resulting reduction in hearing. Then there are deep breathing and other exercises and songs or rhymes. Lessons will be punctuated by recess and lunch provided by the school, after which the children play outside. The typical procedure for a lesson begins in Joanne's corner around the whiteboard on which Joanne has placed pictures and texts or has written letters, numbers or words which are the focus of

the lesson. In the first lesson of the day, Joanne shows the Day Chart on which there is a goal of behaviour expressed as Our Wish for the Day. It is on the basis of this goal that Joanne will add or subtract ticks for individual student behaviour and effort. Joanne believes it is crucial to settle the children, encourage them to be in control of their bodies, and therefore reward them regularly for sitting attentively and for effortful work. The young children are clearly familiar with this on-going points system which Joanne records throughout the day on the whiteboard.

The two hour lesson before recess is focused upon language and especially literacy work. Often, after songs or rhymes, children move into small groups for Newstelling with Joanne and her aides each with a group. This is followed by Storybook in Joanne's corner with questions and answers and Joanne will then begin a phonics lesson, focusing upon a feature of letter or word formation or sound and letter relationship deriving from a part of the story but serving as the basis of the children's own later work. Here the children form pairs either to work towards answers about features of the story, perhaps in order to predict characters or events, or to find words in their own books of the story which have certain common characteristics such as particular suffixes and letters which represent a particular sound.

After this pairwork, Joanne will begin to consolidate the chosen feature of the written language by writing and drawing on the whiteboard usually in response to what the children have discovered from their pairwork. Typically, such consolidation is followed by individual work which involves tracing, shaping, copying letters, morphemes or words and accompanying these with one or more pictures.

Group and pair work is done on the floor in different parts of the classroom. Each child also has a desk at which individual work is completed. At all times, Joanne and her aides work with particular groups, pairs, or individuals. Joanne organises much of the small group, pair and individual tasks on the basis of generally three groupings of ability or prior achievement, with between three to five children in each group. Joanne uses her five years' prior experience of working with Year 1 children as her criteria for identifying these groupings:

Q: In a normal day a lot of the things you do are, I guess, what you would do with any young primary group?

A: Yes, exactly what I would do with a Year 1 class except of course you do have different ability groupings that you cater for within a normal Year 1 class anyway, with the pre-primaries and with some of the children not speaking any English at all so we do have a bit of a separate program but it's all whole language based anyway so they tie in with the Year 1s and 2s. Basically Year 1s and 2s work at the same level with some of them progressing faster so I'm focusing particularly in language on the strategies that they all need. The pre-primaries come in with basically no English and they really flourish in their first year in terms of English. Some of the Year 1 children are having a bit of difficulty speaking English and understanding it. The children who are seven years old are doing pretty well, pretty basic understanding of English, but they do speak English in the classroom though quite a lot of the time they return back to their own language particularly in oral activities where they feel more comfortable in their own language or when they're discussing things in terms of behaviour to each other. You don't hear them speaking English to their adults or to their friends once they leave the school grounds and even in the playground they speak their language.

For Joanne, the first level are the pre-primary children who are starting school. The second level are those Year 1 or 2 children who either appear to be having some difficulties, particularly in literacy development or who are progressing very slowly. The third level are those children whom Joanne considers to be progressing *pretty well* although they do not yet write full sentences because they appear not to be able to *retain them between saying and writing them*. In terms of writing, they're just getting there. They're nearly starting. They're almost starting to convey their message using the letters of the alphabet. She may use a different task with each level or she may use the same task but expect different outcomes from it for each of the levels. For example, she will require a third level child to write out a copy of a full sentence from the story under a drawing related to the story (See Sample 1), while requiring a second level child to put cut out words in the correct order under a drawing (See Sample 2). From the youngest pre-primary children she may expect the tracing of one word or letter and encourage experimentation with letters so that they can write them down as a written message to match a picture or drawings of one or other "characters" in the story.

When individual work is completed, the class gathers in Joanne's corner to share what they have done and receive applause and stickers on the work or points on the whiteboard for good work. After recess the focus shifts from literacy work typically to maths. The procedure of the lesson is the familiar one of an introduction by Joanne to all the children, then group or, more often, pairwork, then consolidation by Joanne moving towards focused individual tasks. Every lesson involves the children in moving round the classroom they may be measuring something, finding a corner to work together as a pair, or seeking a book or writing and drawing materials from appropriate places. And every lesson involves close personal tuition by Joanne and her aides. The children, when not communicating with Joanne or her non-Aboriginal aides, constantly ask and tell each other things in Kartujarra.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Joanne has been teaching for six years. Most of her previous experience has been as a Year 1 teacher. She taught in Perth for two years, then for three years relatively nearby in Far Harbour. I spent two separate full days with her in her classroom and at the school in the third and fourth terms. She had not worked in a "remote" school before although her husband had worked for some time at a school in an Aboriginal community closer to Far Harbour. She has found that she has had to adapt in her teaching strategies when working with a class of virtually all ESL children:

I think the main importance in teaching ESL children is explicit teaching and role modelling first everything I expect the children to do. I have found if you don't do modelling and demonstration first that it is very difficult for them to understand. Also the need for visual aids is very important because you need to be very careful of giving instructions at a very simple level and I've had to be more certain that they do understand the task before they go ahead and do it. Demonstrations from me are vital for every single lesson to the whole class and then going off into small group work to confirm their understanding of the task or topic before they do individual work because they don't speak English. I find that they help each other out incredibly well and that I need to make use of that by involving them in, at the moment, only partner work because it takes them a long time to learn teamwork skills. You can't take anything for granted, you can't presume that they've understood what you said, you've got to be totally organised, everything has to be structured. Their view of the world and prior knowledge needs to be considered. You've got to relate it back to what they know particularly they can't

explain it to you because they don't speak English quite so much. So I've found that you've got to be really really careful and make sure that the curriculum you're using focuses on what Aboriginal children know...I work very whole language based so reading and writing and spelling and phonics and maths would evolve around whichever theme you choose such as spiders or whatever, same as mainstream children, but I'm finding that I'm having to choose texts that are simple and clear and trying to choose themes that have got some cultural background for the children...the books that you are going to cover with them have to have some relevance for them.

Shortly after graduation, Joanne participated in a First Steps professional development program and she believes that much of her approach to language and literacy work and how she undertakes assessment derives from this program:

The First Steps Continuum has been invaluable for these children, particularly as it is developmental, it assists your planning really well and you can see the strategies the children have got in reading, writing, oral language and spelling. You can highlight what they've got and it gives you a lot of direction and I have found I've been able to set more specific reading programs to pinpoint the weaknesses they've got using the continua and then focusing on what they need to concentrate on. It definitely helps me to see, right, these children haven't grasped this indicator yet and it definitely helps me to work out which children have got the same strengths and weaknesses in having something as specific as the indicators to work with.

At the start of the current year, she also participated in a professional development program organised by Eliza, the School District Officer responsible for language and literacy, devoted to the implementation of the Student Outcome Statements. Joanne, in line with District and school policy, sees herself as concerned with outcomes-based education and bases her assessment and reporting procedures upon this focus.

I'm enjoying the Student Outcome Statements and am keen to use the English Outcome Statements in conjunction with the First Steps Continua. I'm using the Student Outcome Statements mostly in maths at the moment and I'm finding them really good for giving you an idea of levelness. It is very similar to a continua in that it is developmental and it gives you something to aim for. I haven't progressed as much with them in English because the First Steps Continua is a good framework to go by for now. But I am now realising how easy it is to switch to the Student Outcome Statements and will probably progress in using them. I've found the continua very good for identifying areas of weakness with children who have difficulties reading and I'd like to continue First Steps Continua for that purpose.

Joanne has established an on-going procedure for assessment of the children's work and her aides also participate in this system, specifically in the assessment and feedback applied to tasks undertaken individually by the children. Joanne's assessment procedures can be introduced first with reference to this assessment of specific tasks undertaken in a lesson. We can then, secondly, consider her own recording system spaced over time and using particular frameworks. The third focus point will be how Joanne seeks to report to parents. And finally, how does she report to her Principal and, through him, to the central office of the system? Each of these are described in turn in what follows.

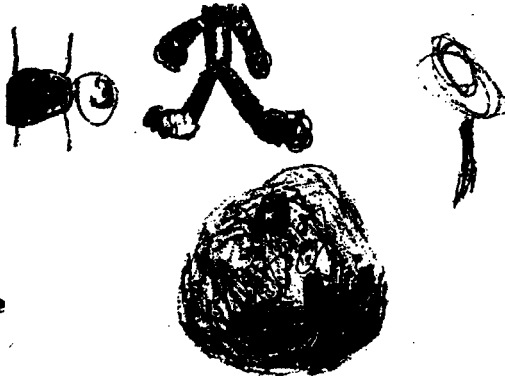
Assessment and Feedback on Individual Tasks

We can begin to see Joanne's assessment procedure from three typical samples of children's classroom tasks. The tasks derive from the focus theme of the lesson and are aimed at enabling children to reveal whether or not they can achieve very specific outcomes. The children undertake the task and, towards their completion, Joanne or an aide will fill in a small assessment sheet for each child and this will be stapled to the child's work. This does not happen with every classroom task, but with those that Joanne has identified as being focused upon outcomes which she has selected from the First Steps Continuum or the Student Outcome Statements for English or - as in Sample 3 - the Maths Student Outcome Statements.

Sample 1: A Classroom Task

Writing "The Spider" ②
 After drawing their production the children were asked to write a sentence, telling 'who' and 'what' can:

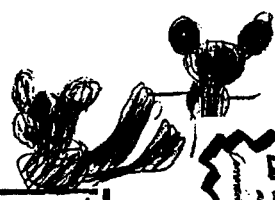
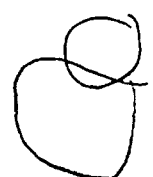
- Place letters randomly on the page
- Print the first letter each word starts with.
- read back own writing
- write from left to right
- point out where it says 'who'
- point out where it says 'what will happen.' *Read in class*



the dog bit the spider and he died
 And he the.
 The dog bit a spider and he died.

Sample 2: A Classroom Task

Cut, mix and sort the words to make 2 sentences.
 Draw a picture to match.



I	am	a	na
I	eat	le	

Read the sentence, pointing to the words.
 Write the words on a separate sheet of paper.
 Sort the words into two groups: 'I eat leaves' and 'I eat fruit'.
 Draw a picture to match each group.
 Write the words 'I eat leaves' and 'I eat fruit' on separate sheets of paper.

Sample 3: A Classroom Task

Look around the class:
Draw the shapes you

Share your shapes with
a partner.

The task sheet includes a checklist at the top right with the following items:

- Find and draw different shapes
- Describe shapes
- Write about shapes
- Write about shapes

Hand-drawn shapes and their labels:

- A circle labeled "circle 10 sides, no corners"
- A triangle labeled "triangle"
- A square labeled "square 4 corners 4 sides"
- A triangle labeled "triangle 3 corners 3 sides"
- A hexagon
- A rectangle
- A trapezoid
- A small circle

Joanne explains her assessment procedure with these kinds of tasks in the following way:

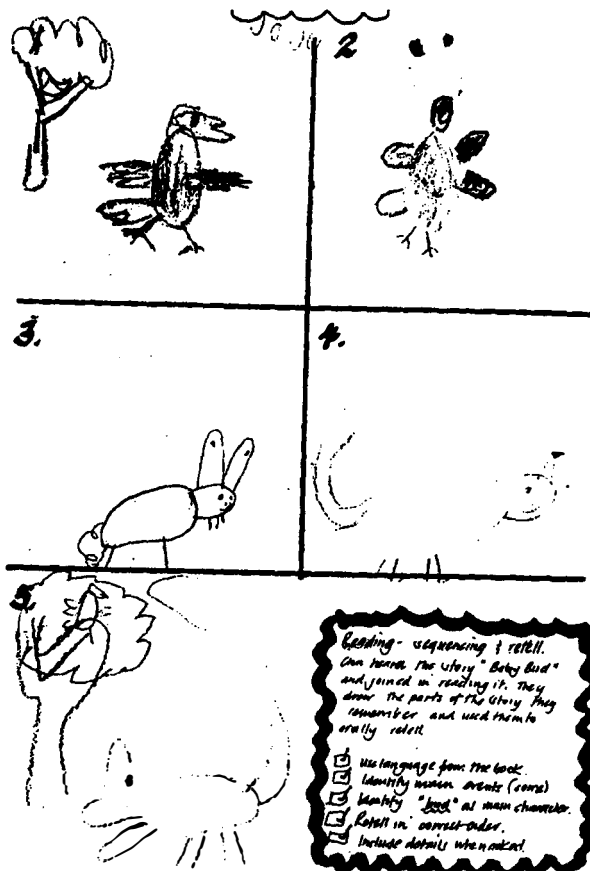
In the task the child has to do this and this and this and then the outcomes of the lesson...I write the descriptions of the task followed by several outcomes of the lesson and then basically tick as to whether the child has done it or not. This form of assessment is pinned to a sample of work and included as a collection of on-going dated samples across the learning areas from the beginning to the end of the year. with a view to showing them to parents.

Joanne adopts a similar procedure with the children's oral production also.

Just by putting little comments every now and then as we go and just photocopy them off. I find on the spot evaluation is best with these children. Pick things up as you go, even like doing barrier games or a lot of little oral language activities you can just tick, even by ticking what a child can do you can see some development.

Samples 4 and 5 illustrate two ways in which Joanne keeps these kinds of records. Sample 4 traces a child's achievements in retelling a story, whilst Sample 5 is the teacher's written version of a retell which she can use to assess at some later point. Joanne also sometimes uses a tape recorder to capture children's retells.

Sample 4: A Retelling Task through Pictures



Sample 5: Joanne's Written Version of a Child's Oral Retell

15.6.02. ORAL RETELL.

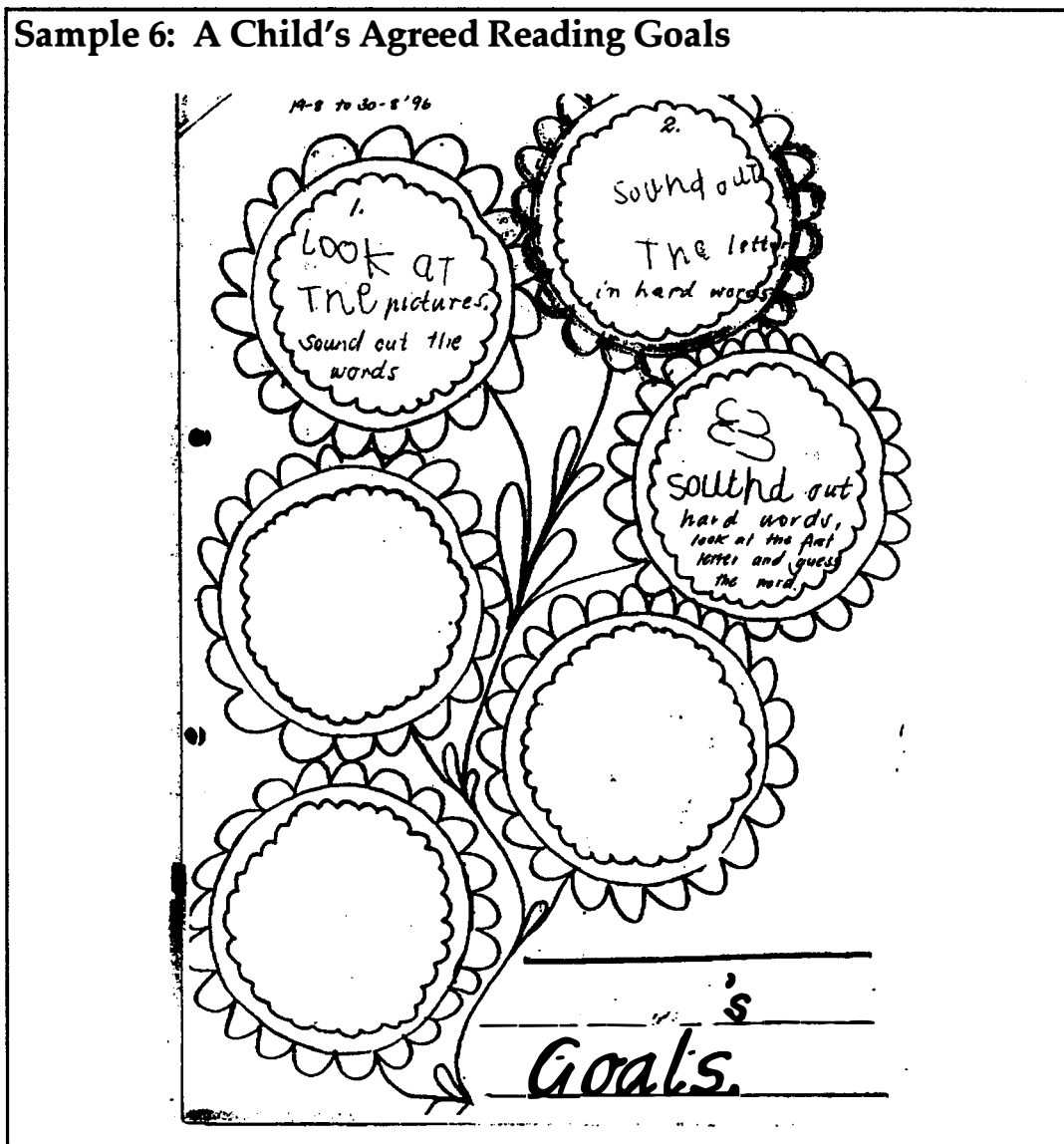
- ① BABY BIRD BEEN FALL DOWN,
HE WAS HUNGRY.
- ② BABY BIRD SAW THE BUTTERFLY
AND SAID "WILL YOU FEED ME".
HE SAID "NO".
- ③ BIRD SEE THE RABBIT AND SAID
"CAN YOU FEED ME PLEASE"
RABBIT SAID "NO".
- ④ BIRD BE SEE THE FOX (START
WITH F) AND SAID "YOU CAN
FEED ME PLEASE" FOX CHASED
BIRD AND HE SAID "NO".
- ⑤

Joanne sees two distinct advantages in punctuating classroom literacy or oral tasks with relatively easily completed assessments of the children's outcomes from certain tasks. The first is as an on-going record for herself: *I've been writing in pointers appropriate to each year and just tick if they could and then it can direct me as to whether they have reached that level or not.* The second advantage is that she can use the assessments as a means of coordinating the work with her aides:

It is also good for my aides, they know what the task is and the outcome of a lesson and it is difficult for them to know what they are evaluating when they are working with a child, so I'm able to give them an idea of what they are looking for...and it's good for them...as well it's good accountability thing for me at the classroom level too.

In addition to recording each child's progress and sharing the assessment process with her aides, Joanne therefore sees her system as the basis for reporting at school level. Joanne is also keen for the children to participate in the assessment process. In reading, for example, which is a major focus in her English work, she establishes goals with the children for particular periods of time and a child will have a copy of these goals and may endeavour to copy these out, as Sample 6 indicates. She began doing this with a target child in an Early Literacy Intervention project but hopes to extend it to groups of children.

Sample 6: A Child's Agreed Reading Goals



Such goals will derive from pointers which Joanne has selected as appropriate and these will also be listed on a check sheet which Joanne completes as the child is undertaking a reading task. every time a child reads to her, the child is provided with a chance to decide whether or not the goals have been achieved. The list of goals will be used with each child for a term or so and, the teacher will indicate achievements on this list each time she hears him read during that period as in Sample 7. She is keen to develop simpler goals so that she can trace and reveal to the child genuine progress over shorter periods of time such as fortnightly.

Sample 7: A Child's Reading goals for a Term



Name _____


Date 12. 8. 1996


always
 sometimes

When Reading the book I

had a go at hard words	<input type="checkbox"/>
kept reading on	<input type="checkbox"/>
guess what a word might be	<input type="checkbox"/>
look at the pictures	<input type="checkbox"/>
sound out words	<input type="checkbox"/> *
think of words to fill in gaps	<input type="checkbox"/>
read each word on the page	<input type="checkbox"/> *
re-read a sentence	<input type="checkbox"/>
point to words <i>looking at the hard words</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2 stars  pointing to the words
 looking at books.

 colouring from the story.

I wish  reading the words.
sounding out the words.
looking at the pictures.

Therefore the task-by-task assessments which are stapled to the children's work and short checklists of goals provide the kinds of information which will inform Joanne of an individual child's progress on the First Steps Continuum and the Student Outcome Statements.

Using the Frameworks

From the earlier samples of children's written tasks we can see: (i) the specific indicators Joanne selects from the First Steps Developmental Continua which she uses to assess children's achievements and (ii) the resulting kinds of data from tasks which she will use to profile a child's overall achievements on a Continuum (see Sample 8). She explains with reference to an individual child:

The writing is basically from his drafts that we collect from the day they come in, so you can basically sit the children down and say okay, it doesn't matter what topic you are doing...they've just told news and they have to sit down and just write their news, which is a recount, and I would model that and then get them to go back and

Clearly, Joanne does not use all the child's completed tasks but makes judgements on the basis of specific tasks **and** on the basis of her own overall impression of the child's progress in writing over a period of time:

We do the continuum about three to four times a year, say once a term and they say that you have to have at least three pieces of work, no, sorry, that they have to have displayed the indicator at least three times before you can tick it and say yes they have done it. So you have collected at least three samples and I put mine into a work sample book...so you've got say between eight to twelve over the year that will show a range.

So, a representative selection of a child's assessed work is placed in a work sample book which then serves as an overall yearly record for the teacher herself. This work sample book serves a second important function as we shall see later. Following this procedure, Joanne has found it more manageable and, therefore, more precise in her judgements if she selectively focuses upon particular literacy achievements of her students. During the year she has focused her assessment upon Writing and Spelling:

It was much easier to gather data on writing and spelling because it's in front of you. You can take it away and easily tick them on a continua, while, like I say, it's a matter of finding time to assess everything the child is reading. That's why I haven't highlighted the reading continua for the first term because it was just physically a matter of not having time to assess them all...with reading you have to have the child in front of you.

Joanne believes that focusing selectively is inevitable. She believes that profiling individual children in Reading on a regular basis is very time consuming. Here, however, she does rely on her own on-going observations to begin to gain a sense of the children's progress:

You need a lot of time to be able to plot the children on the reading continuum. But this is fine for these children. I mean me little pre-primary ones all you can do is watch them and take anecdotal notes by observation, write down what they can do, and then come to the continuum, and if they've shown something a few times you can tick them off from you anecdotal notes. You can easily pick up if they're holding the book properly, turning the pages properly, looking at the pictures. They might be telling themselves a story, whispering to themselves.

Joanne makes *anecdotal notes* on individual children's reading behaviours at fairly regular intervals. Sample 9 provides an example of these from a single term:

Sample 9: Anecdotal Notes

31.7.96
 KNEW "IS"
 TALKED ABOUT EACH
 PAGE FROM THE
 PICTURES SOUNDED
 OUT "CAT". DIDN'T
 POINT TO WORDS

Term 2
 talks in great detail
 of what is happening
 in the pictures. We
 tell you of all characters
 Shows - start
 - end
 - capital letters.
 Remained on task.

13.8.1996
 Pointed to each word
 - Is looking at words to
 knows eg 'l' and
 saying them as he points
 Reading goals - pointing
 - sounding out.

Term 2 July
 Knows front, back, title, spine
 Knows full stops.
 Knows l a to the
 Points to words.

Despite the time consuming nature of profiling Reading on the Continuum, in addition to those spontaneous moments when children read to her, Joanne will sit with each child in her class three or four times a year with a view to assessing their reading achievements. From this she will subsequently plot the child's reading outcomes on the First Steps Reading Developmental Continuum. Here, as in Sample 10, she will move down the indicators identifying each of them that the child reveals during the reading and, crucially for her, will subsequently identify those indicators which the child does not yet exhibit as a basis for future goals for that child.

Sample 10: An Assessment of a Child's Reading

INDICATORS FOR READING DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM - ROLE PLAY READING PHASE

NAME: DATE: 12/9/96

Language and Literacy Behaviours

The reader:

Knowledge and understanding

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> displays reading like behaviour holding book the right way up turning pages as appropriate looking at words and pictures using pictures to show ideas | √ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> realises that print carries a message but may read writing differently each time e.g. when reading a scribbled message to a parent | √ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> focuses on the meaning of a story (children's responses reflect understanding of ideas presented in a text. Story reconstruction is meaningful) | √ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knows the writing and drawing a different e.g. 'Mummy reads the black bits' | √ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognises own name (or part of it) in print | √ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is beginning to recognise some letters | √ |

e.g. 'That is my name - R for Rebecca'	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reacts to environmental print e.g. noticing a fast food sign the child says, 'I want a hamburger'. 	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> selects favourite books from a range selects a book and says, 'I want The Three Little Pigs'. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is familiar with simple stories and uses this knowledge to talk about them 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is beginning to use some book language appropriately, e.g. 'Once upon a time' (The child may use a 'reading voice'.) 	
Strategies for making meaning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses pictorial cues looks at pictures when reading 'The Three Little Pigs' (points to picture of pigs and says 'The three little pigs left home') 	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses pictorial cues to help reconstruct the story 	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses prior knowledge of context and personal experience, e.g. 'This says snake, I have a snake book at home'. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> turns the pages of the book, telling the story from memory 	√
Affective	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> displays curiosity about print by experimenting with writing and drawing and asking, 'What does that say?' 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wants to look at books 	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> offers to 'read' writing and points to text while reading (indicates the beginning of 'having a go') 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enjoys stories and asks for them to be read and reread 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> spontaneously talks about favourite parts of stories 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expresses enjoyment by clapping, joining in orally and responding emotively when listening to familiar stories 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> anticipates book - reading events that are part of the daily routine. 'Are we having our story now?' 	

It is interesting that Joanne does not use the First Steps Continuum for oral language development. Describing this, Joanne felt that:

It goes from babyhood but it doesn't suit my children because they speak differently in terms of grammar and everything, so the Highgate Oral Language Continuum is terrific. It starts with Beginning, then Developing, then Transitional, so it's done in the same phase like form, but it's written in terms of outcomes that ESL children might come up with.

The Highgate Oral Language Continuum had been developed by ESL specialists in Perth to complement the First Steps Continuum but with a focus on the typical ESL child's progress in the early years of speaking and listening in English. During the year, therefore, Joanne focused upon three aspects of oral language use identified in the Highgate Continuum:

There needs to be a big focus developing their oral language so, as a school, we chose Partner Work, Description, and Newstelling this year. The biggest one is Partner Work and I just provide as many opportunities in class to form into partner work across the curriculum

and I just basically tick off what they could do and then my activities would be focusing on what the children need to be working towards next...The majority of my children have passed through Beginning and into Developing, but there are little things like they all need a lot of teacher support to supply a lot of information about a Description. So that would be something I need to focus on with all the children at classroom level and also in terms of assessment at school level.

So, Joanne has found that an oral language developmental continuum designed specifically for ESL children much more appropriate for this aspect of her children's development in English. And she profiles the children, again three or four times a year, on the basis of on-going spontaneous observation of their performance on tasks that enable the children to reveal achievement in, especially, Partner Work, Newtelling and, more recently, Description. It is clear from her daily routine that these chosen focus areas of the Continuum have been incorporated into her classroom activities so she has access to a good deal of data from the children in order to draw up an individual profile as exemplified in Sample 11.

Sample 11: An Assessment of Partner Work

PARTNER WORK

INTRODUCTION

Partner work makes complex demands on speakers and listeners. It requires children to use language to plan, negotiate roles, monitor the task and reflect on the outcome of the activity. Language used for initiating a joint activity then becomes a tool for control and negotiation throughout.

Initially, bilingual children may have anxiety on the completion of the task. Verbal and social interaction will play an incidental role or will be non-verbal. As the children's oral language develops, the oral language interaction will become more explicit. To promote a reflective awareness of language, teachers need to introduce activities that require varying levels of verbal interaction and cooperation.

SPOT CHECK

Does the child:

- undertake the task independently?
- participate equally with partner?
- use talk related to the task?
- negotiate and seek consensus with partner?
- plan and discuss ideas with partner?
- show evidence of monitoring the task, e.g. giving feedback, *challenge*, and *clarification* in problem solving?
- offer reflective or evaluative comments, e.g. discussing or comparing similar tasks?

NAME: _____

YEAR: _____

References
Language and Thinking
 The symbols include 'Spot Check' criteria, and checklist for planning and evaluation of language behaviour.
Oral Language Development Continuum
 The continuum provides criteria to develop a profile of a child's oral language development over time. Language related to cognitive development is listed in each phase under the heading, *Language and Thinking*.

BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	TRANSITIONAL	COMMENTS
The child needs teacher support to initiate cooperative tasks. Teaching modelling is needed to demonstrate language related to planning and cooperating.	The child is beginning to develop cooperative behaviours. English language is necessary to complete partner activities. Teacher support and modelling are still required.	The child demonstrates appropriate interactive behaviours and uses English when undertaking partner activities.	
Indicators of Behaviours			
Text Content and Organization	Text Content and Organization	Text Content and Organization	
<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes simple comments or gives direct instructions, e.g. <i>Ma, Ma do it. Black. Look. No.</i> • relies on teacher support to interact with partner • imitates teacher modelling, e.g. <i>That's mine!</i> • relies on non-verbal behaviours to support English 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes simple plans with partner, e.g. <i>We build bridge. Where are stars?</i> • relies on teacher support to negotiate and solve problems, e.g. <i>Child: What ball tower. He so slow. Teacher: How a tall first.</i> • incorporates language patterns modelled by teacher, e.g. <i>Let's talk about it first.</i> 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporates joint planning and decision-making, e.g. <i>We could get ... Why don't we ... Do you know what we have to do?</i> • uses English to negotiate and clarify roles, e.g. <i>Which part do you want to make? This should do this.</i> • uses English structures modelled by teacher, e.g. <i>We have to talk first. We have to share.</i> 	
Vocabulary and Sentence Construction	Vocabulary and Sentence Construction	Vocabulary and Sentence Construction	
<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives general statements and gives simple instructions, e.g. <i>Black. Big. Here. No. on. Here.</i> • repeats words e.g. <i>Red, red, red!</i> 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plans and negotiates using general terms, e.g. <i>Start here. I go first, OK?</i> • use simple descriptors when interacting with partner • begins to use phrases e.g. <i>Big circle on the top</i> • incorporates nouns and verbs associated with the task, e.g. <i>black, wheel, put, build</i> 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • begins to use a range of vocabulary to plan, negotiate, monitor and reflect on the task, e.g. <i>suggests ideas, gives instructions, challenges partner, evaluates task.</i> • uses simple sentences that incorporate vocabulary associated with the task • interacts spontaneously and purposefully, e.g. through evaluative comments 	

Indicators of Behaviours - PARTNER WORK

The responses of the child as a listener and speaker are context-dependent. Therefore, it is important to take into account the appropriateness of the situation and demands of the task when making judgment about the child's level of competence.

Responsiveness of Child as Speaker	Responsiveness of Child as Speaker	Responsiveness of Child as Speaker	COMMENTS
<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertakes the interactive task in parallel with partner (minimum oral communication) • may be silent listening and watching in order to complete task • imitates instructions or proceeds without consulting partner in order to participate • begins task without planning in order to participate • may display 'frustrated' behaviours when there is a breakdown in communication with partner • use non-verbal behaviours to support communication • may demonstrate understanding through actions 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a variety of verbal and non-verbal language to maintain cooperative behaviours • begins to interact with partner, e.g. <i>I get over now big one than we push it together.</i> • may begin to take a more dominant role in the activity, e.g. using few language to make things clear. <i>Quinn's plan.</i> • invites partner to join in the task, e.g. <i>Your turn</i> • displays a more active interest in partner's involvement, e.g. <i>Hey, go off!</i> • begins to monitor the task, e.g. <i>Now, slow!</i> • makes simple, reflective comments, e.g. <i>The many little blocks. Count!</i> 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discusses ideas before beginning activity, e.g. <i>We could get some ... Why don't we ...</i> • takes an equal role in the task, e.g. <i>We'll have to do this together or it will fall down.</i> • includes partner in the activity, e.g. <i>Try this. I help you.</i> • recognizes partner's efforts, e.g. <i>That good idea. How should work.</i> • makes initial plans and discusses ideas • monitors the activity e.g. <i>You must move this one. Very heavy.</i> • reflects on task and adds evaluative comments, e.g. <i>I get over this you (conscious of who is winning).</i> • may be negative if child is frustrated with activity, e.g. <i>I don't want to play that game.</i> 	
Responsiveness of Child as Listener	Responsiveness of Child as Listener	Responsiveness of Child as Listener	
<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes few responses to acknowledge speaker if absorbed in activity • is unaware of need to respond to speaker • during interaction • may have insufficient understanding of English to respond • may answer questions in a way that shows little understanding of the task or question • may try to initiate own interpretation of task 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • begins to acknowledge the speaker through joint planning, non-verbal questions, making comments • begins to interact to clarify the task either through an action or verbal comment • gives responses to questions that demonstrate an understanding of the task • may respond to partner through non-verbal rather than verbal behaviours 	<p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledges the speaker through appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses • interacts throughout the task by commenting, questioning and responding to questions • monitors the speaker's comments or questions and adds appropriate information 	

Comments

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To sum up Joanne's use of the assessment frameworks for profiling individual students, she uses the First Steps Continua to cover literacy work and finds it easier and more appropriate to focus on development in writing and spelling whilst also having to devote a lot of time to assessing the children's achievements in reading. For oral work, she uses a continuum specifically designed to complement the First Steps Continua but with indicators and pointers which describe the ESL learner more precisely. Within this continuum, she focuses upon Partner work, Newtelling, and Description. She assesses individual children against these continua three to four times each year.

Reporting to parents

Joanne regards parental interest in the children's progress as crucial:

Reporting to parents in an ESL school is our biggest concern. We send out written reports like mainstream schools and you have incidental interviews with the parents if something concerns us or a parent wants to find out how a child is going. There's a lot of informal discussion going on.

However, the area of concern for Joanne and her Principal is communicating the children's progress to parents in ways that they can understand. For this reason, Joanne and the school do not use the indicators in the First Steps Continua or the Outcome Statements as a reporting format:

You can put in the level that the child is at in the Student Outcome Statements or in the First Steps phase plus your comments. We use a little document that that's got these on, but the problem is that the parents here do not understand them...The reporting document that goes home twice a year in the second and fourth term is written but many parents don't read it because a lot of them can't read so they don't understand although we make the language very simple in our written report.

It is in dealing with this problem of communication that the scrap books of selected children's work which the teacher compiles over the year have important potential. As we have seen, Joanne selects work with their assessments attached for the scrap books each term and prefaces the books with a comments page:

So far we've just included samples every now and again, we've got maths samples and phonics type things and we make sure we put a date at the top. It's developmental so from the beginning of term one you can see their progress to the end of the year.

The scrap books provide for the parents a window onto each child's work:

We have Open Days once a term where the parents come into the classrooms and they go through the children's portfolios and have a look at the work the children have done and they can see the progression from the beginning of the year and they see that little assessment sheet attached in the corner. We've got to do a lot more work in this area...The children have got a rough idea of what's going on but we have to make time to sit down and discuss with them "Gee, I like the way you did this and this." At the moment it's great for us to be able to say what they children can do and report to the Principal and those little assessment sheets on each task are really good. They're designed for parents, but some parents cannot read them. We just have to try and simplify the language so that parents can understand it. Some of them can.

The issue for Joanne and the school, therefore, is to make the child's progress more accessible to the parents in some way whilst, at the same time, involving the child more directly in revealing what they have achieved to parents:

We're considering the work sample philosophy this year and we are going to refine the scrap books a lot more next year to become a portfolio where more structured work will be put in it...It is divided up into four terms so this book would be a whole year's sample. You might have one or two samples from each learning area. The samples in the scrap book I've selected, but I would like to move to the child selecting - this goal-setting idea from the early literacy project. I'd like a section for the child's comments where the child writes what they think they are doing really well in...It is given to the child to have a look at and maybe choose the type of work they like best to put in it. The idea then is to have an Open Day where the parents can come up the classroom and look at the portfolio and the child sits with the parent and goes through and says "This is what I did. I can do this".

Joanne therefore sees the solution to the difficulty of communicating the children's progress to parents as partly residing with the children themselves:

What we are thinking of doing is having pieces of work that the child chooses to put in and the child would attach a piece of paper that said: "I choose this piece of work because..." and write their reason and they might write a little comment like "I'm getting better at doing" whatever. We are thinking of having a goal sheet in the book as well for each term. We're trying to have the children put more input into their learning. It's going to take a long time though. And if parents are in the classroom looking at the children's portfolios, we're going to get the parents to have a sticker and choose the piece of work they like the best from the portfolio.

It is interesting that Joanne and her Principal have discovered the need for much more explicit reporting to parents in the community in which they work. It is also significant that Joanne sees the children's involvement in their goal setting, the choice of samples to put in portfolios, and their gradual self assessment as related to the matter of both child and parental involvement in the "performance" of the school.

Reporting to the Principal

For the purposes of reporting to the District Office and, through it to the Education Department in Perth, the school has adopted 13 Performance Indicators, the first of which is: "The extent to which the students develop effective literacy skills". The other indicators cover the main learning areas and generic knowledge and capabilities relating to information finding and using, the use of technology, cooperative work, health, and respect for the rights of others. The school, on the District's initiative, has fully adopted the Student Outcome Statements as the assessment framework for Maths, social science and physical education and is moving towards using them in all the other learning areas, especially English and literacy. The Principal therefore seeks an outcomes-based framework through which the teachers provide him with data of their children's progress in relation to the broader overall Performance Indicators. The Principal identifies two major factors which have facilitated the relatively rapid and successful adoption of outcomes based assessment:

The district is very proactive so anything that comes out of central office if it is good the district people have a look at it and if they think this going to help our children I think we should be able to get

into it. Also there are a lot of young teachers in the District, they're enthusiastic and adaptable to things that are new.

The Principal also provides a strong justification for the use of a common outcomes-based framework across schools:

Take something like science. Before SOS came in presumably all schools across the State were doing science and the ways in which they reported were up to the individual school. So what the children were achieving could have been different from school to school whereas now if you've got the SOS frameworks, hopefully with some sort of moderation the achievements are going to be similar. At least all schools will be focused on the same thing.

From the schools' point of view the children's performance in developing effective literacy skills is paramount, as the Principal explains:

Our major focus here is literacy across the curriculum so it doesn't matter whether it is maths, science, or whatever, it's literacy based if you immerse them in language. I did some MSC testing of Year 7 girls on Monday in Maths and it was the language. They knew the Maths concepts but they had trouble reading the questions and with written answers. And the tests will go to central office and I'm just worried about that. The tests are heavily text based.

Joanne certainly agrees with the priority of literacy development in her own students and she is particularly aware of the possible impact of reporting and accountability if comparisons are made between her Kartujarra speakers and mainstream students in urban areas:

I think the pressure is becoming more relevant these days with accountability. I think people are getting a bit worried about it...I don't feel pressure from outside influences. I'm realistic because I know that it's their language barrier that's one reason holding them up and the other barrier is health. I know that they are very capable of learning and it's going to take longer because of the language.

For reporting purposes, the Principal does not require detailed information about each child, but a clear overall picture of the children's achievements as a Year group. Early in term four, Joanne completes her own copy of the school's Information Management System booklet thereby providing the Principal with a summarised account of the children's progress during the year. Teachers responsible for upper years in the school also complete such a booklet. She provides an overview of all her children's achievements under each of the Performance Indicators. Sample 12 illustrates how she reports to the Principal in this way:

Sample 12: Reporting on One of the School's Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator # 1

The extent to which students develop effective literacy skills

Data Collection Methods

- First Steps continua placement in reading, writing and spelling.
- Highgate continua oral language.
- Teacher perceptions/observation.

Criteria

Reading

Phase	Year Group										
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Role Play	N	N	N	N							
Experimental											
Early											
Transitional											

③ ④ ②

Writing

Phase	Year Group										
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Role Play	N	N	N	N							
Experimental											
Early											
Conventional											

③ ④ ②

Spelling

Phase	Year Group										
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Preliminary	N	N	N	N							
Semi-Phonetic											
Phonetic											
Transitional											

③ ④ ②

Oral Language

Description	Year Group										
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Beginning	N	N									
Developing		N	N								
Transitional											

③ ④ ②

Newtelling

Description	Year Group										
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Beginning	N	N									
Developing		N	N								
Transitional											

③ ④ ②

Partner Work

Description	Year Group										
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Beginning	N	N									
Developing		N	N								
Transitional											

③ ④ ②

Validation:
What evidence allows you to make a judgement/placement on the continua?

All children are beginning to show signs of progression in all language areas, and through focused modelling will pick up indicators. Progression into 'Experimental' is aided as children are not yet using letter/sound knowledge to sound out words in writing & reading. Pre-primaries do not yet display indicators in Roleplay - just need a little more time. All children are responding very well to use of simple (concrete text) reading texts to encourage reading behaviour and use of reading goals. Partnerships is proving a very valuable strategy.

The report indicates the three data sources of her judgements: the First Steps Continua for Reading, Writing and Spelling; the Highgate continuum for Oral language; and her own on-going observations. She indicates against each of the Phases derived from these frameworks the proportion of her students who reveal achievements in particular Phases. And she offers her reasons for the judgements she has made at the end of each Performance Indicator section. Joanne reports

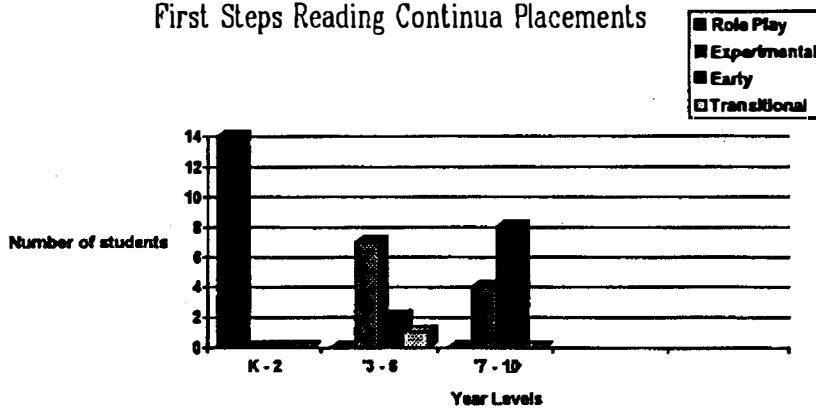
on her students' achievements in this way at the end of each year against all 13 Performance Indicators.

Sample 13: The School's Record of Student Achievements

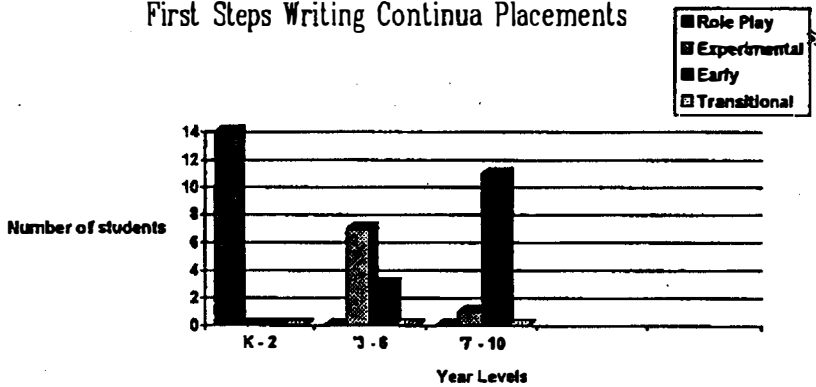
Performance Indicator # 1

The extent to which students develop effective literacy skills

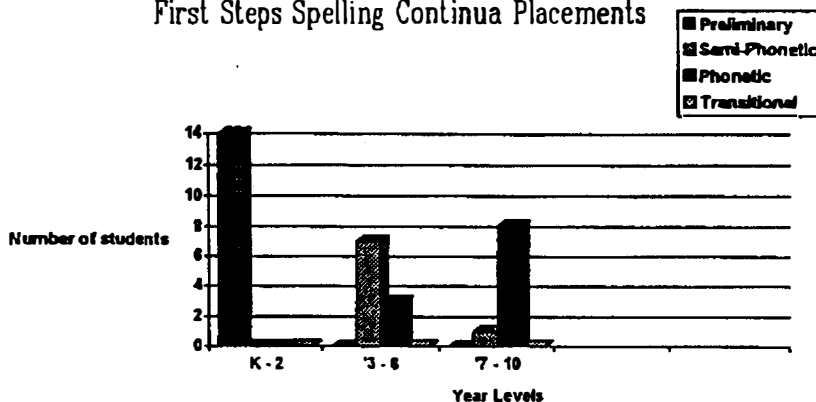
First Steps Reading Continua Placements



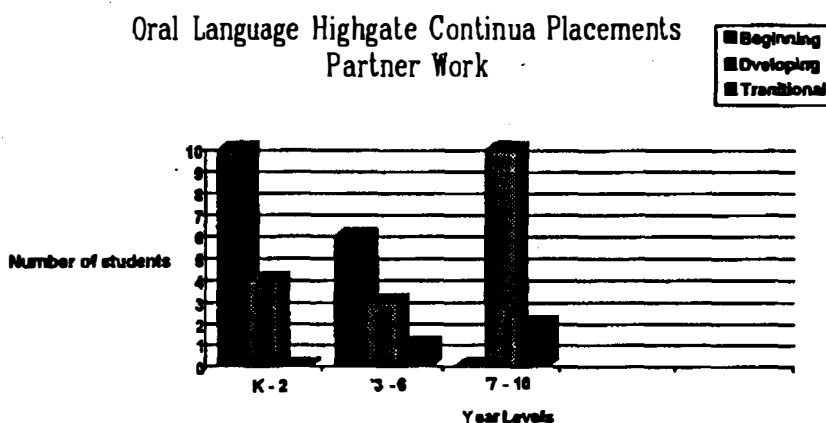
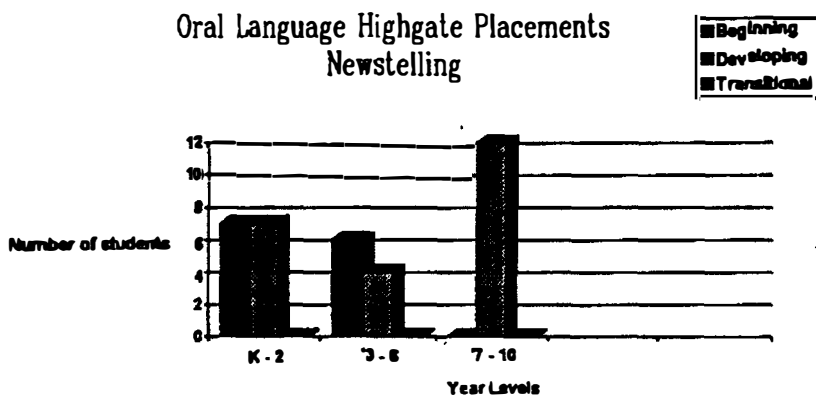
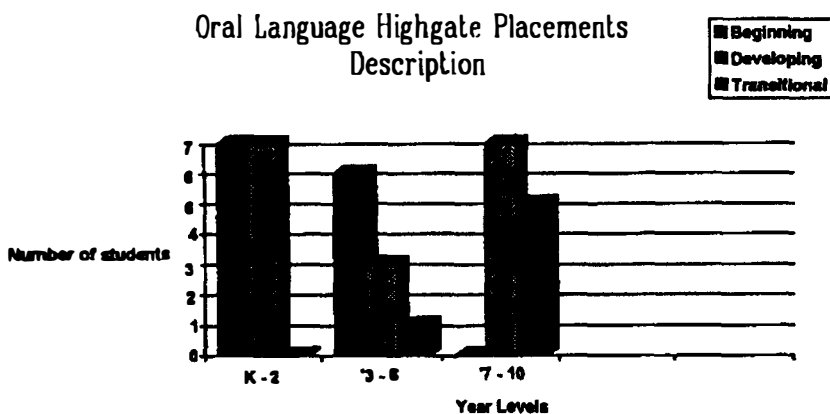
First Steps Writing Continua Placements



First Steps Spelling Continua Placements



Sample 13: contd.



The Principal reports, in turn, to the District Office through a whole school Management Information System booklet in which Joanne's report is combined with the reports of the other teachers and translated into graphic summaries of achievement against the Indicators. The graphs serve to indicate, against the school's chosen assessment frameworks, the proportion of students in each year who are attaining the different developmental Phases. Sample 13 illustrates such a summary of information with reference to literacy achievement across the school and reveals that, in the current year, all Joanne's students are revealing outcomes which place them in the Role Play Phase of the First Steps Continua in

Reading, Writing, and Spelling. In Oral Language, all of Joanne's students have achieved up to the Developing Phase in Description, with only half or less than half entering that Phase in Newstelling and Partner Work.

Relationship Between Assessment and Teaching

We have seen how Joanne designs her classroom tasks around pointers within main indicators of a Phase in the First Steps Continua. She is mainly seeking to develop the children's literacy from Role Play to more Experimental reading and writing behaviours. The ways she works and most of the tasks derive both from her early work as a Year 1 teacher and her strong familiarity with First Steps:

First Steps strategies are excellent. I've been using it almost since I started teaching and I'm trained now to train other teachers. I think its very very good and the big thing is giving the children the option to have learning centres set up in your classroom like a writing learning area where the children can go and write freely on their own. A reading learning area where they can feel free to go and read if they want to and have a shop learning area where they are exposed to lists and they can make their own lists. The strategies from First Steps are fine for these children. But the huge thing that's really important is modelling everything they need to do. We have all these wonderful strategies but the children really need everything to be modelled for them.

Joanne regards the First Steps framework as a significant influence on her planning and diagnosis in addition to its assessment value:

First Steps has been invaluable for these children particularly as it is developmental. It assists your planning really really well and you can see what strategies the children have got in literacy. You can highlight what they've got and it gives you a lot of direction and I've found I've been able to set more specific reading programs to pinpoint weaknesses using the Continua and then focusing on what they need to concentrate on.

To illustrate this, Joanne has targeted specific children this year for much more focused "literacy intervention". However in drawing up a plan for individual children, as illustrated in Sample 14, she generates tasks that all the children would also undertake:

Sample 14: An Intervention Plan for One Child

I Love Spiders

Literacy Intervention Plan for _____

Date: 11/20/11 Year at School: 1 Teacher: Mrs

Current Phases: Reading ✓
 Writing ✓
 Spelling ✓
 Oral Language _____

Strengths	Students strategies to be developed - Attending to print by pointing to words. - looking at initial letters/sounds to predict words - using knowledge of concepts of print Major teaching emphases • Knowledge of letter-sound relationships. • oral cloze activities focusing on words. • talk about letters & words in context.
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Planned Activities and Experiences:											
Whole Class	Small Group	Individual	Notes								
1. Text innovation -	With partner - discuss I love _____	print & write what he, she loves									
2. Picture Flick - cover words	with partner, tell about colour.	Point favourite page and write about your picture.									
3. Add text to pictures		→									
4. Model shared reading, model reading like teacher	Partner work. read story and point to words known	Write words known & count N° x repeated in the book.	* What is a letter word sentence?								
5. Dictating writing - model sentence discussing where spider lived		→ write - sound out words, leave space between words.									
6. Sentence Reconstruction Model letter, word sentence	Choose sentence from book. a) Mix words b) reconstruct to form sentence.	→ Do our.									
7. Tell model oral cloze I am a green spider. Chn. guess word using initial letter.	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>I am a g</td> <td>reen spider</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I am a r</td> <td>ed spider</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I am a b</td> <td>lue spider</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I am a f</td> <td>lat spider etc</td> </tr> </table>	I am a g	reen spider	I am a r	ed spider	I am a b	lue spider	I am a f	lat spider etc	→	
I am a g	reen spider										
I am a r	ed spider										
I am a b	lue spider										
I am a f	lat spider etc										
8. Tell model rhyming words eg: old, bold, scary, happy etc	Partner work										
9. Selling Masked file		→ learn: spider, fat * in 2 weeks									

She also identifies the suggested teaching strategies in First Steps as something which has strongly influenced the way she works:

You can look at the indicators that basically the whole class are not displaying and then you go to First Steps information books and it has teaching strategies for a particular indicator and in my class almost every child needs the same indicator.

For her planning and teaching, therefore, Joanne relies much on First Steps, but she sees the Student Outcome Statements as offering something new:

I'm trying to lean towards a Student Outcome Statement approach which is more of an assessment approach where you give the children

a task , see what they can do and then you have to open yourself up a bit to that, I think, it's up to them how they do it and from that you can evaluate them in terms of the SOS. I will use the SOS as a means for assessing children's performance and use the First Steps as a guide for teaching strategies.

As we have heard her say before, the Student Outcome Statements are seen by her as indicators of achievements of students that emerge spontaneously when left to undertake some task. She makes a distinction between the things that guide her teaching and the Outcome Statements which she sees as **primarily** an assessment and reporting framework:

Student Outcome Statements will become my planning tool whilst First Steps will be my teaching resource, particularly in terms of strategies. So I will primarily use Student Outcome statements to assess the children's outcomes from lessons. .

Consistent with this view, she regards the Student Outcome Statements - and not the First Steps Continua - as means for accountability:

I think the accountability thing has just been scaring a lot of people . It is something that this District is really up to date in and has decided to adopt and use Student Outcome Statements and all of a sudden you have to be very very accountable. I think the Student Outcome Statements will be good as long as we are given time to discuss them as a staff and get familiar with the language. As long as everyone gets familiar with them and the whole school makes the decision as to how much we are going to take on, we're not going to run into it without understanding it properly.

Familiarity with First Steps appears to have enabled Joanne to see it as a resource because of the teaching strategies it offers rather than as a set of criteria for assessment. However, whilst seeing advantages of the wider adoption of the Outcome Statements, she recalls early difficulties even with First Steps:

It gives you something to aim for and all the teachers can talk the same language and say "Oh, my child hasn't progressed to this level yet" or whatever. If the Student Outcome Statements are not discussed properly, they'll be like First Steps where everybody had different opinions of what it meant for a child to be at this indicator or whatever, and that would be a concern with Student Outcome Statements or ESL Scales or whatever because everybody doesn't have the same understanding of them.

For someone trained to train other teachers in First Steps, Joanne will be familiar with both teacher self-defensiveness about their own students' progress or otherwise and, crucially, the different interpretations that teachers may place upon indicators or pointers at the different Phases or Levels. Whilst welcoming the broader focus of the Student Outcome Statements as compared with the literacy priorities of First Steps, she also identifies her need to interpret the particular meanings she sees as inherent within them:

You can easily say "Right, my child's here," and compare them to the other children and you've got a common understanding of outcomes children have achieved across all learning areas so it can become a whole school thing really where you can say this child is at this level for this subject but at this level for the other subject, so it helps your planning more. But I think it will take time for people to use the work samples correctly. Becoming used to the language is a bit tricky. If we can discuss it a lot it will be all right.

Joanne, as we have seen and despite the significant support she receives from involved aides, finds it time consuming to try to draw up a profile in Reading for each of the children in her class. She is clearly concerned about the work anticipated in the fuller adoption of the Student Outcome Statements. And, as a teacher of a class of ESL learners, major issues arise for her in the use of both the frameworks with which she is familiar.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

We saw earlier how Joanne's Principal saw literacy in English as crucial to the student's learning in all areas of the curriculum and that, even for a Maths test for Year 7, he felt the children may know the concepts but be unable to display them because of the language of the test. Joanne strongly values the First Steps framework in her teaching, but even this does not appear appropriate in her assessment with her K-2 students:

A concern that I have is that we're assessing these children the same way as mainstream children and yet the oral language is ESL. You can't accurately assess these ESL children on the Oral Language Continuum as it is because they are excellent in oral language in their language but English is their second language. It is not specific enough for Aboriginal children. I think the Reading and spelling and the Writing are fine because all children are starting in the same place.

With the possible wider application of the Student Outcome Statements across schools in the State, Joanne is fearful of further implications:

I'm concerned about benchmarking and comparisons. Do you compare ESL children to mainstream children across the State? Is it fair to say that an Aboriginal Year 1 child or, say, you've got a Year 3 Aboriginal child who is Level 1, whereas the mainstream child is Level 3? Is it fair to make that comparison when you have got English as a barrier. But you have to be aware of discrimination so you've virtually got to treat them all the same.

She appears to have fewer problems in helping the children develop in English literacy:

Whereas in writing and reading I can see some improvement in these children, Even my little pre-primary ones are showing some of the indicators, so that's giving me information I need to know.

And her adoption of an alternative framework for the assessment of oral language development appears to have solved some of her difficulties. For her, having a real feeling of progress in the child's oral language is crucial:

I think it is picked up on the Continuum in terms of oral language using the Highgate Continuum. The way they speak didn't relate to the First Steps Oral Language Continuum and you need to show some progression. You need to be able to see that a child is developing, particularly in oral language, from when they came to school and not speaking English.

Nevertheless, Joanne recognises that it is not easy to separate oral language development from the learning of literacy in a new language:

Something that really concerns me is the phonetics side of reading. They do not progress along the Writing, Spelling and Reading Continua because of the way that they sound out and write down. The way they say a sentence in their language is different to the way

we would. And straight away they have difficulty with the sounds for letters which they use in their language. This is something that is a huge difference from mainstream children. The phonic side and the grammar and this affects their writing.

Joanne consistently emphasised that she needs to know where the children are starting from in order to identify genuine development and to diagnose areas which need attention in terms of her own teaching. It is here that she is aware of gaps in her own knowledge and experience:

I think it is also a matter of me not knowing their language. If I knew their language I'd know the reasons for the way they speak in relation to the Oral Language Continuum. With their writing I don't know enough about their culture in terms of the genres that are important to their culture and I think we need more background on that. In their culture, they tell stories, but it's different to the way we tell a narrative. And we come in and expect them to run a narrative the way that we do it. I mean they're eventually going to have to learn how we tell a narrative story, but I think more justice has to be given to the way that they speak a story and how good they are at cooking and everything. I'm yet to understand the way they do these things. It might be different from the way we teach procedures. So, I think a lot more consideration has to be given to their cultural background.

Joanne has said that she learned a great deal about young English-speaking children's language and literacy developmental characteristics from being trained in and from using the First Steps framework. Through Eliza, the District Officer responsible for language and literacy, she has recently discovered the ESL Framework of Stages. She seeks from them the same kinds of insights into the developmental characteristics of the language and literacy of the ESL child.

I found the ESL Framework good because the pointers were very specific and I found there were some pointers that I noticed with my children, just an indication of what a child who doesn't know much English displays. I mean, I don't know because I'm not from a non-English speaking background. But it would be good to be able to say the child can do this and this...I'd use the ESL Framework for these children before you could pop them on Level 1. I'd use this until I could say "Yes OK, I can start to pop this child on Level 1 normal Student Outcome Statements." .. And because the levels in the ESL Framework are not the same Levels in Outcome Statements, you'd need to tie them in. I would use them in conjunction saying that your child is starting to work towards Level 1.

Therefore it is particularly important for her to be able to relate the particular achievements of the ESL child, which can be captured on an ESL-specific framework, to what is being assessed in both the First Steps and the Outcome Statements:

The ESL framework is something that I'm new to but would like to use for those children like my pre-primary who don't speak much English and don't display many of the outcomes on the Student Outcome Statements at Level 1. They probably would not have the main indicators and are just starting to display reading like behaviour. In using the First Steps and SOS overlap, it shows basically that the children are in the Role Play Phase. It means that they are before Level 1. The ESL Framework says what the children can do before Level 1. So, the SOS pointers need to be changed to pick this up. You can add your own little pointers for Aboriginal children and I think the ESL Bandscales are something that I'll have

to become familiar with as well. I've found it good looking through the Framework, although it's very different, just to get more of an idea of the capabilities that ESL children have got. I think the ESL children display the First Steps indicators but I just think we have got to take more time to just realise that they may not develop as quickly.

Joanne perceives an assessment framework which describes the typical development in English of an ESL child as contributing to her primary task of assessing and reporting children's progress regardless of diversity of background. In considering whether or not she would assess ESL children differently from mainstream children, she said:

No I wouldn't assess them differently from other children but I would have this (the ESL Framework of Stages) here if I needed it. If I had to go back to that level, then I would, so I'd progress from before pre-Level 1 as a guide. Tell the parents "Look, I'm going back to look at performance specific to ESL children with the idea of plotting your child and comparing your child to mainstream children, but going back a little bit further to get more of an understanding of what your child can do".

What emerges as the ideal assessment framework for Joanne in her situation as she sees it? The advantages of First Steps for her is that it serves four key purposes in her work. It is a diagnostic and assessment instrument that informs planning and it provides possible teaching strategies aimed at addressing specific aspects of language and literacy which her students need to move towards. The Student Outcome Statements is seen by her as primarily a source of criteria for student achievement and, thereby, its assessment. It adds other dimensions for her in the assessment process. It covers all the learning areas and not only language and literacy and, therefore, seems to offer a more comprehensive reporting framework. However, as we have seen, both of these frameworks appear to her not to be sufficiently sensitive to the early language and literacy development of the young ESL child:

I'd like something for children coming in to K because it is difficult for them starting to speak English. Something like a continuum, something for children who speak English as their second language which the ESL Framework or Scales appear to do.

She does not believe that there should be separate assessment frameworks for the ESL child, however, but that mainstream frameworks should account for such children in some way. The real issue for Joanne appears to be teacher knowledge about the ESL child and resources which can support her in her work with them:

It has to be inclusive of all children but I think we need to have a lot more resources around with specific teaching strategies for whether its Chinese, Aboriginal or whatever type of children. And I need to become more familiar with appropriate ESL strategies. The First Steps ones are great but it would be nice to have some more specific examples, as First Steps is not specific for the ESL learner. Maybe some more specific texts as well, resource texts you can go to about the other languages and with things that are familiar to other cultures.

Joanne therefore favours a framework very much like First Steps which informs her knowledge of both ESL and mainstream children's language development, which provides assessment continua, which guides her planning, and which offers a resource of teaching strategies directly related to specific aspects of language and literacy development:

This type of thing works really well with maybe, yes, a few more pointers and things that are ESL based with a developmental progression for the ESL child.

Her experience in her first year at Nyamal has also convinced her of the value of another innovation; the deliberate use of the children's first language in particular when approaching new concepts in different areas of the curriculum:

I know that X (another community school in the Pilbara) has got objects and concepts written in their language and I know that is something I want to do is get those displayed in the classroom and make reference to them more.

When I last communicated with Joanne, she informed me that she and her Principal are now trialing an Aboriginal language program in which the children will learn to read and write in their own language.

References:

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Leigh at Weaver Primary School

Michael P. Breen

The School Context

Weaver Primary School is located in a residential suburb 3 kilometres south of Far Harbour. The suburb was established 25 years ago to provide for the increasing population of the town due to a rapid growth in the mineral and petroleum and allied industries for which Far Harbour serves as a major port. Far Harbour itself is in the Pilbara region of Western Australia which is the largest mineral resources producing region in the State. The town is over 100kms from the next nearest centre of significant population. The estimated population of the Pilbara in June 1995 was 42,960 (2.48% of the State population) most of whom are located in the coastal towns. Of these almost a quarter, about 12,000 people, live in Far Harbour. And almost 5000 reside in the suburb which surrounds Weaver Primary School.

The school was the first of four schools to be built in the suburb. The school is funded under the Priority Schools Program. The number of students has gradually increased over the years to its present role of 370. Almost half of the students are of Aboriginal descent, the families of whom have lived in or around Far Harbour for several years. Many of these families communicate in Aboriginal English as a distinct dialect whilst older members are likely to speak one or more Aboriginal languages. However, just as it is inappropriate to simply categorise all these students only in terms of their Aboriginality, it is both inappropriate and difficult to identify them as having a homogeneous linguistic identity. At one end of a continuum, many may be bidialectal in being able to communicate - to varying degrees - in both Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English. At the other end of the continuum, 40-50 of the students at the school are obliged to learn English as a second or even foreign language. These children come from communities around Far Harbour and they mostly speak Nyangumarata and live in communities in which more than one Aboriginal language is likely to be used. Of these, some are regularly bussed to the school or are visiting relations in the town.

Recognising the original cultural identity of almost half its students, the school provides for the teaching of Nyangumarta to all children in Years 3-7 for one hour each week. The school also has a small minority of ESL children whose families have recently migrated to Australia. Because of the fluid population due to the fluctuations in the mineral and petroleum industries (the population of the town has recently declined but is now predicted to increase again), and because of the customs and traditions of many of the Aboriginal families, the school has significant changes in enrolments in any year. All the teachers expect their class roll to change by about one third during the year.

The Classroom Context

Leigh's classroom is located in a building that houses four other classrooms around a central corridor. There are no doors to the classrooms and they are subdivided by plasterboard walls. Leigh's room is a large rectangle with her desk and boards down one of the longer sides. The children are seated in groups around squares formed by desks. The walls are covered with print and picture materials, some of which are produced by the children and there is an emphasis upon letters and names of things and numbers.

Leigh teaches Years 1 and 2 and she has 32 children on roll of whom 8-10 are absent daily. Some children may join her class spasmodically for a few weeks and then she may never see them again. Leigh identifies nineteen of her students as of Aboriginal descent of whom five come from communities beyond Far Harbour and who speak their own community language. There are two other ESL children in her class: Tanya from Serbia and Peter from Macedonia. Leigh has the support of two aides, one of whom is an Aboriginal Education Worker who also contributes directly to the school's Nyangumarta program.

A typical day for Leigh and her students begins with a brief physical education activity outside or in the hall followed in the classroom by what Leigh calls *free play* in which the children are allowed to go to any part of the room to look at books, build with blocks, or sit at desks and talk with one another. Leigh values this beginning as a way of enabling the children to communicate freely with one another and to mix and integrate as much as possible. She has found that this pause before focused work has a positive effect on the children's later attention. A typical lesson begins with Leigh teaching or modelling something which is new to the students and giving directions about the task which they are about to undertake. Activity therefore moves from Leigh working with the whole class, to individual and sometimes pairwork, back to an evaluation phase with the whole group.

Morning is most often divided between Maths and Language work. Maths occurs in the Maths Learning Centre where the class is taught in groups of about eight students divided among two teachers and two aides. The activities are often hands on with solid objects for measuring or calculating and the tasks required of the children are modelled initially by the teacher and subsequently undertaken by the children often collaboratively.

Leigh builds her Language work around themes provided by a particular reading book that she has chosen, usually of a narrative kind. The class share a common reading book which may be based upon a taped version of the text. She uses classroom tasks that support the children's reading and writing in relation to the chosen text. On the boards behind her she lists *sight words* which are the frequent grammatical words such as conjunctions, pronouns, or key verbs that recur in the student's texts or which she expects them to use in their writing. She may focus in her teaching and through the students' writing work on a list of about a dozen of these words over a period of time before moving on to a second or third list.

Leigh will also extract key sentences from the text or story she is working with and write these on a separate board to enable the children to identify them in a particular written text or to focus upon them in their writing tasks. On one of the boards, Leigh has also written a number of Serbian words which she obtained from a Serbian dictionary when Tanya arrived as a recent newcomer to her class. In order to make Tanya feel at home in her class and because of the rest of the students' curiosity about Tanya's language, Leigh encouraged the class to recognise these words and even to greet each other in Serbian at the start of the day's work.

When undertaking writing tasks, Leigh and her two aides circulate among the students to give them guidance. On completing writing tasks, children are encouraged to self-evaluate their work and Leigh uses a points and stickers system in an on-going way both for behaviour management purposes and to reward the children for their output. There are also classroom jobs which are allocated to different children on a rota basis with their names placed alongside each duty on a board by the doorway. Leigh negotiates with the class on who should undertake particular jobs and their undertaking is also rewarded through the points system.

Another regular daily event is Newstelling in which different individual children stand with Leigh in front of the class each day and tell their news and are asked questions by other students. Afternoons tend to focus on more relaxed activities, especially given that Far Harbour enjoys fairly consistent temperatures over 40c for four months of the year and a relatively warm Spring and Autumn. But, in recognising the importance of literacy across the curriculum, Leigh builds reading and writing work around the other curriculum areas. She usually ends the day with storytime. Leigh is clearly sensitive to shifts in the mood of her class and she may punctuate activities with a burst of collective deep breathing if they appear over excited or grumpy and she will balance focused desk work with a story from her or whole class participatory activities like a song which may, for example, identify the parts of the body or celebrate the benefits of teeth brushing.

Leigh's language work is highly focused upon enabling her students to learn the alphabet and to recognise its sounds and be able to write it through various manipulative tasks. She also focuses upon enabling the children to become familiar with selected vocabulary such as the lists of "sight words" or key words from the text she is using in a theme or story. From this she aims to move the children through writing whole words and sentences. Her priorities are:

I want to know if the kids can recognise sounds, I want to know if they can recognise numbers and colours and basic things like that because this is Grade 1. With Grade 1, I concentrate a lot on phonics and sounds and blending of sounds, and how to tackle the alphabet because I'm a phonics based person. I focus on the alphabet because if they know the sounds then they can put words together and they can sound things out. And a lot of the sight words you can't sound out in full but they know that's a 't' or 'l' or whatever. The children who can't read are the ones who don't know the alphabet, that's just basic for me...If they know the sounds then they're progressing, so they can usually use these sounds to put them together and make words, you know, 'd' 'i' 'd' is 'did' as in 'did you go somewhere?' And you can give them strategies to put two letters together and a third one and make a word, so they're word building with their sounds. Another thing we do with sight words is that they just don't write them out but they've got to draw a picture and the picture has to relate to the words as in 'Look at the ice cream' and they'll draw an ice cream. So they're sentence building and putting sense to the word, making sense out of the word.

Like many mainstream teachers in her situation, she is conscious of the possible circumstances of ESL children in the school:

I haven't had any ESL training so I haven't been so aware. I am aware that they do more hands on activities in their culture and they learn by their experiences and that's how their classroom is out there in the wide world, whereas we bring them in and sit them at a desk with a pencil and paper. So I know that's not normal with them so I had that at the back of my mind. But at the same time I'm not out there in the bush so I've got to develop their skills within the environment that they're in so that they can actually cope with the mainstream as well and eventually get a job there.

Leigh also recognises from her own experience that, at the individual level, ESL children are not a homogeneous group. When talking about two children in her class, Tanya recently arrived from Serbia and Alfred from an Aboriginal community, she makes the following distinctions between them:

Tanya was different because I believe she's familiar with school in her own country. Alfred is not. He is six and she is seven. And they don't have a schools in his community so he's not literate. I would probably handle them differently. Tanya was such an obvious case of

a child coming in having experienced a school environment and knowing school as such and it was easier for me to know that she was probably a good Grade 1. I actually got books in, Serbian books, but she wouldn't read them. I couldn't read them and I couldn't make myself understood. She would either copy from somebody's work which was fine because she's still writing or she would just get a reading book they were working from. I allowed her to do that because while she was doing it she's still writing, she's manipulating letters, she would be familiar with some of the sight words and also spaces between words, so there's lots of skills there in just that exercise, so I often just let her do those sorts of things. Alfred's different. He isn't literate so he doesn't really know what letters are or numbers. He can't draw pictures, he doesn't know his colours, so I have to go right back. So, Okay, this child hasn't had experience with just the objects that I've got in the classroom.

Her views on the prior experience of Alfred highlighted a dilemma facing her as a mainstream teacher of very young children and who may not know for sure of all their children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds which may vary significantly. Speaking of another Aboriginal child, she says:

It took me a while to work out that Michael was really ESL. A lot of these children are sort of ESL basis, but I'm not too sure how much he understood because he was so quiet and you put it down sometimes to their shyness. They seem to do what you're asking them to and I think they become very skilled at looking at what the others are doing and quickly do just that. Because Year 1 and 2 is informal in a way, they can get away with it. It's not like "Pick up your pen and write this" where they would be lost. They can be just as bright as any child here, you know, but their background is different. They're coming into a different institution so to speak. So it's not as if they don't know, their skills are different. Normally these children when they're in school, they just get to know what's expected of them and they just skyrocket, though some of these children have problems in their home lives or a tragic past. Some of the Aboriginal parents are really behind them, want them to learn, they read their books every day and they do their homework and so they are actually up with the rest. The other children are more transient and school is not valued by them, they know you've got to go to school and just learn you work at school, but that's sort of where it finishes. Michael, for example, just refuses to take homework.

Added to the problem of identifying whether or not the young newcomer speaks English is compounded for Leigh if the child's dialect of English is markedly different from the dialect with which she herself is most familiar. She can not be sure whether the child is acquiring English for the first time or whether she can build upon the dialect they may already know:

Alfred comes to school with a little bit of English but you notice that a lot of the Aboriginal children will have limited English, enough to get by, enough to fool the teacher most of the time because they're just very quiet. You could be fooled into thinking well he's either really behind, but then I would think, perhaps being an Aboriginal child, you get familiar with them in this school, maybe he didn't go to preschool because that's usually obvious if they can't colour in, draw, or cut out and they look at blocks or Mobilo and they've never seen it before. And they're reluctant to speak so you think they're shy because in Aboriginal culture they are often shy. So I don't want to force them to do things that will make them feel uncomfortable and scared of school. So you try and make them feel welcome and

part of the group but as time goes on you give them their work and they can't draw or they don't know any numbers or they're looking at the next person to find out what they can do. So you just know there's something wrong. He shows all the indications of having another language at home, but really to know whether that's right I'd have to ring home or I'd get the Aboriginal Education Workers to go out there and try and find out. Well it's very difficult to get the parents in and for years I have tried and tried and tried.

Leigh acknowledges that her own professional training did not prepare her for dealing with the ESL child. She has discovered things more or less by trial and error. That all her students should feel comfortable and come to enjoy school is a priority for Leigh. Therefore, in endeavouring to make Tanya feel part of the classroom group, Leigh tried to communicate with her through a Serbian dictionary and, as we have seen, encouraged the rest of the class to use some Serbian words listed on the blackboard. Leigh had common names of places and objects in the school translated into Serbian and written on cards for Tanya to take home so that she could become more familiar with her new environment. Tanya's mother, however, objected strongly, insisting that Tanya was at school to learn English! Her initial approach in working with Tanya reveals Leigh's reliance on her own intuitions:

Just from my observations, because if you give them things and they can't do it you know you can't go down that line. I would give her things that the other kids were doing and you do that initially because you aren't prepared for a child who does not speak English. As soon as I knew what she could do then I would start doing things that were more relevant to her. We had our reading books, even though she wouldn't understand it, she would still read the book, she would imitate, she wasn't afraid to point to the words. She got that way she could do one to one correspondence and she could pronounce words very well though she didn't understand what the story was about. So, in my pidgin Serbian I would try very hard to explain what it's about, but what she was doing was probably good exercise anyway because she's speaking and she's quite comfortable doing that. I don't think she wanted to be different and they know what they're doing. If it was reading, and if I'd have her off in a corner or with somebody else doing something individual, it wouldn't have been part of the group, so she wouldn't have liked that. So you've got to be very careful you don't just give them all sorts of different things

Because she sees herself as endeavouring to provide her mainstream class with the same learning experiences, Leigh does not believe in teaching her ESL students differently within her overall approach:

I wouldn't teach the ESL children differently all the time, I would involve them in the same things. It's not always the same but I'd involve them in the same things, particularly oral things, like you may be reading a big book or you might be sharing news or free play, so they're involved in similar things that the other children are. When it comes to the actual work that they can do, it's been the same for Alfred but there have been times when it is hard. So it becomes too hard and it's just pointless then I will draw out something else for him to do. I'll say "Alfred let's do some fun activities, you can do a fun one." So I don't say "You're doing something different" but "You can do something a little bit special", you know, I'll get him to do that.

Leigh provides a significant argument, when talking about Alfred, in support of her common approach:

I have found that the ESL children don't want something different, they want what the other children have had. He wouldn't understand a lot of this but he still does the things that the other children do and to give him something completely different, I have found that they feel strange. Last year with the ESL children I tried to give them something more basic and more simplified, but they didn't want it, they wanted what everyone else was doing.

However, as we have seen, the class as a whole is divided into four groupings for Maths depending upon the level they are attaining and, for English work, Leigh identifies two groupings in her class which is sometimes divided so that she can work with one group while an aide or support teacher works with the other in a room close by:

Just by listening to them and working with them I split the class into two. For these two weeks I've prepared all the lessons and activities for the children so they're out there doing something completely different. They're not working at a higher level. They're getting to the stage where they're now pointing to each word as they're reading and discovering one to one correspondence while these children are now actually reading and identifying the words. The ones out there are still not familiar with the alphabet, they're still not sounding out the letters, but they sort of know most of the letters. The ones I have with me here are into blends and getting into sentences.

Leigh summarises the distinctions between the types of activity she would undertake with each of the groups:

If I'm using a big book then I might have two different worksheets. One group of children might draw a picture or cut and paste while the other will write, so there can be a variation in the type of work they do. I'm more interested in their reading where the other children can read and they need to practise their writing, so these children, some of the ESL children or the lower children, will work on manipulative skills. They might not be able to read but they can look at the board and go "Oh, that word comes first". So I'm more interested in those kinds of skills and once they get these basic skills they're starting to recognise a letter or its shape and that this shape goes first or that little dot goes at the end.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Leigh has lived in Far Harbour for 21 years and clearly knows the community very well. She even undertook her teacher education there in an outreach institution of one of the universities. She has been teaching at Weaver School since graduating four years previously. Despite believing that her concentration in her teaching on phonics, for example, is not typically a First Steps priority, her approach to language and literacy is strongly influenced by First Steps, as she explains:

I would have worked the way I do before First Steps. Well, I'm a fairly new teacher, so I came in with First Steps so I was lucky. When I started I wasn't sure how the school planned other subjects but First Steps was adopted by the school, so I've actually gone right into First Steps. That's all I know...I think it's all very relevant. It's just that I know some people don't teach phonics, they teach it in context and they take all their work from a particular big book and

things like this. As I'm teaching or reading I will say "Let's look for this sound", but I actually do separate phonics lessons.

As we shall see, Leigh uses the First Steps Developmental Continua as a record of her students' progress and she reports to the school on the basis of the whole class achievement of phases on the continua. However, Leigh relies on First Steps in both her planning and in the strategies and tasks she adopts:

All of first Steps is relevant. You've got that many books in First Steps that you can select. It just depends on what you want to focus on. If I want to focus on writing or reading or if I want to extend phonics, I can go to the module and get other activities and ideas. Other teachers do it differently, others don't teach phonics at all but it is my focus. You can pick it up and play it to your style.

Leigh clearly has her own priorities in developing her students' early literacy and, though convinced of the value of First Steps, she uses the framework in a selective way:

I tend to focus on a bit from here and a bit from there using First Steps. With First Steps you can get what you need and find what you want to target with them. So then I would think, "Okay, what can I do to develop this area and these children here?" So I might then go to First Steps and find all the activities I can do to increase their ability level in a particular thing.

In general, therefore, Leigh's approach to language and literacy work with all her students is based upon her training and later experience as a teacher of Year 1 and 2 children and this is influenced, on the basis of her own judgements as to what is needed or what appears appropriate at particular times, by performance indicators and the teaching strategies in First Steps.

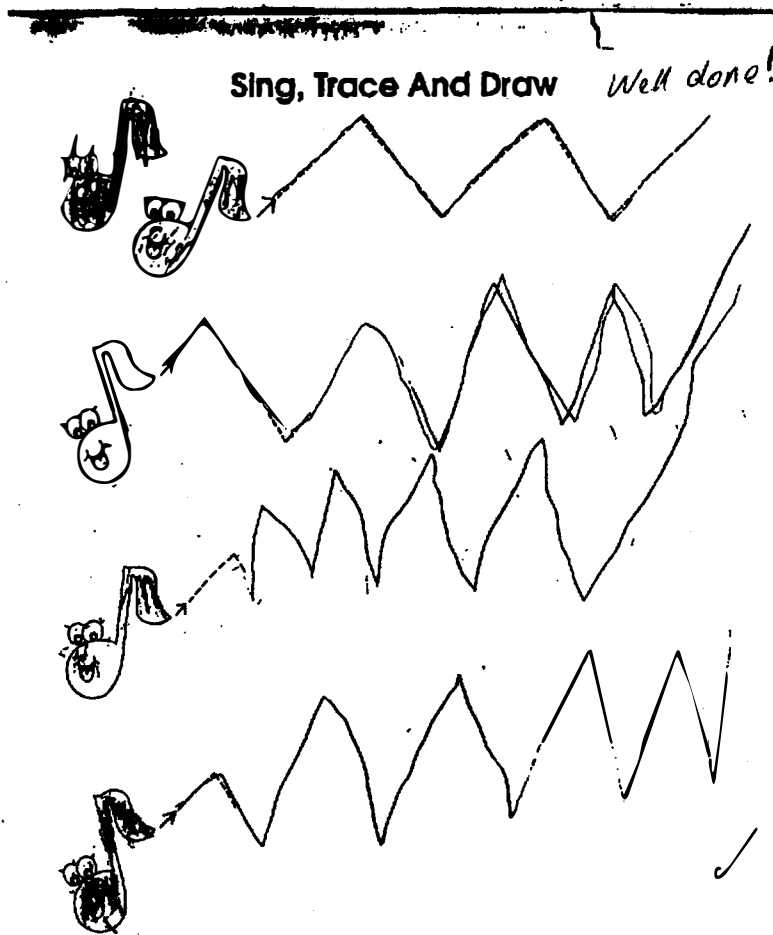
Turning to her assessment practices, we can consider these in relation to: (i) how she may assess the progress of the individual child; (ii) her use of First Steps and the Student Outcome Statements as aids to assessment; (iii) her reporting to parents; and (iv) reporting to the Principal and the school. The following sections describe each of these in turn.

Assessment and Feedback on Individual Tasks

Leigh keeps what she calls her *test folder* for each child in which she places selected work that indicates their progress over a term. These work sample books with teacher's comments on different tasks and the teacher's own assessment sheet are sent to the parents at the end of each term. Virtually all the tasks she selects will be in written work, not least because Leigh, like many of her colleagues, finds written work easier to evaluate because they can take it away to assess after class and because it can be collected in a folder for the child, the teachers, and the parents.

Leigh and her aide will move around the class checking children's progress on a task and Leigh will occasionally write a comment, draw a smiling face, or place a star on a completed task as is illustrated in her comment and check on a manipulative task completed by Alfred in Sample 1.

Sample 1: A Classroom Task



- Teacher / Parent
- Encourage children to make the movements in the air while singing or humming.
 - Trace the guidelines.
 - Continue the rhythm and movement.

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In making initial assessments of the children's levels of ability and potential, Leigh relies strongly on her experience as a mother and a teacher and from working with new arrivals:

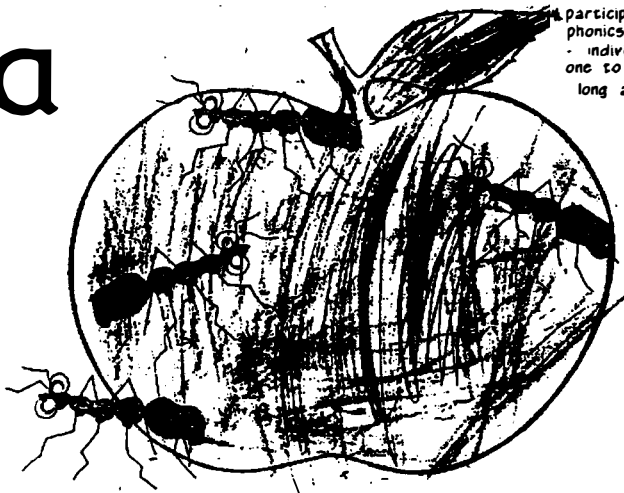
By the first few weeks you know where the children are. You know that these are going to race on and those need some pushing, they think school's just fun and have no idea at all. So you get to know who's who very quickly. When they come down from pre-primary and you give them something, you say, "Draw your favourite thing." And one will do it and another one will just colour over the page and another will just do squiggles. Or you might say, "Write a copy of this." Some will copy it others won't even be able to manipulate a pencil very well or they'll put one word here and another there, so they're trying to copy but it's not in order and some children will just put scribbles or not do anything. So, you sort out that some children are keen to learn, others are nearly there and other children are almost not ready for school. And the ones who are not ready you say, "Those are my target kids." it boils down to a personal decision. Knowing Grade 1 it's quite easy and you know whether they've been to pre-school or not because they are familiar

with behaviour and objects in the room. So, normally I get a lot of information just from what they do initially especially like drawing a picture of themselves or circling same and different things.

Through a similar process, Leigh found she had to go back to earlier tasks with Tanya and Alfred with their perceived needs as ESL learners in mind. Sample 2 illustrates the kind of focus which Leigh adopts for early literacy learning. She describes it in the following way:

Sample 2: Typical Early Literacy Tasks used by Leigh

Aa



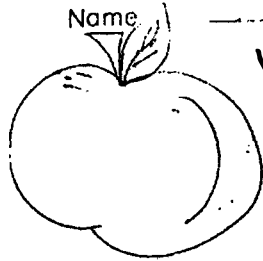
participates in whole class
phonics session
individual workbook
one to one attention for as
long as possible (not long enough)

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Sample 2: contd.

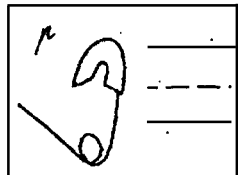
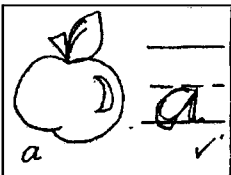
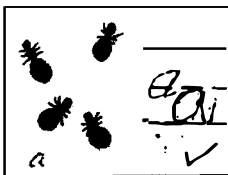
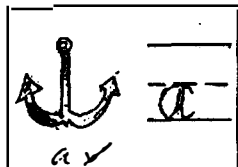
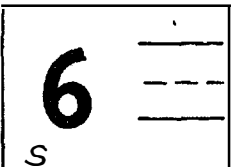
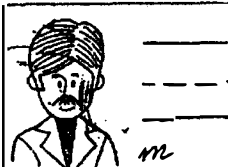
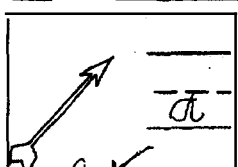
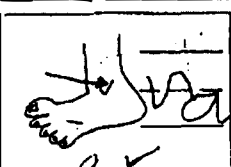
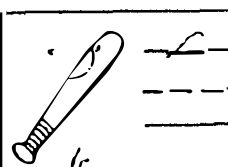
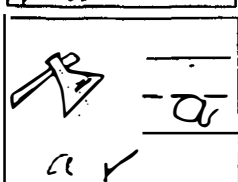
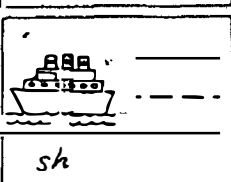
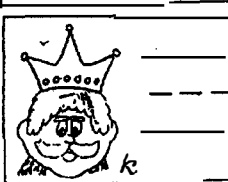


Name _____

Write the letter **a**

if the picture begins like 

Say the name of each picture.
Write the vowel sound you hear.

 _____	 a ✓	 a ✓
 a ✓	 s	 m
 a ✓	 a ✓	 b
 a ✓	 sh	 k







I would give this to all the class at the beginning of the year but if they come from pre-school they may know 'a', so why teach it again. With someone like Alfred or Tanya I would use this kind of activity. One to one is difficult because some of the children may finish their tasks in two minutes flat. So I would point to the letter and say the sound and we'll draw it or I'll say, "Point to another 'a'" and he might do that and I would just get him to colour it in. You see you don't have time to sit and go through it for a long time, but as you're working with the class you'll do it and it will catch on. With Alfred I'm looking at how he can copy the letters, so I'm not interested whether he can read that word and draw the word or even know what it's about. I'd be really happy if he just copied the shape. So I'm looking at his skills in a different way. He's still doing the same task as others and he's still learning. He's done marvellously to do this.

Most often, as we have seen, Leigh expects her ESL students to undertake the same tasks as one of the groups of children in which she has placed them. These tasks will be directly related to her theme, they will be made up of cumulative smaller tasks and contain key words and sentences from the book which is related to the task. In Sample 3 we see that Leigh has given Alfred a star and a sticker on the first page of his handout for his efforts.

Sample 3: A Task Related to a Theme

Wants same work. Set different outcomes and look at letter shapes, use of colour, illustrations and responses to instruction.

Name: Uddi Leah Ulla Date: Jet to the moon
 ☆ Uddi Leah Ulla ☆

speak	read	write
	jet	jet
	mum	MUM
	moon	MOON
	cat	CAT
	girl	GIRL
	Tom	TOM

Name: _____ Date: 7-5-96

Jet to the moon ☆

1

jet moon cat mum



2

can ~~not~~ and come

I will go to the moon.
 Will you go with me?
 Tom and Mum will go with me.
 The cat can not go to the moon.
 The cat can not come.

1 Join the word to the illustration.
 2 Choose the best word to complete the sentence. Write the word.

Leigh explains how Alfred has approached the tasks and her priorities for him in doing it :

We've got two groups in the class, one is on a more advanced book and this is the lower one. We were trying to do transport and because these children aren't up to it yet so I chose jet transport. A lot of the children are handling this really well but you've got to get key words, so I'd write the key words and they will get to know the words through the picture. Alfred will look at the picture but maybe these pictures aren't culturally familiar to him so he may not connect it. My aim for him is actually writing or copying or even manipulating the pencil and having a go. He couldn't do this when he first came, so he's had a go.

For Leigh, the tasks she uses provides the basis of the children's writing and reading work in a related way. As with Alfred's writing, she expected slightly different achievements by Tanya in her reading as compared with the majority of her students:

I would give her things that the other children are doing but it became pointless. So, as soon as I got to know what she could do, I would start doing things that were more relevant to her such as alphabet work and the phonics book...She would still imitate, still read the book, so she wasn't afraid within the class to point to the words and she got to one to one correspondence and she could pronounce the words very well although she didn't understand what the story was about.

Leigh finds that regular assessment of the children's oral achievements is a difficult and very time consuming undertaking. She is keen to develop close relations with all her students and, over the year, becomes familiar with their achievements and difficulties largely on the basis of observation:

What I observe and how they talk to me. A lot of it is observation and how they're relating to one another, how they're playing in the shops and how they're mixing.

Asked if she set up particular tasks for oral assessment work, she replied:

I have set up special tasks in the past but now a lot of it is observations. And you can use First Steps that highlights oral work such as newstelling and barrier games...We had a newstelling checklist that we worked out, so every time a child would tell news I would know whether the other children covered a 'when' question or 'who' 'what' and 'why' or whether they spoke with a clear soft voice or they spoke broken language or whatever. But I haven't followed that through because it was a lot to do. What was the point, I mean I knew it all in my head so when I go back to the Oral Continuum, rather than keep two things, I can just go along the Continuum and this is what I need to know and what Phase I'm in.

Using Newstelling as an example, Leigh describes Alfred's participation which, she believes, is fairly typical of her young ESL students:

Alfred will get up to tell news, he's keen to get up but he doesn't say anything. So I'll sort of say, "Good morning boys and girls" and he'll say something then but it's very quiet. The children see his mouth moving and they will say, "Good morning Alfred." When they've got free activities he will go round and mix with the children. He's often not talking but they're all talking but he's doing the same things as them and he might say a word or two because he knows what he wants. But you still don't see him talking a lot.

Her judgements about the children's oral development are on-going and closely

tied in with her day to day approach to the children generally:

Sometimes I think I've asked a question that's very simple but he doesn't answer and he doesn't really know what I said. So then, rather than let him just be embarrassed I say, "Would you like so and so to help you?" which is the normal thing you do. He'll nod "Yes" and then I'll just get somebody else to answer and I'd say to him, "You knew that all the time, didn't you?" and he would say "Yes". You've got little strategies like that so that they don't feel embarrassed because you want them to feel comfortable.

Using the Frameworks

When Leigh first started teaching four years ago, she would seek to profile all her students on the First Steps Developmental Continua against all the indicators. Sample 4 illustrates the detail required and refers to only one of the three Phases Leigh's students are likely to be working through:

Sample 4: Assessment of Oral Language using First Steps

Early Language max.2

Whole Class Profile Sheet

CLASS _____

PHASE 2: EARLY LANGUAGE INDICATORS

PART IV Profiles of Oral Language Development

The Child	PART IV Profiles of Oral Language Development																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Speech Development																				
• uses oral grammar style which is an approximation of adult grammar—onomatopoeical and concrete, e.g. phew—phew-for-shoe—whee																				
• experiments with sounds through rhyme and repetition																				
• is beginning to use pronouns but may make errors in syntax, e.g. Look at the doggie. They at dog.																				
• shows confusion between parts of nouns, e.g. You, that's hot, here's there																				
• demonstrates an understanding of distinction in personal pronouns, e.g. Give it to him. Give it to me.																				
• begins to use endings such as -ing, -ed, -s																				
• may confuse tenses when describing an event, e.g. I going shopping yesterday																				
• uses function words—a, the, a the, for, because—to link ideas previously expressed in unconnected ways: the dog went—because I'm going to the park																				
• demonstrates an understanding of most common prepositions, e.g. on, under, front, behind																				
• may make sound substitutions, e.g. t for v drive for drive r for k tick for tick s for sh slip for slip w for r rabbit for rabbit d for th drabble for brother f for th free for three																				
• focuses on interesting sounding words and enjoys repeating them, e.g. beautiful, leopard, football																				
Language of Social Interaction																				
• is beginning to develop awareness of others needs and begins to provide feedback information when introducing new topic, e.g. Beanna, I want shopping. Look at this.																				
• is aware of social conventions but does not match actions to phrases, e.g. "kiss me" and pushes friend with the hands.																				
continued on next page																				
Teacher's Notes																				
Date:																				

Leigh found that she was spending much of the time on profiling that she preferred to devote to planning:

Well I used to use these sheets and I used to spend hours ticking this off and ticking that off and trying to work this in. It helped me to look for things. I used to hear teachers saying, "Oh, it's all up here, it's in my head." I used to wonder how they just knew where the child's at and what they can and can't do. But I can actually do that now and working through all the checklists and all the information that I thought I had to collect was far too much. It has

been a basis to become familiar with some of the things you need to know about the Phases. But I can now target children in my head and I can think of one and go , "Yes, I know that child's Phase"...When you're first starting out, you overdo everything because you think that's what you have to do. The school or the parents don't need such detailed information.

Whilst it clearly enabled Leigh to be aware of the specific aspects of her young students' language development, detailed profiling of each child proved to be too demanding of her time and she felt that the detailed information might not be used. She now completes a class profile each term using the First Steps framework but only with reference to the main Phase titles such as Role Play or Experimental etc. From this she has deduced that:

Most of them have gone from Phase 1 to Phase 2 and I've got some children going into Phase 3. Those children going into the third might, by the end of the year, be roughly equivalent to Level 1 in the Outcome Statements and working towards Level 2. I don't refer to Level 2 because I haven't any children at that Level although some are getting there. Before I would put them on Level 2, I have to go through and flip my page to find out what indicators would put them on Level 2. I'd have to really study the Outcome Statements to make sure that they have been covered.

However she may create a more detailed profile, using the First Steps framework illustrated by Sample 4, for the children she has identified as 'target children' such as Tanya and Alfred and some of her students who are having particular difficulties in early literacy:

I do this sheet for myself but we don't need to keep this. All we really need to know is how many children in the class are in which Phase. In Reading most of my children are in Role Play but working towards Experimental.

We have seen a moment ago how Leigh extrapolated from her assessment of the children against the First Steps Phases to where they might achieve at the different Levels of the Student Outcome Statements. Leigh, like many of the teachers locally, has worked with Eliza, the School District Officer responsible for language and literacy, in order to begin to use the Student Outcome Statements in English.

In tune with District policy, the school has adopted the Student Outcome Statements in Maths, now in its third year, and Social Studies with a view to extending them to Science next year and then introducing a new Strand each year for every learning area. Leigh's Principal presently sees the Student Outcome Statements in English as 'an evaluation tool but not for reporting'. The school reports on language and literacy outcomes using the First Steps Continua. However, with Eliza's offer of professional development in the English Outcome Statements, Leigh was keen to discover how she might adopt them:

I was working with Eliza at District Office as I wanted to use the Outcome Statements so we thought this was the best way and have one for each child so it can become like a profile. But then it would take a long time just to assess one child in the learning areas. If you had all the books in front of you and went through the Outcome Statements to find out where they were at, it was just mind boggling. I tried it for a while and simply got too tired and you think, "Well, why am I doing it? Will another teacher use this profile?" Probably not because it's my interpretation. I have found that each Outcome has to be interpreted slightly differently. So Eliza and I decided to go back and put it on a class profile and now I can go through the document and take the objectives that I want.

During the process of exploring the Outcome Statements at teacher meetings, Leigh discovered a number of significant problems:

“Posing questions “ is one indicator. Well, okay, they don’t pose questions. They will do what I ask them to, I will give them examples of how to do things and they’ll do it. But then I thought I’d work on it and started getting the children asking questions about number, for example. I wanted a question related to what they were doing. When we worked with other teachers, we found that people were just doing one sample and saying “Oh, my kids can do that” and tick, tick, tick, Level 1, Level 2 or whatever. You needed more samples. But I wasn’t getting good data from my children. Once they can pose questions, they’re actually analysing and thinking about things and the process is in place. I thought my children were doing this and doing this but they’re not really doing it. They’re doing what I ask them to do. Whether they’ve got the processes in their minds I’m not sure. It looks good just ticking them off, “Oh, all my kids are on Level 1.” But I’d much rather know for sure and think “No, they aren’t really good at this one,” so I need to work at it.”

Leigh believed that teachers were differently interpreting the Level Statements and that she herself needed far more evidence of her students’ achievements before she could be sure about assessing them against the Statements. In order to *work at it*, however, Leigh has found that her initial experience with First Steps enables her to make a distinction between her teaching and the objectives she chooses to focus upon against which she will assess the children’s achievements:

So instead of using First Steps, Continua I would much rather leave it, get my strategies from the First Steps book to help the children move on, but I’d take the Student Outcome Statements as my target and focus points.

Speaking of her ESL students in particular, Leigh indicates how she relates attainment in First Steps Phases to the Levels in the Outcome Statements:

You know they’ve got different skills in different areas, so language is really difficult. If they can’t read or write they’re really stuck in some areas, so they would have to be pre Level 1 or in the Early Language Phase of First Steps.

Identifying her ESL students at pre Level 1, however, raises problems for Leigh which we will return to later. The question here is: given the difficulties she initially confronted in trying to create detailed profiles of her children using the First Steps Developmental continuum, on which particular framework does Leigh now base her assessment in English, both for her own records and for reporting purposes?

Leigh’s own recording and reporting frameworks mirror her use of First Steps and the Student Outcome Statements as planning and teaching strategy guides. She is deliberately eclectic on the basis of familiarity with the frameworks and experience in working with the children in their early literacy development. She keeps her own checksheets to trace the students’ progress against the specific objectives she has chosen to focus upon. Sample 5 illustrates this in relation to her concern with the children’s knowledge of the alphabet and sound-letter relationships and her listings of frequent ‘sight words’. Her tasks have been selected to address these things and she will use such a checklist about once a term to trace progress in them. The Sample here is her assessment of the early achievements of one of her ESL children.

Sample 5: Leigh's Checklist of Letters and Sight Words



Knows the Sound
Knows the Letter Name
Gives a Word
Unknown
Error

a	-	✓	✓		
m					
s					✓
t	✓				
f					✓
e					✓
n					✓
l	✓				
c					✓
o					✓
r					✓
h					✓
g					✓
z					✓
u					✓
d	✓	✓			
w	✓	✓			
3					✓
b	✓	✓	✓		
y					✓
x					✓
v					✓
j					✓
q					✓
sh					✓
th					✓
ch					✓

STUDENT CHECK LIST

Name: _____
Grade: One
Date of review: _____
Tester's name: _____

SIGHT WORDS

LIST 1
the and a to
at in I
that was one
look of

LIST 2
it he for is
with had his
as on you
two see went

LIST 3
have not but
her by she
be they ask
all like three

Home Reading
: ✓ Good • Satisfactory * needs encouragement

Leigh uses these kinds of checklists as an on going record of how the children are progressing according to her own specific points of focus in her teaching. From these she will build up a profile for school and parental reporting. Here she uses a 'Student Language Profile' (see Sample 6). Interestingly the indicators in this profile are largely based upon the Student Outcome Statements, but not all of them.

Sample 6: Leigh's Student Language Profile

For parents - Sample fold.

STUDENT LANGUAGE PROFILE

Name: _____ Date: 4th Term 96 Sound Developing

<i>These are some of the behaviours your child may display in language</i>	
Speaking & Listening	
• uses appropriate greetings and displays appropriate manners	•
• joins in action poems, verses and group recitals	•
• follows simple instructions	✓
• recounts personal experiences and discusses them with peers and adults	•
• ask and answers questions to seek and clarify information	•
• makes relevant contributions in class / group discussions	•
• attempts to observe class rules	✓
• can cooperate effectively with others	✓
• express needs, wants and feelings in an appropriate manner	•
• speaks clearly on most occasions	•
• pronounces most sounds clearly	•
Reading & Viewing	
• use title and picture clues to predict texts	•
• points to words in familiar texts while reading	•
• responds to environmental print	•
• recognises own name	✓
• recalls events from text viewed or read	•
• discusses favourite aspects from text viewed or read	•
• compares personal knowledge and experiences with information in texts	•
Writing	
• use approximations and conventional letter shapes to construct 'messages'	✓
• tell others the intended meaning of the written message	•
• copies environment print for use on self-directed activities	•
• leaves a space between words or word-like clusters	•
• usually write from left to right and top to bottom of the page	•
• experiment with punctuation marks	•
• use sounds heard in words to represent written language	•

Students who have achieved Level One show a growing awareness for using spoken, written and visual texts in and outside the classroom and school

Level One in relation to First Steps Phases

ORAL LANGUAGE	READING	WRITING	SPELLING
Beginning Lang.	Role Play	Role Play	Role Play
Early Lang.	Experimental	Experimental	Experimental
Exploratory Lang.	Early	Early	Phonetic
Emergent Lang.	Transitional	Conventional	Transitional
Consolidated Lang.	Independent	Proficient	Independent
Extended Lang.	Advanced	Advanced	

As we have seen with her use of First Steps in her planning and in her overall reporting of the Phases, Leigh is selective in the indicators of achievement which she adopts. She sees the Outcome Statements for English as providing her with samples of students' work to which she can refer but, crucially, with pointers from each of the Levels. And it is from these that she deliberately selects for her

own 'Student Language Profile'. She here provides some of the selection criteria she uses:

It gives me work samples to indicate this is a typical sample of a child in Level 1 or this is a typical sample of Level 2. I've selected these pointers from those that are listed and I've changed it slightly. I have thought, "Well this is important," and you want things that you know you're doing in your classroom all the time. So we do appropriate readings and displays and my overview for this year, because I had a horrible time last year, is that we're going to have good manners and to be able to greet each other properly, to teach them common courtesies. So that was important in my classroom. You don't need to use all the pointers for a Level. The pointers are guidelines and that's different from First Steps where you have to have all the indicators in a Phase...So, I've selected the pointers that I find important and I guess somebody might do it differently. A lot I didn't put in can be encompassed in these anyway.

In practice, Leigh has actually selected about one in three of the original pointers from the Outcome Statements. She explains why she has excluded or included some specific pointers for the Profile:

I wouldn't select "Form writing-like symbols or marks on a page, scribble writing across a page." That one is covered in First Steps in Role Play which is at an earlier Level. To me to be in Level 1 they would basically be forming their letters...I chose "Use approximations and conventional letter shapes to construct messages" because if you don't understand the letters that they're writing and, as I interpret "use approximations", they might be doing an 'a', they might not be forming it the right way, but it is definitely an 'a'. And the letter shapes have to be conventional otherwise you can't read it. And if they're going to construct a message I've got to be able to read it.

Leigh sums up her approach to creating the 'Student Language Profile' in the following way:

So most of them are from the Outcome Statements, but I have actually put in some of them myself like: "pronounces most sounds clearly" because I find in speaking and listening that's important. Alfred doesn't pronounce his sounds so clearly, so I wouldn't tick that for him. It's in the Oral Continuum of First Steps but it is not put like that, it's not clear, it doesn't say "Should speak clearly" or whatever.

In general, when assessing her students' development in English, including her ESL students, Leigh has moved from detailed profiling against all of the indicators in First Steps to relying on her familiarity with the children in order to assess the overall Phases they have reached. In addition, on the basis of checklists of her own specific objectives, she constructs her 'Student Language Profile' for each child at the end of each term and this profile represents an eclectic selection from pointers in the Student Outcome Statements and from some of her own objectives.

Reporting to Parents

It is school policy to make available to parents, at the end of each term, a folder of selected work samples from the children, which Leigh calls her 'test file', and these are accompanied by the teacher's evaluative comments or summary sheets such as that illustrated in her Student Language Profile (Sample 6 above) which she regards as providing assessment criteria which are '*most relevant for my classroom and more relevant for the parents*', In addition, at the end of each half year, Leigh completes a school report for each child as in Sample 7.

Sample 7: The School Report Form

		OUTSTANDING HIGH PERFORMANCE SATISFACTORY CLOSE TO REQUIRED PERFORMANCE UNSATISFACTORY NEEDS OUTREACH PROGRAMME	NAME: _____
			YEAR LEVEL: _____ DATE: _____
SUBJECT	ACHIEVEMENT	COMMENT	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
READING Comprehension Uses picture clues to gain meaning of story Understands what is read Predicts what may happen in a story Understands the main idea in a story Word Recognition Personal Reading Literature Speaking/Listening Phonics Recognises single sounds taught Recognises blends taught Recognises digraphs taught Applies sounds taught in daily work Writing Confidently attempts inverted spelling Requires little motivation to write on a given topic Writes notes/ideas in a logical manner Beginning to write using sentences Beginning to use simple punctuation	[Grid for Reading Achievement]	ATTITUDE/EFFORT <input type="checkbox"/>	BEHAVIOUR <input type="checkbox"/> Always very well behaved <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates responsible and acceptable behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Accepts responsibility for personal behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Needs supervision to ensure satisfactory behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfactory behaviour despite constant supervision CONSIDERATION OF OTHERS <input type="checkbox"/> Always polite, courteous and considerate of others <input type="checkbox"/> Polite and considerate most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Needs to be more considerate of others <input type="checkbox"/> Often discourteous and inconsiderate of others INSTRUCTIONS <input type="checkbox"/> Always follows instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Usually follows instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Needs to respond to instructions immediately <input type="checkbox"/> Needs supervision to follow instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Often ignores instructions PARTICIPATION IN CLASS <input type="checkbox"/> Always contributes to class/group activities <input type="checkbox"/> Usually contributes to class/group activities <input type="checkbox"/> Reluctant to contribute to class/group activities <input type="checkbox"/> Often disruptive in class/group activities PERSISTENCE AND INTEREST IN SCHOOL <input type="checkbox"/> Always willing to resolve problems despite difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Usually willing to resolve problems despite difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Tends to stop work when faced with difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks the ability to concentrate for long periods COMPLETION OF WORK <input type="checkbox"/> Completes work quickly <input type="checkbox"/> Completes work at a satisfactory rate <input type="checkbox"/> Often needs extra time to complete work <input type="checkbox"/> Often needs supervision to ensure work is completed <input type="checkbox"/> Seldom completes work BOOKWORK PRESENTATION <input type="checkbox"/> Always produces neat work <input type="checkbox"/> Produces neat work most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent where neatness is concerned <input type="checkbox"/> Needs supervision to be neat <input type="checkbox"/> Work is untidy but tries to be neat <input type="checkbox"/> Seldom produces neat work ATTENDANCE PUNCTUALITY <input type="checkbox"/> SATISFACTORY <input type="checkbox"/> UNSATISFACTORY <input type="checkbox"/> HALF DAYS ABSENT <input type="checkbox"/> OUT OF SATISFACTORY <input type="checkbox"/> UNSATISFACTORY <input type="checkbox"/>
COMPUTER Knowledge & Understanding Skills	[Grid]	ATTITUDE/EFFORT <input type="checkbox"/>	
NUMBER Understands the basic concepts taught Can apply these concepts Understands number concepts up to [] Has confidence to tackle new concepts Works independently SPACE MEASUREMENT	[Grid]	ATTITUDE/EFFORT <input type="checkbox"/>	
SCIENCE Knowledge & Understanding Skills	[Grid]	ATTITUDE/EFFORT <input type="checkbox"/>	
SOCIAL STUDIES Knowledge & Understanding Skills	[Grid]	ATTITUDE/EFFORT <input type="checkbox"/>	
HEALTH EDUCATION Knowledge & Understanding	[Grid]	ATTITUDE/EFFORT <input type="checkbox"/>	
PRINTING Has good control of pencil or crayon Forms letters/numbers correctly in printing Size is consistent Spacing is consistent	[Grid]	ATTITUDE/EFFORT <input type="checkbox"/>	
MUSIC			
PHYSICAL EDUCATION			
DRAMA			
ART & CRAFT			
TEACHER	PRINCIPAL		PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEW ADVISED TO DISCUSS REPORT <input type="checkbox"/>

The language and literacy criteria within the report, whilst expressed in outcomes against which the student's achievement is graded from 'outstanding' to 'unsatisfactory', are clearly selective and reflect the school's priorities in these areas. For example, 'Reading' is indicated as paramount and four of the seventeen outcomes refer to phonics whilst 'Speaking and Listening' are referred to as a single outcome. Perhaps not surprisingly, this selection of outcomes for reporting to parents appears to mirror Leigh's own teaching priorities. We might deduce that they reflect the consensus of the teaching staff and the Principal regarding the key features of literacy development and also those features which the school regards as helpful for parents to know about.

In talking about reporting to parents, Leigh identifies three problematic issues in this task: (i) the need to make distinctive reports for individual children; (ii) to provide parents with an accessible account of their child's progress, and (iii) appropriate parental responses.

Leigh was confronted by the need to make reports that distinguish one child from another and felt that the Student Outcome Statements might help her in this:

I've gone to District Office because I wanted to learn about Levels rather than just a Grade 1 or 2 focus. I've got a brother and sister in the same class and you just can't be sending home the same report on everything, even if you've got different objectives. I feel the parents don't want to see the same, I make sure that one child is working on their own level and another working on her level, so their getting two separate things at home. They may be working towards the same outcome,, but, because they're in different Phases, their objective in that Phase is different.

The distinctive achievements of the child become particularly significant when Leigh has to report on her ESL students. Talking about Tanya's progress, for example, Leigh raises a particular problem:

She's in Role Play, but it's not really true because she's ESL. I think you have to make that known for parents...If all the other children in the class were in Experimental and she's in Role Play, then I need to be able to explain why. I just need to record that for myself to explain it to parents, but with the school, they don't need to know that, they just need to know who's in what.

Leigh recognises that some of her ESL students can achieve things in their first language which are not accounted for in reporting. What they can achieve in English appears below the average for her class, but she feels the need to be able to explain the discrepancy to parents while her present formal reporting documentation does not allow this. This issue of making things clear for parents is a central concern for Leigh. Her experience with the First Steps Continua has made her regard the framework as an inaccessible basis for reporting:

I think some of the First Steps indicators could have been a little different. You need something to send home to parents if they're really interested and something to help the children as well...It would be good to have a parents' section. It is just the way it is worded...wordings could have been changed to make it more understandable.

Leigh therefore regards her 'Student Language Profile' (Sample 7) as far more understandable to parents than the indicators from the First Steps Continua. As we have seen, although many of the criteria are Leigh's, several of them are derived from the Outcome Statements. She offers an additional reason in support of these as a basis for reporting:

I probably prefer Outcome Statements for reporting to parents because it covers a broader area and goes across the learning areas

So, Leigh deliberately chooses statements in her reports to be as clear as possible to parents. However, when considering her reports of Tanya's progress in relation to her parents' understanding, she observes that:

Well they probably won't unless they learn English. So that's up to them, they're adults and it's up to them to go and ask an interpreter what it's all about.

Leigh feels that she has taken great care to facilitate Tanya's adaptation to an English-speaking school environment, such as translating words into Serbian on special cards and using Serbian words in the classroom, and that it is up to the

parents to seek the information they may need:

I mean they have got to learn to move as well. They haven't cooperated. I've actually done a lot of work and even though I believe they have appreciated what I've done, if I'm going to report to the parents in English I'm not going to report in any other way. Because they are in Australia, they need to get a report in English. If I was in another country then it would be up to me to go and interpret my child's work. If they don't wish to do that, then it's their prerogative.

In talking about one of her Aboriginal students, Leigh also refers to what she regards as the responsibilities of parents and limits of her own responsibilities to them:

I always send his reports home but never get them up for an interview. If they don't come up, then I can't explain. So, if they are not interested in coming when I request them to, then I can't concern myself with that.

Reporting to the Principal

In Language and literacy, the school requires Leigh to provide, once each semester, a summary of the proportion of her class who are in particular Phases of the First Steps Developmental Continua in Writing, Spelling, Reading, and Oral language. Each learning area is, at present, based upon different frameworks of objectives or outcomes whilst Maths and Social Studies are expressed in terms of selected strands from the Outcome Statements. The school is gradually adopting more strands from the Outcome Statements within each learning area as a basis for reporting to the Education department through the District Office.

Leigh describes her reporting procedures as follows:

They want certain information for accountability and for collating information, which is usually a fairly good basis for what you should be keeping as well in your own classroom, so I'm following that as well. But I also have my own like sight words lists or alphabet checklists...The school wants to know what Phases the children are in, so in the first six months they will ask, "How many children have you got in this phase, how many in this and how many in this." To be able to give that information, you have to keep your own records up to date and they'll ask for that information again at the end of the year...The children should have moved on, they should be progressing through the Phases, that's what you hope. A lot of them were in the first Phase, a big majority of the children, but now they've gone into the second, so they've moved along. But there are children who are still down there. Hopefully not, that's just where they're at in their learning development.

As we have seen, Leigh judges that her class is divided across Phases 1-3 on the Continua, with smaller groupings in Phase 1 and Phase 3. She also has a file for each child which includes her own records of their progress against the assessment procedures she herself adopts such as student check lists and the 'Student Language Profile' (see Samples 5 and 6).

On reporting to the school, Leigh feels that the First Steps Continua have been appropriate. However, she is wary of the wholesale shift to Outcome Statements for the school's records because she believes that the amount of work involved may lead to over reliance upon both exemplary samples in the Outcomes Statements documents and possibly hurried judgements of limited examples of the children's work:

The school collects First Steps information like key indicators. We've done reporting on Outcome Statements, but I'm not happy personally, I don't think the school is happy...We want to see if the children are in a Level for a subject and so you'll do some classifying using the indicators. Because we might classify on the basis of one lesson looking at the samples in the booklet, this doesn't mean that the child is really at that Level. We need more evidence than that.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

In general, we have seen that Leigh's assessment procedures in language and literacy are informed by her familiarity with First Steps which she also uses as a basis for some of her planning and teaching strategies. She reports the progress of her whole class to the school on the basis of the main Phases in the First Steps Continua. She sees the Outcome Statements as broad objectives in her teaching and ultimately for reporting purposes. We have also seen that she applies her own teaching priorities in using check sheets to assess tasks undertaken by her students. For her records, she balances criteria derived from her own teaching concerns with a deliberate selection from parts of the frameworks which she sees as relevant to her own classroom. These records are also used for reporting to parents, while the school report itself, though outcomes-based, reflects the kinds of teaching priorities which appear to be shared by Leigh with the rest of the school.

Leigh works with her ESL students very much as she would work with young children in the early stages of schooling and she assesses their achievements as she would any child. She is aware of their distinctiveness, however, and devotes care to meeting their specific learning needs. She is also aware of the need to identify such children in the assessment process. However, on reporting, Leigh does not believe that the school has a specific policy concerning the ESL students. In working with Eliza at the District Office more recently, and as a result of her own concern about identifying and assessing her ESL students, Leigh immediately saw the potential value of the ESL Framework of Stages. And when she shared the document with her Principal:

She said, "Oh this is great, where's it been all this time?" So, in our reporting to the school we will have First Steps and I know we're going towards Outcome Statements then we need to be mindful of the ESL and make sure that they cover Outcome Statements for ESL learners and just have a box saying we have got 15 ESL children in our school at present who are at this Level, this Level and this Level. Knowing they're ESL probably depends on the teacher.

Like many of her colleagues teaching in the mainstream in her school, Leigh recognises her need for, first, ways of recognising the specific language development of the ESL child and, second, teaching strategies that she can use in helping such children to progress in English, particularly in the learning of literacy.

Assessing and Teaching ESL Children

There is no doubt that Leigh is alert to the likely experience of young ESL children entering school:

If they haven't been to school it must be really daunting because they come in and they've got someone telling them, "Come and sit here," and they must think, "Why should I do that," especially the Aboriginal children who haven't had to do that before, so it's quite a new thing. Normally I take a lot of information from what they do initially, like drawing a picture of themselves and I give them little

exercises like same and different. A lot of Aboriginal children would recognise the difference but they don't know the word "different".

We have seen, however, that Leigh believes she would not necessarily teach the ESL child differently from her other students because she has discovered that they do not feel comfortable being treated any differently:

I involve them in the same things, particularly oral things, like you may be reading a big book, or you might be sharing news or it might be free play. But they're involved in similar things or the same things that the other children are. When it comes to the actual work they do, like with Alfred's, it has been the same, but there have been times when it's too hard. No other child's got this book, you know, like his little book. So it becomes too hard and it's just pointless. Then I will draw something out, something else for him to do. So I'll say, "Let's do some fun activities", or "You can do something a little bit special", you know, I'll get him to do that.

On the matter of assessment, now that she has been introduced to the ESL Framework of Stages by Eliza, the District Officer for language and literacy, Leigh asserts, *'I would actually go for this now and this is brilliant'*. She recently used the document to trace the characteristics which he believed Tanya revealed (See Sample 8).

I put Tanya on the First Steps Continuum and it wasn't relevant. It didn't work because she was in no Phases at all. But she was in her first language, coming from Serbia she has had formalised education in her first language. If I go to the ESL Stages and I find she's in Stage A which says she is literate in her first language, she knows some schooling in her first language, she could print, she could copy, she could draw, she could colour in, you know, so there's obviously some skills there...I think she's trying to talk to me in her own language, though she knows I can't understand but by my questioning and body language or my looks on my face she can actually interpret whether I'm understanding or not. And she is beginning to speak to me in English. She brought me a present and she said, "This is for you." Spent the whole weekend learning, "This is for you," like a thank you present.

Sample 8: Leigh's Judgements about Tanya using the ESL Framework of Stages

Learning Context

Stage A beginners may be learning in an intensive language centre, or may be participating in regular junior primary activities. In the latter context learners' will need ESL teaching from an ESL specialist who is able to work on a small group or individual basis within the classroom context alongside the teacher. Learners also benefit from appropriate assistance from an ESL-informed mainstream teacher.

GROWTH POINTS

Teachers have identified two growth points for Stage A Beginners

Growth point 1

In terms of language development learners at this stage:

- have some background in education and are familiar with the tools of the classroom ✓
- have limited English, expressing themselves in simple words and body language ✓
- have limited numeracy ✓

message ✓

- stay within safe patterns of language
- are developing their listening skills
- cannot negotiate meaning, i.e. communication breaks down because if they don't understand, or are not understood, they tend to take no further part ✓
- need and use the security of predictable language e.g. respond to a predictable question.
- have a message in mind when they write.

In terms of personal/cultural development they:

- have some experience of school environment and routine ✓
- may be shy and withdrawn ✓
- are likely to spend a lot of time watching and listening ✓
- may think they are understood when they are not

In terms of learning-how-to-learn skills they:

- are able to use their learning-how-to-learn skills in limited ways e.g. predicting, guessing from the context etc.

In terms of conceptual range they will be operating mostly in Sphere 1.

Growth point 2

In terms of language development learners at this stage:

- are becoming literate in English
- are introducing sentences with recognisable structure
- can hear, remember and use appropriate language in communication situations
- can negotiate meaning e.g. are likely to rephrase, ask for clarification, etc
- are becoming more competent academically
- are familiar with the routine of school and classroom and the environment of both ✓
-
- are developing metalinguistic awareness e.g. they are becoming aware of sentence structure and tenses, use of facial expressions and gestures, use of intonation, etc.
- are beginning to be able to generate language; they will take risks as well as use patterned language appropriately

In terms of personal/cultural development, they

- are developing social skills ✓
- are becoming more confident, more willing to take risks ✓
- are becoming emotionally more settled ✓

On being asked how she diagnosed whether or not a child was ESL before she had access to the ESL Framework of Stages, she replied with reference to one of her Aboriginal students:

I knew Alfred was ESL because of where he comes from, because of his quiet behaviour, because of his reliance on his brother and sister in the bigger school. You know, they sort of cling together. Yes, a lot of these little sort of traits. I can't say for sure because I've got no proof but I believe he speaks an Aboriginal language at home. He's more tribal than a lot of the children here that are town Aboriginal children and he's living out in one of the communities. He catches the bus to and from there. He's very tired and will fall asleep in class, so I'll just let him sleep because their homelife may mean he's up all night.

However, Leigh later referred to the ESL Framework in order to trace what she regarded as the typical characteristics of his language use (See Sample 9). Interestingly, despite the insights this appeared to provide for her, she believes she would need confirmatory evidence from other sources:

This is what I've seen through observations that he's at Stage AL. He shows all the indications of having another language. To really know, I'd have to ring home or I;d have to get the Aboriginal Education workers to go out there and try and find out.

Sample 9: Leigh's Judgements about Alfred using the ESL Framework of Stages

CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARNERS AT STAGE AL

In terms of language development Stage AL learners:

- are literate in their first language ✓
- are beginning learners of English ✓
- have minimal numeracy skills ✓
- have minimal background in education and are unfamiliar with the environment and culture of school and classroom ✓
- have limited print experience ✓
- may be going through a 'silent period' ✓
- tend to rely on body language to express themselves ✓
- may not be receptive to learning for an extensive period of time ✓

In terms of personal/ cultural development they:

- may be shy and withdrawn ✓
- may take a long time to work through feelings of culture shock ✓
- are likely to spend a lot of time watching and listening ✓
- may have limited social interaction skills with other children e.g. limited experience of play, may tend to resolve conflict physically
- may exhibit extremes of behaviour (e.g submissive to aggressive)
- may misinterpret body language

On the specific task of assessment, Leigh wants to be able to identify her ESL students' achievements appropriately in the future but suspects that it would need to be ESL specific:

I might have to do a different one for Alfred and somehow dovetail it so that I can tick it's Level 1 ESL or Level 2 ESL, so I've got to come up with a document that's going to show him on the continuum, whether I put First Steps or even have another space down here for a Stage just for him which would be ESL. That's something I've got to look into and I don't know how to do it yet. District Office will probably help us come up with something.

Leigh interprets the ESL Framework of Stages in a similar way to her approach to both First Steps Continua and the Outcome Statements. She does not see it only as a description of the characteristics of the language of the ESL child, but also as statements of **objectives** to which she could direct her teaching:

I think I'd have a different framework for assessment But I don't know, I haven't really gone into it enough. The ESL Framework of Stages is very relevant for their learning, you know, using simple greetings, I think ESL kids need to do that. They need to follow simple instructions, so I probably would keep those in for all the children.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

We have seen that, in much of her teaching, Leigh relies on First Steps for identifying students' needs, appropriate teaching strategies, plotting the children's development and for reporting in global terms to the school. We have also seen that she regards the Student Outcome Statements as a source of overall objectives which she sees as reasonably complementary to the more detailed goals within First Steps. She expresses the main influences upon her choice of assessment frameworks:

It's what the school needs and how you're going to report to the parents is what you need. With First Steps, I guess if you're going to focus in on one child for a specific task, then it can be very useful. But as a general classroom record thing, you just can't do it...Across the curriculum, I think, if they go across the curriculum that's the only way to go. The Outcome Statements are probably going to be a universal thing so you've got to learn it and you've got to get there. But what I'm doing is relating it to First Steps. First Steps is brilliant, it gives me the strategies. Outcome Statements doesn't give me any strategies. But it gives me things to work towards. Before I can put them on Level 2, I would have to really study the Outcome Statements and find out what indicators would put them there.

There is no doubt that familiarity with First Steps is the window through which Leigh will evaluate any framework she might work with in the future:

If I want to know more detail, then I go to First Steps, especially how to move the children on. You've got all the activities and the strategies to help the children move on. And now that I know the First Steps more thoroughly, it's all there and the Student Outcome Statements is something I'm learning. Because it's too broad, you've got to break it down and find out what they're really describing. It's just very broad and just everyone can interpret it however they like. I need First Steps because I can see that my children are progressing through the Phases but they are all Level 1 or, especially the ESL children, pre Level 1.

Therefore, school requirements and reporting to parents are not the only significant influences upon Leigh's preferences in terms of assessment frameworks. She needs to have a genuine sense that the children are progressing in their learning. In her concern for identifying the progress of her ESL students in language and literacy in particular, she sees limitations in applying the ESL Framework of Stages. Thinking of the parents of her students, she is as cautious about it as a basis for reporting, as she was with First Steps and the Outcome Statements:

They don't want to see two pages of this kind of thing. I've just taken what I think is important. So even if I didn't change what I already do, I'd have to compare the Outcome Statements and the ESL Stages. There might be something in ESL that's very appropriate for all the children or there might be ESL things that are already written down in the Outcome Statements. But I need to actually put in a box and change it a little bit and tick that he's an ESL child. Like I could have a little box there that says, "Level 1 in relation to First Steps," or "ESL Level such and such related to the ESL framework or whatever". He might have lots of ticks according to this framework but in the First Steps he wouldn't be there at all.

So, Leigh wants a framework that, while identifying the ESL child, is also compatible with the frameworks with which she is already familiar and which she is already required to use in her reporting. More recently she discovered the

ESL Scales and that they were specifically designed to harmonise with the Levels in Student Outcome Statements: *'It has similar outcome statements. It's really quite exciting'*.

Perhaps more significantly for her, Leigh expresses a hunger for information about the ESL child now that she is much more aware of their experiences and their specific needs:

I need to know a lot more strategies and things for these children...I'd like something a bit more friendly and even some strategies like First Steps has got but they're general strategies. It would be nice to have somewhere where you can go if you have a child that has a particular language that you would be able to find out about. I would have thought there would be something available about the different languages of these children.

She recalled how First Steps had informed her about the patterns of language development of the English-speaking child. On the basis of this experience, her ideal framework for her work with ESL students would have the following important characteristics:

I want a framework that gives me an understanding of what an ESL child is. I mean, just knowing that you can't speak a language, being someone in another country, that you just don't understand anything. Just identifying them, finding out some of their character traits of what I could look for. And I'd like strategies to help me know what I can do. And goals for you own planning. And also information of how I can get help or where I can get help.

And, crucially for Leigh, she wants to be able to see development and map genuine progress which she believes she can not do with the frameworks with which she is most familiar and which she is currently required to use:

I want it to give me a framework to work on in planning terms and even just being aware. If I've got Aboriginal children in my class from now on that are really struggling, I probably can go to it (The ESL Framework of Stages) and look at the characteristics of a learner at a certain stage and say, "Gosh, he's doing all these things." It gives me a clearer picture of them. I would like to be able to use this to trace their progress on, like a scale that they can actually be on a continuum. So, instead of these children being off the continuum they might well be on Level 1 on the Outcome Statements but the ESL children might be on Level 1 on the ESL. So, they're still placed. They're not displaced.

So, Leigh is concerned about what she sees as a serious limitation of the Outcome Statements when assessing the ESL child. As an alternative, perhaps not surprisingly, Leigh uses First Steps as her criterion for the thoroughness that she would prefer in a more inclusive assessment procedure:

I see it in line with First Steps. I want something different from Outcome Statements because it's too broad, but something that actually puts children in phases where you can see them progressing and moving though it might be slow or it might be quick. And I'd see the same things with any ESL child and where you can actually be excited to see them moving on, you know, and gaining more grasp of the language and the culture, and moving more in the new environment in which they are.



Nicole at Weaver Primary School

Michael P. Breen

The School Context

Refer to the previous Case Study 'Leigh at Weaver'.

The Classroom Context

Nicole shares the same school context as Leigh and her classroom is in the same building as Leigh's. There are no doors to her room and it is easy to hear the teacher in the classroom nearest to her. The room is quite long and narrow with Nicole's desk, board and reading corner at one end with windows at the other. The children sit at pairs of desks quite close together. The walls are covered with print and pictures including the alphabet and numbers and Nicole's lists of 'sight words' on which she is currently focusing. Much of the work is done by the children alone or in pairs or in collaboration with Nicole.

Nicole teaches Year 2. It is her second year of teaching and she was surprised to find herself in Far Harbour as she had grown up in the wheatbelt east of Perth, knew it well, and had hoped to be posted to one of the rural schools there. She has 31 children on roll, 28 of whom are of Aboriginal descent. Most of these children live in and around Far Harbour itself and come from families who largely share Aboriginal English as their dialect. However, Nicole has three students in her class who are bussed to the school from an Aboriginal community inland from Far Harbour and whose first language is Nyangumarta. Nicole works closely with an Educational Support teacher who focuses upon the children at risk in learning throughout the school and she also benefits from the support of an Aboriginal Education Worker. As with Leigh and most of the teachers in the school, Nicole's roll of students will change by about a third as the year unfolds and several of her students will be transient or regularly absent.

A typical day in Nicole's classroom will begin with Newstelling with the students sitting on the floor in the corner around a self-standing board where Nicole most often introduces new aspects of work or presents stories or other input on which the children's own desk work will be based. Newstelling involves three or four children presenting their news and being asked questions about it by the other children. The newsgiver is given a reward sticker and so also the children who ask good questions. Nicole has a stickers and points system for rewarding appropriate behaviour and student achievements.

Nicole may then read a story, often about activities which may be familiar to the children such as desert tucker or visiting the shops. This will lead to focused desk work by the children related to an aspect of the story and aimed particularly at developing their literacy. Much of Nicole's language work is based upon First Steps. Children devote much of their reading and writing to becoming familiar with letters and words, but Nicole will also focus upon the structure of recounts - beginnings, middles, and ends - or such notions as 'setting' or locality in narratives for instance. The children's output in writing, which may sometimes be undertaken in pairs, will be evaluated by the whole class and Nicole will discuss with them the appropriate rewards both for the work and the students' behaviour during it.

Much of the work is undertaken in three different groups. In Maths, for example,

the three groups spend fifteen minutes in turn with Nicole and her two assistants. Nicole points out that there is a very wide range of ability in the class and she has to group them in order to provide appropriate guidance in the work of each group. She identifies the three groups as, first, those students who are achieving well for their year, then those who are average in their attainments, and a low achieving group who include children who are at learning risk and need the guidance of the Education Support teacher. Nicole's ESL children are in this group. Nicole describes the children in the group:

Lots of them haven't had the experiences that you expect children to have had by the time they get to school. So I've tried to set up an environment where it is like pre-school, where they've got a water play table and a sand tray and lots of things that'll develop their manipulative skills and other skills. How can I expect the children who haven't been exposed to books to sit down and read. They just don't know.

She indicates some of her criteria for grouping the students when she refers to those who appear to be underachieving:

Their background would have a fairly big influence. I think language comes into it partially, but I think it goes a lot deeper than that, it goes into their previous schooling experiences. They might have had different schools early on and they just haven't built up the stability in the same environment. Cultural differences would probably be the biggest thing, even for me as a teacher coming here, the difference in their culture to me, you know, that's a pretty bit hurdle to have to jump. The children from X (a distant Aboriginal community) don't go to pre-school, so they haven't been socialised.

Asked if she used any of the assessment frameworks to form the groupings, she said:

I do use the Continua, but I think it goes a lot deeper than just using First Steps and doing what works best. I tend to look a little beyond that and use the First Steps pre-primary books because they've got lots of ideas that are good for language experience activities. It's also intuition. You can't just rely on a checklist because obviously the checklists aren't suitable for every child. But I use the strategies of First Steps to teach the content of understandings from all my other subjects. You've got continuity from your language in the morning to your other subjects.

Observing the range of ability in the class, she describes their reading achievements:

I've got children who try to have a go at reading but are not really effective readers in the sense that they do not identify sight words and put things into meanings and things like that, all the way to children who can work independently and can read fantastic books and they can write fantastically. First Steps enables me to use strategies that will cater for all the needs of the children in my class.

Nicole's overall approach to learning tasks is clearly influenced by First Steps the potential of which she discovered whilst on her final teaching practice at university with a First Steps focus teacher who had been provided with professional development in the early years of the program. Nicole believed that she learned more about teaching Year 2 children from her than she had learned at university.

Her reading activities include providing the children with their own small content books with simple vocabulary and from which she can deduce if the children may be pointing to words, looking at the illustrations, and such like. She builds

activities around these books such as putting frogs in a pond. She will have a focus big book directly related to a particular theme or concept which provides the pivot for all her work with the class. This focus will form the basis of the children's writing where letters and their sounds, parts of words, selected sight words, and model sentences and punctuation will all derive from the story in the book.

Nicole's use of a 'concept based learning program' where she takes a theme such as Shopping or Transport and integrates it into all the learning areas is central to her teaching. An overall priority for Nicole is to provide a program 'whereby social contexts or experiences are developed'. This concern with the social has its roots in Nicole's own specialisation and strong interest in Social Studies at university. She chooses Shopping, for example, because:

It relates to the children's needs and experiences, encourages direct personal involvement, allows the children to do tasks that arise out of a real social context, and provides opportunities for the children to see, hear, and use the types of spoken and written language that are appropriate for the social situation.

Nicole may devote a good part of a term or a whole term to a single integrating concept or theme. Her on-going planning for this theme-based approach is illustrated by extracts from her plans in Sample 1 and she specifically relates literacy and oracy activities to her own objectives in the other learning areas (see right hand column).

Sample 1 : Concept Based Learning

Concept Based Learning			
Date	Theme: What is shopping?		
Activity	Resources	Monitoring	L/ Area
<p>Reinforce 'What is shopping?' Chn write on tchr made u/s what they think shopping is. Oral sharing. O</p>	<p>Paper worksheet</p>	<p>Identifies shops as a significant place. Identifies activities that take place in specific areas within the shop</p>	<p>SSE 1.8 People and Places Identifies places that are important to self and others B/st Prediction</p>
<p>B/st names of shops i.e bakery, Things..... write onto card Do structured overviews to sort into clothes, variety, speciality</p>	<p>Cardboard Cards</p>	<p>Categorise 4 different shops into 4 groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food • clothes • speciality • variety 	<p>B/st Categ</p>
<p>Chn draw a map of SH Shop centre Share maps Show map of Shop. centre, discuss differences</p>	<p>Paper</p>	<p>Identifies by drawing the main shops within S.H. shopping centre.</p>	<p>SSE 1.7 Features of places Identifies natural and built features of places using direct observation SSE 1.2 Communication prepares info for and audience</p>

Concept Based Learning			
Date	Theme: Healthy/Unhealthy Foods		
Activity	Resources	Monitoring	L/Area
<p>Discuss Food Symbols/Logos</p> <p>Identify those which are healthy/unhealthy. Give into healthy/unhealthy chart.</p> <p>Design a healthy food logo.</p> <p>Discuss eye catching logos</p> <p>Develop a variety of patterns/designs</p> <p>Colour, cut-design</p> <p>Talk about the attractiveness of the design</p>	<p>Food catalogue with logos</p> <p>Record materials for logo</p>	<p>identifies healthy food logos</p> <p>Discusses what makes logos appealing. Experiments to design a logo</p> <p>Makes a logo</p> <p>talk about the appeal of the logo</p>	<p>H&PE</p> <p>2.11</p> <p>People & Food</p> <p>T&E</p> <p>Investigating</p> <p>1.1 Investigates the form, and identifies the uses of everyday products</p> <p>designing</p> <p>1.2</p> <p>Producing</p> <p>1.3</p> <p>Evaluating 1.4</p>
<p>COOKING - LUNCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini - pizza • Fritzy kebabs p20 Snack n Pack • Banana smoothie p22 " <p>Have recipes written, then identify the parts of the recipe.</p>	<p>Ingredients</p> <p>Parent helpers</p> <p>Note to parents/canteen</p>	<p>Participates in making healthy foods. Chooses to eat healthy foods</p>	<p>H&PE</p> <p>1.11</p> <p>People & Food</p>
<p>Discuss types of foods cooked for lunch- healthy/unhealthy.</p> <p>Consider the ease to make lunch</p> <p>Set a goal to include new food in their diet.</p> <p>Use PLAN</p>	<p>PLAN chart.</p> <p>Worksheets</p>	<p>Sets a goal to include healthy food in diet</p>	<p>H&PE</p> <p>2.11</p> <p>People & Food</p>

Focusing on the language within a theme and on the texts carrying the theme, Nicole sets the children specific literacy tasks, as in phonics for example:

I picked those sounds because they're coming from the text and they've seen them, they're hearing them in the text that's being read. It may be a work sheet based on the them but it may also be something I pull out of my phonics file to supplement it.

Her typical approach to literacy focused work would be:

The first step would be just what the actual sound or blend is, whatever we're up to, so it might say 'ai' and there will be heaps of 'ai' words on a sheet and they'll have a go. Ok, so we can't read the words straight away, what word attack strategies can we use? Say, all right, sounding out, just having a go, looking at the end letters and then they actually trace over the 'a' sound and then complete the word. And they say it and they might then have a go at the bottom of the worksheet which might ask them to read it or draw it or maybe finish a sentence or it could be illustrate a sentence. And then there's usually a 'yes' or 'no' activity.

In addition to focused writing of letters or words, Nicole expects the children to undertake writing daily in a relatively open ended way:

Before I actually focus on things, I say to them, 'OK, what sort of things can we write about? I mean all the sorts of things that we need to be able to write', they may write a shopping list, or the alphabet, they can write numbers, they can copy down the date, whatever. I got it into their heads that they know millions of things they could write and then I modelled to them how to write different sorts of things. And now they know that as soon as they come in from recess they've got 15 minutes and they've got their books out, there's no talking, there's nobody out of their seats for 15 minutes, and they write whatever they like. It's good because they're starting write their letters and even Susie (one of the ESL children) she'll write the letters and I may not understand what it is, but she's written just a mass of letters and solidly for 15 minutes. She's having a go and I can say to her, 'OK, that's great, now come and read it to me.' So she'll read it to me and I can get what it is she's saying to me and then I'll write back to her on what she's written.

Sample 2 is an illustration of Susie's free writing and Nicole's response to her.

Sample 2: An example of Free Writing

h @h @f dyc stak al
 p @h @f dyc stak al
 k @h @f dyc stak al
 r @w h d f a t i o p d h a p p h e
 Y x h d a p o f t k o p d h a p p h e
 K p h i a c e r d h a p p h e
 K C h i a c e r d h a p p h e
 p o h p h p h d i o p d h a p p h e
 h d n c k h k c h e h e h e h e
 Y @ h a t c h a t h e h e h e h e h e
 h @h @f dyc stak al
 h @h @f dyc stak al
 F @h @f dyc stak al
 h @h @f dyc stak al
 h @h @f dyc stak al

now! Your writing is
 fantastic I can see you
 have learnt the letter
 'a'

Nicole sees such relatively unstructured work as complementing the focused letter and word and sentence writing:

It allows them to take the opportunity to have ownership of their writing, it's their choice, something they can learn for themselves, especially with the children I've got where it has to be such a structured program. It's also risk taking. It pressures none of my

children to be perfect and I don't expect them to know everything at the start. Risk taking and developing independent work skills are a main focus for me.

Nicole complements the written work with big book reading as a group, the children's own work on little 'content books' and such activities as finding or using the 'sight words' which she sees as occurring frequently in the texts she uses. Oral work emerges out of these activities in addition to specific oral tasks such as Newstelling or barrier games:

We do lots of shared book reading and last time I was taking Miriam (another ESL child) and the lower achievers in the class and working with them. Now our Ed Support teacher is taking the lower achievers and she's working with them in small groups in such things as shared book so that they become familiar with the pre-reading, during reading, and after reading activities. They may be pointing to words, counting words, finding letters in words and so on.

Nicole's ESL students work with the Education Support teacher usually for an hour each day for three days a week and for two hours on the other two days. She and Nicole collaboratively plan once each week and they base their planning on the children's progress on the Continua derived from First Steps by Nicole.

As the year has progressed, Nicole generally expects ESL students to undertake different kinds of activities from those she promotes with higher or average achieving groups.

I do different sorts of activities only because their code is different from the rest of the children. They're the lower achievers in the class, so their programs are very different. Some of them are still struggling with initial sounds and they're way behind. They're starting at their initial sounds whereas the majority are blending and at a more complex level of working than that. And a lot of the activities I'm doing with the lower children are the things I've done much earlier in the year. Because of their irregular attendance there's not the continuity and they're not going to remember.

On the other hand, Nicole has noticed a change in the ESL students in her class:

At the beginning of the year they used to speak all the time in their own language and once they understood that I didn't understand what they were saying to me, they've come round. I've got mine on board now, I can see there's been just so much of an improvement this year...And they don't use their first language. They don't have to. They've got the confidence to come up to me and talk to me and have a good conversation in English.

Nicole is conscious of her lack of knowledge and appropriate teaching strategies when approaching the specific needs of her ESL children:

When I was at Uni, all you had was about ten hours of training in Aboriginal Education. And I'm teaching, you know, a high population Aboriginal primary school and that's not the grounding that I needed. I've learned more since being here...It's not as if people in most schools in Western Australia aren't going to be exposed to ESL children, even if it's only one child in their class.

The school allocates an hour each week to the teaching of Nyangumarta to all children in Years 3-7. In the present year, occasional lessons in the language have also been provided to the younger children. Nicole noticed several interesting developments emerging even from this brief exposure:

Our Aboriginal Language specialist here has been coming in and giving the lessons with us for about four visits this term. Because the same things in reading and writing are done in those lessons as we do, there's continuity. But Richard (one of the ESL children) at the beginning of the year just blew his top. He just wouldn't listen and I think he saw it as a shame thing because we knew he could speak in that language, yet he wasn't willing to do it yet. But last week when he came in, he was the first to put his hand up and respond and he was just amazing. He wanted to do it and I think he recognises now that we're not worried that he can speak in another language and that it's his first language.

Nicole also made significant deductions for herself from the experience:

We want to learn it too so we can be a part of his world and understand. And I think that's a really important thing with those children, respecting their first language. And when they know that you're going to respect it but you want to help them to be able to speak in our first language, they just take that on. They should have more in their first language in Years 1 and 2. For me being their teacher I should be able to speak it too and I need to have an understanding and that would come from our whole class being exposed to it. I try to get into my teaching a few things and that broke down a few barriers as well. If these children in our class had more exposure in these sort of lessons, I think that would have a huge effect. And they can make a connection between their vocabulary and English. With the Aboriginal Language Specialist here they have a perfect sort of modelling of the words in both languages.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

In this, her second year of teaching, Nicole is consolidating her familiarity with First Steps:

I was lucky when I was on my final teaching practice because I had a First Steps focus teacher as my classroom teacher and I was exposed to amazing stuff in her classroom. I did a lot of work outside my teaching practice time and she actually enabled me to go to First Steps professional development with the staff from the school. I had seen First Steps working and I wanted to know how to use it.

We have seen that Nicole uses the First Steps Continua to guide her in the division of the class into different achievement groups but in addition to her own judgements about the previous educational experiences and cultural differences among her students. She relies on the First Steps Continua in other ways also:

I can use the indicators to identify where they are at and from that I will plan my program or intervention planning, do extensions to programs and then I'd use that again as my assessment points. I have the indicators from First Steps as my indices for a term or for two weeks...I wouldn't say that I put a great emphasis upon Student Outcome Statements yet in language, yes in Maths, but then I'd use the SOS to link to my First Steps ideas...I'm dabbling still with SOS.

Sample 3 is part of Nicole's language program for a particular period of time. She will use several of these during the year. Her teaching emphases are selected from indicators in First Steps. In assessing language and literacy development in her students, Nicole relies upon the First Steps Continua but in a selective way:

I don't sit down every night and get out my First Steps, but I think if you become familiar with what the indicators are, what your major

teaching emphases have been for that term or for however long your language program has gone for, it's on-going. I suppose I sit down weekly and reflect and think, "OK, what have we done this week?" And using the children's work samples I like to conference with the children a lot to find out how they are feeling about things, and so probably weekly I would actually reflect on whether or not Miriam or Richard (two of the ESL children) have achieved a particular emphasis for the week.

Sample 3: Nicole's Language Program

<p>Reading</p> <p>TEACHING EMPHASIS</p> <p>Matches some spoken words with written words when reading a book or environment/af print.</p> <p>SKILLS/ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Brainstorm. Before and After Prediction. Picture books. Read and point. Word Search. Story map. Sentence matching. Character Paraphs.</p>	<p>Spelling</p> <p>TEACHING EMPHASIS</p> <p>Relies on sounds which are most obvious to hear.</p> <p>SKILLS/ACTIVITIES</p> <p>LCWC. Unjumbled words. Word Pyramids. Word shapes. Magazine Words. Spelling games. Vowels. Word Searches.</p>	<p>Oral Language</p> <p>TEACHING EMPHASIS</p> <p>Shows an interest in explanations of how and why.</p> <p>SKILLS/ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Newtelling. Free and directed play in the classroom shop. Role-plays. Class discussions. Barrier games. Oral stories. Social Studies</p>	<p>Writing</p> <p>TEACHING EMPHASIS</p> <p>Reads back what has been written to clarify meaning. Attempts familiar forms of writing.</p> <p>SKILLS/ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Procedures. Reports. Written notes. Reflections. Descriptions. Sentence construction.</p>
<p>Math</p> <p>TEACHING EMPHASIS</p> <p>Teaches students how to use money for a variety of purposes.</p> <p>SKILLS/ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Free and directed activities with money which encourage handling, sorting, matching, shopping, arranging, recognising and counting. Sharing amounts of money. Playing shopping games requiring change. Adding 2 or more prices together. Count money using coins.</p>	<p>Science</p> <p>TEACHING EMPHASIS</p> <p>Use five senses to examine and describe a variety of solid objects and substances. Identify parts of the body used for each sense. Value of various senses combined or in isolation, to identify objects or substances.</p> <p>SKILLS/ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Identify objects. Social skills. Mystery sounds. Sorting objects. Checklists. Learning Journey.</p>	<p>TEACHING EMPHASIS</p> <p>Commerices contain a number of facilities for the provision of goods and services.</p> <p>SKILLS/ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Brainstorm and Categorise. Structured Overview. Reading maps. Drawing maps. Making models. Graphing. Making and reading tables. Working cooperatively to make a classroom shop.</p>	<p>Health</p> <p>TEACHING EMPHASIS</p> <p>Recognising and developing food choices and practices.</p> <p>SKILLS/ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Identify healthy and unhealthy foods. Classify foods. Discuss packaging of food. Healthy food pyramid. Shopping Lists. Class Discussion.</p>

From her on going assessments, Nicole judges that most of her students are in the Early Reading and Early Writing Phases of First Steps and she feels they are in Beginning and Early Language and in their oral language development. She also believes that the majority of the students are pre-Level 1 or approaching Level 1 in the Student Outcome Statements. However, she also deduces that the three ESL students in her class are a Phase behind the higher and average achieving children in all aspects of their development in English:

The factor that has influenced this is that they haven't done pre-school and, for instance, Miriam was a repeat Year 1 and if I could I'd get her to repeat Year 2 I would because she simply does not have the skills. And what I'm afraid of is that she's going to be in year 3 next year and most of the children are going to be beyond the Early Writing Phase and she's still in Role Play.

Relatively recently, Nicole undertook professional development locally with Eliza, the School Development Officer for the District, in order to learn about the Student Outcome Statements:

With the Levels of SOS you can link them with the Phases of First Steps but also make links across curriculum areas. You can make links between, say, spelling and the outcomes that focus on spelling in the SOS. This is probably making more work for yourself, but at

least you are building up an awareness of the new initiatives that are coming and I think it is important anyway...I think SOS are brilliant for me because they go across the curriculum which is how I like to work. I taught myself Outcome Statements basically. I prefer them because you can develop a more appropriate program especially with children who have such a diverse experience. You can plan your programme in a variety of levels or to a variety of outcomes. When you've got big class sizes and such differences in literacy levels you're sort of limited in what you can do. Whereas with Outcomes you can work to a broad outcome but with a variety of pointers that you can use as objectives for your lesson.

So, Nicole uses the Student Outcome Statements as a broad framework of outcomes across learning areas from which she selects objectives in her own *concept based* approach. In language and literacy work, she uses First Steps in three ways: as a source of 'teaching emphases' in her language program which complements her overall thematic work; as a resource of teaching strategies which she generalises across learning areas; and as her main assessment criteria from which she selects indicators that describe the tasks that she has focused upon at particular periods of time.

We can now look more closely at Nicole's assessment procedures by considering: (i) how she assesses specific tasks undertaken by the individual child; (ii) the kinds of records she keeps for herself or in cooperation with the Education Support teacher; (iii) how she reports to parents and (iv) how she reports to the school.

Assessment and Feedback on Individual Tasks

Nicole describes, by way of illustration, how she approaches the work of Susie, aged seven, who is one of her Nyangumarta speaking children. Nicole and the Education Support teacher agreed that Susie is still at the stage of discovering initial sound-letter correspondences. In Sample 4, Susie has copied words and sentences. Nicole comments on Susie's work in the following way:

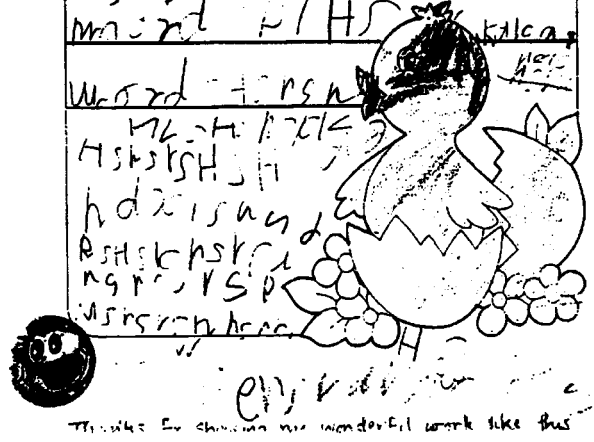
Basically here she's had a go. She would have done all this before I went to her. She knows that print conveys a message, she knows left to right and to go down the page. But she doesn't have that initial sound understanding and she doesn't yet have a sight word vocabulary so she's not totally aware of high frequency words and she doesn't demonstrate her use of them because she doesn't have that vocabulary built up. But, having said that, there's lots and lots of things she's done. She'll write frantically like she has in this particular activity. And she's proud as Punch about that and she'll say, 'Look, this is what I've said,' and she knows it has got meaning for her so she'll read it back to me. And she hasn't had any teacher assistance here.

The Sample indicates the kind of feedback Nicole gives to each child on tasks which she assesses. Nicole keeps a work sample folder for every child and, on each task, she will have written a comment related to the objective for the lesson or the specific piece of work. She can refer to earlier pieces of work in Susie's folder and this enables Nicole to go back even further to the beginning of the year and see the contrast between Susie's current work and her earliest writing, as in Sample 5.

Sample 4: A Recent Example of Susie's Writing

Journal 7-11-79

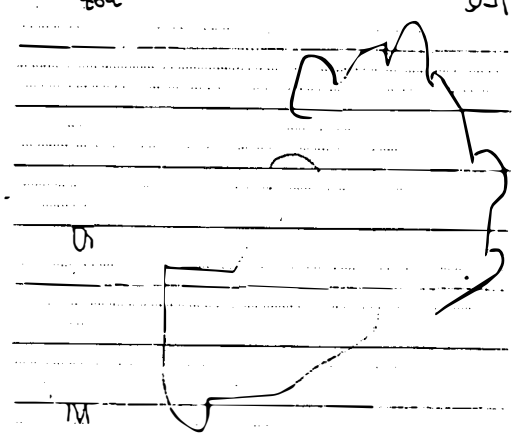
inlayode wwiththe9di
9ollr year witr hpe b
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word = r w b h a n a e
ms - F p / H s k l e a
word = r s n
H s k s H s H
h d z i s a n d
R s t s k h s k r
n g r o r s p
W s i s r o n h e e
H



enly k d i s i o n
Thanks for showing me wonderful work like this

Sample 5: An Earlier Example of Susie's Writing

600 K 20/2/96 921




h

M

D M d t l 2006

6 W h



Nicole, in talking about Susie and students like her, is keen to encourage them to write as much as possible, not least because she can obtain relatively spontaneous examples of their work:




I really believe that the only way children like Susie are going to be able to write is having time to write for themselves, just choose anything they want to write about and know that they can write a list and know how it is set out. But mainly for them to go and just independently write things down, not to be told. Last term I'd say, "OK, you're going shopping and you need to write. Find ten orange things and write them in a list for the shop". But this was still structured by me. The point of First Steps is that they do it spontaneously.

Nicole's overall approach to assessment is on-going:

Whatever activity they have done, I've either assessed it by looking at them over their shoulder if you like or else I've collected a work sample and I can tell from that. And I can tick in my checklist.

Nicole usually relies on the 'monitoring' column in her *concept based learning* framework as her checklist (see Sample 1). However, she tries to involve her students as much as possible in the assessment process and will occasionally use the kind of checklist illustrated in Sample 6 when working with the children on their reading.

Sample 6: The Checklist of Agreed Achievements and a Goal

Name _____	✓ always
Date _____	• sometimes
<u>When Reading the book I</u>	
had a go at hard words	<input type="checkbox"/>
kept reading on	<input type="checkbox"/>
guess what a word might be	<input type="checkbox"/>
look at the pictures	<input type="checkbox"/>
sound out words	<input type="checkbox"/>
think of words to fill in gaps	<input type="checkbox"/>
read each word on the page	<input type="checkbox"/>
re-read a sentence	<input type="checkbox"/>
point to words	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 stars  _____	
 _____	
1 wish  _____	

It is like a reading conference because they read to me and I look out for these things while they are reading. What I write next to the first star will be something I've chosen as an improvement in their work and I explain it to them. Next to the second star, the student chooses something which they have done well in and I write that down. The one wish is a negotiated goal which we agree on for the future. We

write it like a goal, their goal for reading. If I had a smaller class I'd try to do it every fortnight with a new book just so they keep monitoring themselves and so that I had a good handle on where they were at.

Nicole would like to develop this joint assessment approach and she is gradually creating tasks based upon First Steps which involve the children in reflecting on their own achievements, as in Sample 7:

This is based on First Steps and it relates to descriptions. The indicators come from the Oral Language Continuum. They had to bring an object from home and needed to work out ways to describe it to the rest of the class. I haven't used them a lot this term as I've tried to focus a little bit more on Newstelling. And this will go into my profile of each child. It's totally First Steps and I'm going to get them to assess themselves according to things they can do when they're speaking English.

Sample 7: A Task Requiring Student Reflection on Outcomes

ORAL LANGUAGE

In our classroom oral language plays a very important role in the sharing, learning and reflecting processes. The children are required to participate in speaking and listening activities regularly, both formally and informally.

MYSTERY OBJECT

In this activity the children brought in a Mystery Object from home. They were required to give clues to the class about what it was, and the class could ask questions about the Mystery Object to discover its identity.

- can:
- describe an object using attributes
 - colour
 - size
 - shape
 - function
 - links information to provide a simple but logical description
 - talks about personal experiences
 - uses varied and specific vocabulary
 - uses simple sentences with little variation
 - responds appropriately to questions, providing adequate elaboration
 - responds to an audience and situation by using appropriate
 - volume
 - tone
 - eye contact

MY REFLECTION ON SPEAKING AND LISTENING

THINGS I KNOW AND CAN DO	not yet	more than	always
• I know that I should take turns when I'm talking with other people.			
• I know how to get people to listen to me when I say something.			
• I love listening to stories and joining in with the parts I know. I know when people have left parts out of a story and I can tell them what they should have said.			
• I love to look at books and I can tell myself stories from books when I look at the pictures.			
• I love to say rhymes and sing songs.			
• I like to draw and write.			
• I can guess what might happen if...			
• I like to ask lots of questions.			
• I listen carefully to instructions.			

Using the Frameworks

We have seen that Nicole bases many of her teaching strategies across learning areas upon First Steps and that she uses the indicators in the First Steps Continua in a selective way in order to deduce objectives for lessons and tasks in language and literacy work. We have also seen that Nicole builds much of her work on a *concept based learning* approach which seeks to integrate the learning

Nicole may rely on assessing a child's work directly, but she also builds up a picture of each child's progress on a day to day basis. In describing this process, and thinking of Susie, she raises an issue about having to do one-shot reports at a specific time:

They say that they must show these indicators three times, but when I sit down to do my First Steps Continuum, you know the children, you have them every day in your classroom, you know where they're at. And when it comes time for me to sit down and write my numbers of children for admin for our school data collection or reporting, you think, "OK, I've ticked it, but are they really doing it now? Are they really doing all these things?" I mean I can tick these today on today's date and I can say, "Yes, she is doing all of these things because I've seen it regularly over the last ten weeks. Some a couple of weeks down the track, there might be things that aren't on here that she is doing and she's doing it continuously. I've looked, say, at a couple of assignments. I've also watched her what she's done in class and I know she can do it. I may not see it in the one piece of evidence in front of me, but I know she's done it. And so you make an account about every three or four weeks and you know you're pretty confident that it's true.

For her own records, Nicole also relies on collected samples of the children's work in individual work sample folders. She also keeps other kinds of records: 'I also keep a lot of written notes which are anecdotal when I get time to'. She refers to an example (Sample 9) which she made in relation to Susie's oral language development and she comments upon it in the following way:

Susie at the beginning of the year was a very shy and withdrawn student who just didn't really know how to cope in a classroom situation. She didn't have any confidence and was shamed easily. I'd only have to raise my voice and she'd burst into hysterics and sit there crying and she wouldn't hardly say a word to me, to any of her peers, unless it was with Miriam (another Nyangumarta speaker). They'd lived together in their community so that was it.

Sample 9: Anecdotal Notes on Susie's Progress

ANECDOTAL NOTES

NAME: _____

SCHOOL: _____

YEAR: Two TERM: 4

Wendy got up and told news today in front of the entire class. She used eye contact & expressions. She clearly expressed what she did - Nikita, Charlene and herself were playing school at 12. While they had lots of fun! She laughed when describing something funny about what Nikita did.

It was so rewarding and enjoyable to have her share such news!!

When she comes into class in the mornings she gets books and 'reads' them. Enjoys role-play of 'me' - sitting at the whiteboard and pointing to words. Reading looks to her doll/boy!

With children such as Susie who are seen to be at educational risk Nicole will focus on the minor indicators in First Steps and build up a profile of the child's achievements until the main indicator is clearly achieved. However, Susie is also one of Nicole's 'target children' in an Early Literacy Project and she and the Education Support teacher set up a specific teaching plan for Susie (see Sample 10). Nicole regards such a plan as a guide for herself and the Education Support teacher for a term's work and as a much more focused framework than relying on First Steps Continua. A major motive for the plan is their feeling that Susie is still hard to locate against the key indicators of First Steps.

Sample 10: A Plan for One of Nicole's 'Target Students'

Individualised Education Plan

Term 4
1996

Name:

Teacher:

Grade: 2

Long Term Goals (What the child will be able to achieve in 4/5 years time):

1. Dev. conf. abt. that she has confidence to have to go at reading & writing for different purposes.

2. Deep understandings of base concepts across all strands.

3. Deep awareness of how to care for eyes, ears.

Short Term Goals (What the child will be able to achieve by the end of the term):

Subject	Goal
Language	
Reading	* Deep knowledge of all single sounds & build a small bank of sight words.
Writing	* Use knowledge of sounds & sight words in own writing.
Spelling	* Learn letter names & initial sounds.
Oral Language	* Build on deepening confidence when speaking to others.
Mathematics	
Number	* Recognise & use nos 1 - 10.
Measurement	* Deep understanding of concept of area.
Space	* Shape recognition.
Working Mathematically	N/A.
Physical and Emotional Health	
Coordination	* Continue deep - esp. in printing (form letters correctly using big mat).
Social/emotional	* Continue to deep interaction skills.
Other	
Health	* Care for any cuticles.

Nicole describes the plan in the following way:

This is directed at what she is doing and what strategies we are actually using in the classroom for her. You need a big focus like this for her, whereas the Continuum is an account of where she's getting generally. Although it's pretty detailed, it's still an account of

achievement and not what we need to focus on with her from day to day.

So, for specific 'target children' like Susie, Nicole and her support teacher feel the need for an explicit planning document. Also, as a follow up to the plan, Nicole and the support teacher write up a Profile of Susie's progress over the term for their own records (Sample 11).

Sample 11: A Profile of Susie's Achievements in a Term

Student Profiles	
Term Four 1996	
Name: _____	Address: _____
I.O.B.: _____	Grade: Four
Ph: _____	Teacher: teacher
Educational Background: _____	
Documentation Available:	
MSB plan	
First Steps Plotting ✓	
Previous year level reports ✓	
Previous profile ✓	
Year One Survey ✓	
Basic Skills <i>Recognises most colours, some diff. with shape recognition hygiene skills need help - carrying for items, illnesses. writes first name.</i>	
Language Reading <i>Comprehends literally when reading basic text, basic word features, recognises of few familiar letters in context but needs further help.</i> Writing <i>Writes strings of known letters, symbols & assigns meaning. No one-one correspondence.</i> Spelling <i>Recognises some letters/sounds (a, k, s, m). Uses in writing but out of context.</i> Oral Language <i>Displaying more confidence when speaking to others. Gives more detail. Sometimes applicable to text.</i>	Mathematics Number <i>Recognises no, 1-5. Not able to carry out operations. Able to sort, classify objects. Counting still deeping.</i> Measurement <i>Lacks understanding of measurement concepts.</i> Space <i>As above.</i> Problem Solving <i>Not an independent worker.</i>
Social Behaviour <i>Interaction with others: Interact well with small, familiar groups or singly. Others however not with other term.</i> Attention to tasks: <i>Has difficulties in this area as easily distracted from tasks.</i>	Coordination Fine motor: <i>very good.</i> Gross motor: <i>As above.</i>

Reporting to Parents

Once a term, Nicole sends the children's work sample folders home. In it, she completes a learning area overview sheet or, if she has used a theme, she includes a checklist of the theme's 'monitoring' statements (see Sample 1). Like Leigh, Nicole reports to parents each semester using the school's report sheet (see Sample 8 in the case study of Leigh). Nicole finds the sheet limiting and she is keen to move towards providing more structured portfolios of students' work in order to show these to parents:

In the last few years the Education Department has been looking at reporting to parents; what is most effective or what is least effective? And our reports in our school are pretty out of date because they don't match our First Steps philosophy and to me it's not a true indication of what the children are really learning. So, as part of our

District initiative, we're trialing portfolios as a way of reporting to parents.

In order to make the child's work more accessible to parents, Nicole places two pages at the front of each child's folder of work samples in which she: (i) explains the purpose of the folder and (ii) encourages them to talk about the work in the folder directly with their child (see Sample 12).

Sample 12: Guidance to Parents in the Work Sample Folder

Dear Parent / Guardian,

This folder is your child's Record of Learning for this term. The purpose of this folder is to:

- Encourage you child to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Take pride in their efforts and achievements.
- To give you the opportunity to be involved and informed in your child's learning for the term.

All of the eight Learning Areas will be covered this term. English, Mathematics, The Arts, Health and Physical Education, Science, Studies of Society and the Environment, Technology and Enterprise and Languages Other Than English.

Please take the time to share the contents of this folder with your child so they can share with you some of their educational experiences for this last term.

The involvement and interest you show is valued, both by your child and myself.

Please contact me if you have anything that you would like to discuss in the folder.

Hints For Sharing Your Child's Record of Learning

- 1 Please make the time to share the contents with your child.
- 2 Let your child know that their learning is important to you.
- 3 Address your comments to the child, in a *positive and constructive* way.

It is likely that you will find spelling or grammatical errors in the review. Whilst I encourage children to strive to do their best, errors show areas that still need help. As the children have more practice, their spelling and self-evaluation will improve.

Here are some examples of beginning statements that you may choose to support and encourage your child:

- we are pleased that/with
- is setting goals
- working consistently
- more confident
- is motivated / a trier
- is interested/caring
- shows perseverance
- enjoys
- shows more responsibility
- is tackling new challenges
- encouraging

Some statements that you could use to help you.

- I can really see that you have been learning lots of new things lately and enjoying it as well.
- It is great to see how much your writing has improved, you have shown that you have a go at writing by yourself and then get other children or your teacher to help check your work.
- I'm really pleased with the work you have done. I can see that you have worked hard towards your goals and have tried hard in all areas. Keep up the good work.

For Nicole, she even regards the work sample folders as not fully appropriate for parents. She would prefer to select important tasks the children have done and place them in the portfolio. *And I'd write two sentences to say why they have done that activity and say that I can see that the child has achieved a particular thing.* At present, Nicole is using the First Steps indicators as a guide to creating a portfolio very much along the lines of her language focused work as illustrated in Sample 3. She remains concerned, however, that she does not have enough contact with some of the parents, especially of children who come from the more distant communities.

Reporting to the Principal

Once each semester, Nicole advises the Principal of the proportion of children in her class who have achieved a particular Phase on the First Steps Continuum in language and literacy. For Maths, the whole school has been focusing on particular strands within the Student Outcome Statements, and Nicole again reports on the proportion of students who have achieved a particular Level of the Outcomes. Nicole derives the information she needs to summarise for the Principal from her own on-going use of these frameworks.

Perhaps because she is less familiar with the Outcome statements than she is with First Steps, Nicole finds reporting against the Maths Outcome Statements *very time consuming*. She is obliged to assess each individual child against all the pointers for the strands which the school has chosen as a priority before making her final summary report. She believes, however, that:

There's links being made between all the different learning areas on the basis of what the children do, like 'design', 'make and appraise', 'investigate' 'communicate or participate'. In Studies of Society and Environment they've changed their skills to correlate with the ones from Science, Technology and Enterprise. So, by developing that consistency across outcomes of different areas, there'll definitely not be as much paperwork to do as we have for Maths at the moment.

We saw, in describing Leigh's situation, that the school is moving towards Outcomes Statements as a framework for reporting in a number of learning areas, but adopting one strand in each area each year. Nicole is concerned that there may be mismatch between what is required for reporting and what she may have covered in her teaching:

If you haven't taught lots and lots of that particular strand, when the whole school data is collected, there's a weakness because of the gap between what is to be reported and what you've done, I mean that's going to happen in anything.

However, Nicole believes that the school is addressing this particular worry:

I think our school's taken a bit of an initiative with this and thought, "OK, we've got all the different years and all the different levels of children in each year, let's have these teachers sit down with their work samples in front of them and collaborate about assessing the samples." "OK, this is what I think a pre-Level 1 student is, this is what I think a Level 1 student is, this child's nearly at Level 2," and comparing like that. This issue of different assessments by different teachers we saw as one of our weaknesses this year from our data collection and that's what we will do next year.

Nicole is aware of the work involved in the process of data collection:

I think because everyone is using the Student Outcome Statements as the data collection for the first couple of years, we have been collecting too much data. I think, because we are just in the early stages. If you had to do that for every subject area it would take a lot of time.

The Relationship Between Assessment and Teaching

We have seen that Nicole bases her much of her teaching approach upon the kinds of strategies recommended in First Steps. Nicole is also particularly keen to integrate all the learning areas as much as possible in her teaching. Talking of her theme for the previous term, she explains her use of both the Outcome Statements and First Steps:

I used the Outcome statements as my aims. I used them in my planning and I used them for my objectives for each of the things we did. It's complicated, but I used the Outcome Statements for where I wanted them to be. I use objectives such as my pointers that will help me get to the Outcomes, but then I've got First Steps as my strategies. I teach through the concepts, the genres, the lists and whatever else. In using First Steps strategies I'm still using my knowledge of student behaviours and teaching activities, but that becomes an incidental thing because I know it, because I'm familiar with it and you can see that they're having to have those language skills and they're achieving those outcomes.

Nicole finds that the Student Outcome Statements help her as specific objectives in her wish to integrate across learning areas around a chosen theme:

These two years I have done heaps of work in SOS with the District Office and Eliza (the SDO for language and literacy). And that wouldn't have happened if I had gone to the wheatbelt. I'm scared to go back now to the wheatbelt because I know I'm going to go back to Sleepy Little Hollow land where SOS are not used very much. Whereas I use SOS for everything I program in.

Nicole favours the Outcome Statements framework because she believes that it allows her to deal with the wide range of abilities of the children in her class and also because she can make links with First Steps which underlies her whole teaching approach. She also favours them because they help her to identify specific plans for her work across the learning areas:

It takes hours and hours and hours and hours to do, but it's the most effective way for me to do it with those children and it's real, I can use real things with my themes where all the children are able to do something. I've chosen my concept which I'm looking at this term and I've brainstormed every single thing that I can think that's related to it and is relevant to my children in the class. Then I categorise it all into the eight learning areas and you make links between them. I've looked at the activities that I could do generated from my brainstorm and then I look at whatever Outcomes that I could achieve by doing these activities.

It is clear that Nicole's use of both First Steps and the Outcome Statements is eclectic and based upon the priorities generated by her chosen theme and her growing familiarity with the students in her class. It is interesting that she is obliged to treat Maths in a distinctive way because she knows that she must cover the Outcomes within particular strands laid down by **the school** rather than compiling and synthesising her own set of objectives.

How she exploits the frameworks in a selective way is expressed in the following way:

I don't just use all the First Steps Continua as objectives, but just some of them. I think some of the things that are there are pretty irrelevant. Take preliminary spelling, it says, "I know where to find my name." Well, to me, that's got really nothing to do with spelling, that's got something more to do with reading...I have had to adapt some of the indicators to suit my children in my

situation...I use cultural differences...A classic example is past tenses with the ESL students. and other things Richard will come up to me and say, "He's got my pencil," and he's talking about a girl. Some of the things in First Steps are just too difficult. What relevance really is learning how to write a report going to be to Susie. I'm not knocking her and I hope that she does get to bigger and better things. But, realistically, for the likes of Susie, isn't she better off knowing how to write something that she's going to use in her everyday life?

Nicole therefore believes that the frameworks allow her to be selective according to her own teaching circumstances. In any case, she assumes that different teachers in different situations will also be selective:

There's a difference too in the fact that the way I assess a child will be different from the way that the person who's in the next classroom assesses a child. It's just a different person even though we're using the same framework. With x (the Education Support teacher) I discuss a lot and you can become biased because you want these children to be there and you can think that you're seeing things that you're not and that you've seen it more times than you actually have.

Assessing and Teaching ESL Children

Nicole's earlier observations about the suitability of First Steps activities or indicators for her ESL students highlight her recent interest in working with such children in more appropriate ways. Two issues were raised for Nicole when she first began working with her Nyangumarta speaking children. First, that she found it hard to identify signs of progress in the children's work that she had usually been able to recognise with even those Year 2 students she regarded as average achievers. Secondly, as the year passed, she was genuinely concerned about recommending that the ESL children move forward to the next Year group when she felt they had not yet mastered some of the basic things she expected of her students:

I fear that their specific need may not be catered for when they move into Year 3 and that's a worry. If they don't show progress here they will get left behind.

In sharing her concerns with Eliza at District Office, she was introduced to the ESL Framework of Stages and she immediately recognised its potential in relation to the ways in which she was assessing the majority of her students:

They're great because with profiling using First Steps or the Outcome Statements, we start at Level 1. Well, that's fine for children who have had a previous schooling experience before they hit Year 1, but these children and their cultural differences, they haven't had the background experiences that the majority of children have when they come to school. So, they're pre-level 1. But there's nothing in the Outcome Statements to say that a pre-level child is doing something Whereas the ESL Framework has got three Levels and they look specifically at the ESL child and their experiences before they came to school and basically you can see where they've been. You can see what sort of things they can do and you can fit them in to either B1, B2 or B3 which links to Level 1 of the Outcome Statements. So what I was going to do, and it will take me forever, is to use the ESL Framework as well and link it to Outcome Statements and look at what strategies I'm using from First Steps to come up with an assessment checklist that's right for the ESL children.

For Nicole, the ESL Framework of Stages provided her with something that

would harmonise with the Outcome Statements and her experience with First Steps and would, crucially, inform her of the language background of the ESL child.

There might be something that is obvious in the ESL sense that a child is lacking but which I didn't even think that could be a factor that could effect their learning. So I think in using the Framework I'd be able to find out the characteristics of the ESL child. So, not only is it for programming, I see it as a professional development document. And I think that's the biggest thing. when Eliza showed it to me she said it would show me much more about an ESL child and I told her that instead of hitting my head against a brick wall, I now feel as though I've got something that I can look at and think, "Well, OK, I can use the ideas".

Having a framework which echoed the ones with which she was already familiar and knowing much more about the ESL child would enable her to add a new dimension to her programming:

I think that it gives you more direction because the biggest problem I have is the fact that I'm not and ESL trained teacher. I've had no experience in a language other than English until I came here. I'm probably naive in the sense that I didn't understand the cultures of these children. I've been exposed to Aboriginal culture where I originally grew up, but not the same Aboriginal culture as up here. So you're looking for ways that you think you're going to be best able to help these children cope at school and plan programs that are more effective. I just don't have enough knowledge so it is helpful for me. I'm still learning about it, about things that are really important to them and their culture. So that's giving me a little bit more structure as well.

Although valuing the additional knowledge to be gained from the ESL Framework of Stages concerning her ESL students, Nicole would not teach the students in any markedly different way because she feels that it would be too complex and demanding in her circumstances:

The Remote Schools Program file gives language experience activities and things like that and I've used it to try and get some ideas. But, once again, I get to the problem where I've got so many varying abilities in my class that I can't use that approach for my entire class and that's a big problem.

Nicole wants to be able to supplement both what she can plan and do in the classroom and what she presently looks out for in her assessment procedures with the information she can obtain from an ESL framework. However, she recognises limitations in the frameworks with which she is currently more familiar:

I wasn't able before to say enough about my ESL children. I mean, you can make judgements but it's the little things that don't show up on the First Steps Continuum or the Outcome Statements, like Miriam coming up and having a conversation with you. That's a major step for her. She's writing me letters every day. She comes to school in the morning and gives me a letter. Where can you write these sorts of developments on your First Steps Continua? You can't do that sort of thing. Looking at Miriam and seeing the progress that she's made, I could probably fill out a couple more indicators on the Continua. but it doesn't really show you the whole profile of that big learning curve that's all of a sudden taken place for her. I've seen her go from this quiet little thing that didn't want to do anything except play with dolls to now when I'll sit at my desk

and I can tell she's saying, "What's my next activity, I want to do it".

In essence, Nicole wants to be able to trace the particular nature and extent of development in language which she has recognised in a child like Miriam who appears to have started from very small beginnings but has moved a long way. And she feels that indicators from First Steps or Outcome Statements can not capture these things. She therefore sees an ESL framework as being more sensitive to such things and as a means towards more inclusive assessment frameworks:

I'm quite sure it's going to be able to fill in some spaces in my program. It's going to give me directions in planning and programming for the ESL students. There's nothing in Outcome Statements that's pre-Level 1. The children weren't achieving the outcomes so this is where the ESL Scales are going to come in because, in a school like ours, we're going to be able to look at putting in the ESL Framework for outcomes that match the Outcome Statements.

Asked if she felt that using an ESL framework as a basis for reporting to the school and the parents might mark out the ESL child as underachieving, she replied:

I don't think parents would feel it was unfair to their child because they can recognise that the child has a need in English. And if you're really catering for individual differences and needs in your classroom and it's a social justice issue as well. You know, I'm catering specifically for the needs of that child and I try to cater as much as I can. but there's not the outcome there for me to reach at the moment. I'm probably looking at it from an Aboriginal language point of view, not at a recent migrant point of view, but perhaps it would be different. I've got lower classes so may be it would be the same with different kinds of ESL students higher up the school. I look at one of the older girls who is ESL in Year 6 and I know some of her work has been modified for her because she doesn't have the experience in English, so she's not developing. Having these frameworks you can see what you can do to help her and I don't think the parents would mind if she was assessed on the Framework because of their genuine need and desire for their child to succeed at school. They would not be embarrassed by the fact that she's being assessed differently.

For Nicole, the ESL Framework of Stages has informed her of the likely early development in English of her ESL students and she recognises the potential of something like the ESL Scales for mapping the children onto the Outcome Statements. It appears that she seeks from an ESL framework the kinds of benefits she recognised in First Steps: knowledge of young children's early language development, indicators against which to plan her program or to identify the objectives in her classroom activities, and teaching strategies that would meet the particular needs of ESL students.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

At the present time, Nicole prefers the Student Outcome Statements rather than First Steps as a framework for assessment:

Because you can develop a more appropriate program for children who have such diverse experiences. You can plan your program in a variety of Levels or to a variety of Outcomes. It's basically designed for individual achievements. If you're working towards a broad Outcome you can have a variety of pointers that you can use as your objectives for each lesson. There's flexibility for me as a teacher who is

capable of writing an objective or pointer. I can slip in my pointers for my program to achieve a specific Outcome. It is my interpretation based upon the example given in the pointers.

Despite her obvious familiarity with First Steps or, perhaps because of it, Nicole has become aware of what she sees as its limitations:

I don't think First Steps is anything really new compared to what people have been doing for years and years in teaching. It's just giving it different names and you're still using the same sort of activities. There's nothing in First Steps to tell us that in Year 2 every child should be able to read these 100 words or that every child should be bale to identify these 40 sounds, so there's not that structure, unless I've missed something along the way. I need to know where these children should be at.

In thinking of an ideal framework for assessment, therefore, Nicole appears to wish for one which is very specific about the objectives which should be attained by the typical Year 2 child but which nevertheless allows her the freedom to select various and different objectives which contribute towards to attainment of an overall Outcome. This reflects her own drive towards integration of learning areas in her work:

It's a shame that Student Outcome statements are divided up into subjects. It would be better if it was a generic set of outcomes, but I suppose it's got to be in learning areas for accountability.

Therefore Nicole would much prefer a single framework along the lines of the Student Outcome Statements. But she also seeks a framework that provides:

An assessment tool which would then allow you to evaluate what the children have learned and then you can use that as a basis for planning. So its a whole cycle: plan, teach, evaluate.

Nicole values the samples of students' work in both First Steps and the Student Outcome Statements because they inform her of the different stages of development. In addition to samples of work, she would want to see open-ended tasks of the kind she has used from First Steps.

Crucially, for Nicole, an assessment framework would have to be used consistently across the State:

It should be something that every school uses and it doesn't change from school to school so that everybody had exactly the same records in their school and everybody collected data based on this thing. So next year if I'm in a different school, I don't have to learn how to use their reporting criteria. All I need to do is get out this piece of paper and this is how I would be accountable to my admin. And this is how my Admin's accountable to the Super and this is how the Super's accountable to our director General. So that every single person in the State is using the same thing.

Asked if the wrong impression might be given when comparing the relative achievements of some children in some schools in different localities and with different populations, she asserted what she believed as the neutrality of criteria in a framework such as the Student Outcome Statements:

The whole focus would be levelness, not saying what the differences are between schools but looking at what the individual child is achieving. In my view you could still have a framework in which all things are mixed together, which is inclusive, but you're getting a clear picture of where the child, where Richard compared to Miriam is in my classroom. The reason why I say what I say about a State-wide approach is that here we've got an especially transient

population and I've got children coming here from Perth where their average Year 2 may be a lot higher than my average Year 2. But I can go and look at their report and see where they're at and so Year 2ish here is different to Year 2ish in other places. It's the level children are at, not the year that matters. And that's why we need a State-wide document that shows this.

Nicole considered what this might mean when comparing the achievements of her ESL students with other students in her class. She identifies the problem in First Steps rather than in some preferable State-wide framework:

They don't achieve as many indicators as the average child but that's a fault in First Steps because it's based on the English language. Where do you find the most effective ways of teaching my ESL students, especially when I've got so many English speaking children in my class? It's designed for monolingual children but there's other strategies that could be much more suited to ESL children. I mean, sure the First Steps stuff is wonderful if you are in a suburban primary school in Perth. I think it's discriminatory. I'm not throwing it away totally because I do rely on it and it is an extremely useful tool for me in the classroom. But it's got its weaknesses in that sense.

She does not believe that this problem confronts the Student Outcome Statements:

Because you can write your own pointers as your objectives from your individual plans to suit a specific Outcome. They've got to be inclusive.

And Nicole is convinced that the ideal framework has got to account for the achievements of the ESL child. 'It's got to have that. All of it's got to have an ESL influence'. Looking to the future, she believes that she will build upon her current way of working. Having asserted that she has learned more in the time she has been at Weaver Primary School working with the diversity of children in her class than she ever learned during her pre-service education, she recognises the importance of remaining open minded and being keen to keep learning:

I think the kind of information I'm getting now (from the ESL Framework of Stages) will help. I mean that may be just me thinking, "Well, hey, here's something, it might help." But I mean that I'm prepared to give it a go to make it easier for me to cater for the needs of the ESL children in my classroom. Ok, let's just imagine I go back to the wheatbelt, I'll still work exactly as I'm working now and I'd assess in a similar sort of way. I don't think I'd distinguish between the ESL children and the others in the way I teach and assess. I'd still do exactly what I'm doing now. But, I mean, who's to say, because I will always change. I'm looking for better practice. I can say "Yes" now to what I'm doing but if someone comes up to me and says, "Here, this is a way that we've trialed and we think it works." Well, I'll have a go.

Kylie at Banksia Pre-Primary School

Michael P. Breen

The School Context

Banksia School is one of four primary schools in a residential suburb 3 kilometres south of Far Harbour. It was opened fifteen years ago to serve a relatively new part of the suburb unlike the first school in the centre of the suburb, Weaver Primary, where Leigh and Nicole teach. Also unlike Weaver Primary, Banksia School is not part of the Priority Schools Program. It shares with another school in the more affluent part of Far Harbour itself a reputation for being in one of the 'better' socio-economic catchment areas of the town.

A further difference between the two schools is that there is a significant proportion (19%) of Malaysian and Christmas Islander children whilst children of Aboriginal descent represent only about a quarter (26%) of the school population. Not more than 5% of the Aboriginal children come from communities beyond Far Harbour where they acquire Nyangumarta as their first language. The majority children of Aboriginal descent, being resident in or around Far Harbour, speak Aboriginal English as their home dialect whilst a minority come from homes where Standard Australian English is the parental dialect.

A feature which Banksia School shares with almost all Schools in Far Harbour and across the Pilbara is that 70% of its teachers are between one to three years out of university. There are 224 children on roll in addition to 49 pre-primary children who are the responsibility of Kylie. These children are divided between a morning group (8.15-11.00 am) and an afternoon group (12.00-2.30pm). Within these groups of 4-5 year olds, Kylie expects a change in roll during the year of about six or seven children and with most regular absences among the distant community children and children of Aboriginal descent. Kylie explains why she believes such children's attendance may be unpredictable:

Especially with the younger children, if anything happens within the family, they'll be the ones that don't go to school. If the parents have to go somewhere, the older ones will be left with a relative to go to school and the younger ones will be taken by the parents. If someone dies and the parents have to go and visit a relative, the younger ones will be taken with the parents. And that was quite obvious at X (an Aboriginal community where Kylie taught for two years before moving to Banksia School). I had 34 on my roll there, but I'd be lucky if I got 25 every day.

The Classroom Context

Kylie's classroom is separated from the main buildings of the school by a shady play area with various climbing apparatus and a sand pit. It is a bright, spacious room with a home corner, a model farm corner, a block building corner and a space near the door to the play area which is Kylie's space around which the children sit when she works with the whole class. There are pictures on all the walls and some have number, letters or words on them. Several of the pictures are drawn by the children. There is a door on the other side of the classroom leading to the pre-primary entrance which children and parents use at the start and end of morning and afternoon sessions. At these times, several parents will enter and exit with their children.

Kylie's morning group of 25 students includes three ESL children; two from Christmas Island and a child whose family has recently arrived from Bosnia. There are also six children of Aboriginal descent and two Maori children all of whom speak a distinct dialect of English. Her afternoon group of 24 students includes seven ESL children; four whose mothers are from Malaysia, two from Christmas Island families, and another child from a family recently arrived from Bosnia. In this group there are also three children of Aboriginal descent, two of whom Kylie believes speak Aboriginal English at home. Both the Malay and Christmas Islander groups of students come from Moslem families. Christmas Islander families are very likely to speak the particular version of Malay that has been established on the Island for many years, although several Chinese languages and Indonesian are also spoken there.

A typical session in Kylie's class may begin with the children manipulating wooden puzzles on the floor in the main central area of the room. Then Kylie will call them to her area and she will say a sounding rhyme such as 'itchy indians' and the children will join in. In this way, Kylie introduces her students to the relationship between sounds and their equivalent letters of the alphabet. The children are asked to find the letter 'i' in the written version of the story in the big book.

When doing individual work, the children will sit at tables in the centre of the room. Often, however, the children will divide up into the different corners in the room, indicating their choice by taking a different coloured wrist tag from a board near to Kylie and setting off to rearrange the farm animals, build a castle with blocks, or set up a 'meal' in the home corner. Kylie monitors the numbers of children choosing each corner to roughly equal proportions through the simple device of the numbers of wrist tags available and she will suggest to one or other child that they have a turn in a corner that is different from the one they went to on the previous day. Even at this age, corner groups appear to divide according to gender.

Kylie has an aide and a parent volunteer helper. When the children do individual desk work or work at different tasks in three groups, Kylie and her helpers will guide the children in their work. Such activities might include cutting out and making animals out of various materials, drawing or making letters out of playdo, or undertaking a focused learning activity designed by Kylie. Classroom activities will be punctuated by time in the play area outside where the children will experiment with water or build with sand. The class may also go to the library and spend time finding and looking at appropriate books. On one occasion in the library, the local policeman and a person from the electricity company explained the dangers of electricity and fielded enthusiastic questions and experiences of the children, some of which had a passing association with electricity. It was clear at least that most of the children were uninhibited in their willingness to interact.

The closing of a session usually involves the eating of fruit and a story from Kylie or from a tape based upon a big book. Kylie will greet and talk briefly with parents who come to collect their offspring and will stay in the room until the last children are collected.

Kylie bases how she works with the children on a set of goals which she regards as appropriate to pre-primary students. Some of her major goals are illustrated in Sample 1. She describes these as deriving from: *'The syllabus, my own interpretation of what's needed in pre-primary, and of what I've seen over the years - my own experience'*,

Sample 1: One Set of Kylie's Pre-Primary Goals

COGNITIVE-LANGUAGE

The child will:

- 1. recognise their name
- 2. recognise colours
- 3. recognise shapes
- 4. recognise a-z
- 5. match name
- 6. match colours
- 7. match shapes
- 8. write their name
- 9. follow directions to complete task
- 10. tell verbal stories
- 11. tell news to the class
- 12. listen to stories to answer questions
- 13. participate in oral discussions

Sample 1 illustrates only one of eight sets of goals towards which Kylie works. The others relate to the main learning areas in the primary school and are: Social-Emotional, Cognitive Social Studies, Cognitive Maths, Cognitive Art & Craft, Physical & Motor, Cognitive Health, and Cognitive Science. In locating language and literacy work within such goals, Kylie asserts their necessary integration with all the work she does:

It's really hard to pick out language goals because language is done in everything every day. When we started with 'A' in the alphabet, I used to get them up and they'd circle anywhere in a word or sentence and I thought, "No, this is silly, because there's a Maths concept there too." There's the shape and we're looking at the first line so ordinal number is a Maths concept. So, at the end they count up how many 'A's are on each line and we might add them up. So, you're doing Maths and Language at the same time.

Referring to specific goals, she emphasises the integration of language within what she sees as an on-going informal focus upon the children's overall development:

Recognising the A to Z is what I think they should know when they go to Grade 1. Recognising their name and writing it and matching it. They should be able to do that and the colours and the shapes, being able to say, "This is a pink pencil," or whatever. Following directions we do every single day with every single thing that we do, and the last four of the goals, tell verbal stories, tell news, listen to stories and participate in oral discussions, it is hard to separate by saying, "Right, today I'm doing oral language," like you can in Grade 1. I mean verbal stories are used all the time because every child walks in and says, "Mrs T, last night we did this." And sometimes they'll say things incorrectly and instead of saying, "We go to the shops," I say, "So, you went to the shops." That sort of thing. It's all done informally.

Kylie therefore sees language and literacy as inseparable from other goals which she is helping the children to achieve:

At the beginning of the year there's a lot of children who won't talk to you at all and they won't stand up and talk in front of a group of other children. It's only third or fourth term that we tell news and they all have a news day and there's still children who will stand up and say it to me and not everyone else. By the end of the year I want every child to have the confidence to stand up. How much they say is up to them, but as long as they've got the confidence and say, "Good morning everyone," when everyone says, "Good morning," back, and they're showing something they've brought from home and tell us about it, that's all I expect. I mean, telling news isn't just a language thing, it's a social thing as well. It's developing confidence to talk in front of other people. So, it's just so hard to isolate what is what in pre-primary.

In terms of the content of the children's work and the kinds of activities which she focuses upon in order to facilitate the children's development, Kylie is very strongly influenced by her initial teaching experience in an Aboriginal community:

When I first started teaching I had a very wide spread of children from K to Year 3. I found it very hard. I was a new graduate, so I found it very very hard especially with children who weren't even ready for Grade 1. I just sat there saying, "What do I do?" I had no idea. There were children who would say, "I can't do this, I can't write." And I'd say, "Write in your diary and tell me a story." And they'd say, "I can't do that, I don't know the letter." I just thought, "This is impossible." I couldn't stand going back to Grade 1 with children who didn't have the basics. So I probably do a lot more basic Grade 1 work now than I should do. I actually work with the Grade 1 teacher here and we do integrated work at the moment. I had Grade 1s on Monday and she had my class.

In her daily activities, therefore, Kylie sees herself as primarily socialising her students to meet the demands of the first year in primary school and providing them with what she regards as the basics in the different learning areas through integrated activities.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Kylie has been teaching for seven years. As we have seen, she spent her first two years teaching K-3 in an Aboriginal community some 100 kilometres due south of Far Harbour. She then taught pre-primary for a year in a suburb of Perth. Since that time she has been responsible for the pre-primary provision at Banksia School.

When describing the children in her class, Kylie finds that her experience is a strong guide to her on-going assessment of the children's potential and their progress:

I suppose you can spot the children that are at a high level, the ones that you know can cope and, as I think everyone does because there is no other way, you then compare the rest of the children with them. So the children that aren't at that level, you know they are the ones you have to push further along. Basically it is quite informally done. Lots of stuff is done informally. Those children that enter at a high level aren't just left there. I do other things with them like this morning, when they were all circling the letter 'i', I have heaps of little stories and the children who are really good at them I give them another story that we haven't worked on and say, "Right, go and find all the 'a's and 'b's which will be something extra for them to

do. Even in my first year teaching pre-primary after teaching K-3 for two years, I had an idea where the children should be and that is basing it on the children who are very advanced.

Kylie elaborates on the bases on which she forms her judgements of her students' initial capabilities and potential in the following way:

Through talking to them basically. I've been here so long and I can know what the family is like, knowing the other children who have been through, because, with the bulk of them, I've taught their brothers or sisters and I know the parents. Also, five years now down the track teaching pre-primary, I have background knowledge. I have a good idea. I've seen children before and can say, "That one is much better than such and such was," that sort of thing. I think, because I have 'staggered entry' with half of the morning group one day and the other half the next day, I see ten children on the first day of school. I can spend that time finding out about them. And everything we prepare for them in those first two days or the first week is all stuff they can do without any help, so it gives me time to sit and talk with the children and get an idea. I'd say in the first week, I can say, "Yes, this one's fine, that one is going to be a bit of a problem, this one needs a lot of work, that one we'll have to watch," and so on.

Because she was 'too full on' in her first two years of teaching, she could not attend professional development in First Steps. She was familiar with the framework and tried to use the Continua, but her experience generated a need in her for something:

Much more basic than First Steps. to cover the basics and not only literacy and language. I think that in a Year 1-3 primary classroom it's great. But there it was very hard. When it comes to writing and spelling and that sort of thing there are some children who can't write and it's real coaxing. They'll draw a picture. So, basically, without so much as looking at the First Steps books or putting them on the Continua, I still pursue oral language. If I can give them the oral skills, then they're a long way ahead of getting nothing at all...When I did First Steps at X (the Aboriginal community school), we did Spelling, Reading, and Writing, all three over the year. And one term I'd do one Continuum and it would take me two days and then next term I'd spend three days and it was all just too much. And being only the second year out, I still had no idea what I was doing let alone trying to incorporate something new. Apart from that, there was Science and Social Studies and all the other things on top. I felt like, "This is First Steps, you should be doing First Steps." But I didn't take it on board fully. And I still haven't.

Kylie resists using the First Steps Continua as assessment criteria because she believes it is inappropriate for pre-primary children not least because she sees it as not fully capturing the likely attainments of the pre-primary child:

I put them on the Writing Continuum once and thought, "This is a waste of time," because the bulk of them were in no Phase at all for Writing. I mean, you're only aiming towards Level 1 in the Outcome Statements. That's what we've been told.

Comparing her program for her pre-primary students (see Sample 1 for example) with her knowledge of First Steps, she again emphasises the advantages of not distinguishing language and literacy from other developments in learning:

I think mine is entirely different but it also fits in well. I haven't read the Oral language books all that closely, but I think that I do it all anyway without even thinking about it. That's the beauty of pre-

primary, because you do everything. It's the same with the Student Outcome Statements. I can say I am using the Outcome Statements without even thinking about it because that's just the way pre-primary is. It is everything integrated and you can't say, "Right, this activity today, we are going to make an animal out of different materials and it's just art." But it's not. They are using scissors and paste and wool which involves a physical skill. They have to put three plates together so that's like sizing, it's Maths. They're painting, so they're distinguishing colours, and that sort of thing.

More recently, and like Leigh and Nicole at Weaver Primary School, Kylie has been undertaking professional development in the Student Outcome Statements with Eliza, the District Officer responsible for language and literacy. However, this work has also involved cooperative planning among the pre-primary teachers in the District:

What we started doing as a District where pre-primary teachers have a really good network up here and we meet regularly. What we did was we went through the Outcome Statements when we first got the document and we all took a learning area and had to take it back and write a brief description of what it was all about. To break it down so it was easy to understand. Eliza set this up for us so that we identified the strands and sub-strands and, instead of having related topics as focus, we wanted to make up pre-primary pointers for each strand. They aren't different pointers but what I took from the document and could say, "Yes, my children can do that." So, there are lots of pointers which I just left out because they didn't seem to refer to the pre-primary child. We can make a combination of what is there and what we actually do in order to make the document work more for pre-primary. That's the hard thing for pre-primary because the Student Outcome Statements are primary based. So now it is a little easier for us to use them.

Kylie and her colleagues in local pre-primary classrooms therefore deliberately selected those aspects of the Student Outcome Statements which they believed their 4-5 year olds could achieve in the year in which they taught them. Discovering that the Student Outcome Statements did not recommend specific teaching strategies, Kylie identifies the limits of the framework:

The Outcome Statements themselves are really airy fairy. They're too vague. I mean, "Recognises what it means to be healthy and record what individuals can do to promote health." That's fine if you've been teaching for twenty years. I've been teaching pre-primary for five years and I still have to look back at the syllabus sometimes to get ideas for activities.

In her approach to teaching, therefore, Kylie relies not on the strategies proposed in First Steps nor the goals implicit in the Outcome Statements. Her teaching strategies derive from her initial teacher education, her experience, and the Pre-Primary Syllabus. Her assessment procedures also derive from these sources. We will consider how she assesses specific tasks, her use of an assessment framework, and how she reports to parents and her Principal in the sections which follow.

Assessment and Feedback on Individual Tasks


Kylie regularly assesses tasks undertaken by her students. She selects from among these assessed tasks and places them in a work sample folder for each child. At the end of each term the folder is taken home for the parents to see. It is important to Kylie that the parents receive a clear indication that their children are achieving particular things in order to counter possible assumptions that pre-school is merely *all play*. Each work sample is therefore prefaced by a sheet

designed by Kylie, who adopted the approach from another pre-primary teacher, on which the specific goals of the task are stated and the child's achievement against these specific goals is indicated. Specific task goals are derived as subordinate outcomes from Kylie's overall goals as illustrated in Sample 1. Kylie describes how she undertakes the assessment process with reference to a particular numbers task:

First of all did they know their age, can they write their age? I said, "How old are you?" And then I evaluate whether: 1 each child could do it without any help, 2 with some help, or 3 with a lot of help. Most of them got a 1 on their sheet. Their sheet had a birthday cake and below it a sentence that said, "I am dash years old." So I said, "Right you have to fill in the sentence now and if you are five years old you put a five there." Then, "If you are five, how many candles do you need on your birthday cake." And there's a birthday cake on which they draw the right number of candles. There's one with a house with their address written on it and I put it in there so that they know their address. I ask them again if they knew their address and could say it and then I would tick the appropriate box with a 1,2, or 3. Then I asked, "Do you know your phone number?" and they had to copy their number down if they could and I could tick another box depending how they had done.

Kylie describes her assessment of a particular task (Sample 2) undertaken by Ashia, aged 5, one of the ESL children in her class:

Sample 2: A Classroom Task



05 FEB 1998

HAPPY FACES

The children were asked to:
 Draw a happy face.
 Give a sentence about what makes them happy.
 Identify and share times when they feel happy.

	1	2	3
Can draw a happy face	✓		
Can write a sentence	✓		
Can identify and share	✓		

- 1. Achieved without any help.
- 2. Achieved with some help.
- 3. Achieved with a lot of help.

I feel happy when my mum give me a present.

She's got a face with wool for hair and it says, "I feel happy when my mum give me a present." The children were asked to draw a happy face, tell me a sentence about what makes them happy, which I write down for them and identify and share times when they feel happy. And there's a box indicating how she achieved each of these...I don't do this kind of thing every single day. every time they do a painting or a drawing or something. It would take you for ever and you wouldn't get much else done. But, if it's a special activity like this one, we do the assessment. And if they do

something like a really special drawing or that sort of thing, then we sit down and say, "Well, tell me about it."

Sample 3 illustrates Kylie's approach to task assessment in relation to the Cognitive Science learning area. Some children will complete the task using the cut out pictures of the objects used in the experiment, while Ashia has drawn the objects on her sheet and Kylie or her aide has written in the names of the objects as described by Ashia.

Sample 3: A Classroom Task in Science

1 JUN 1996

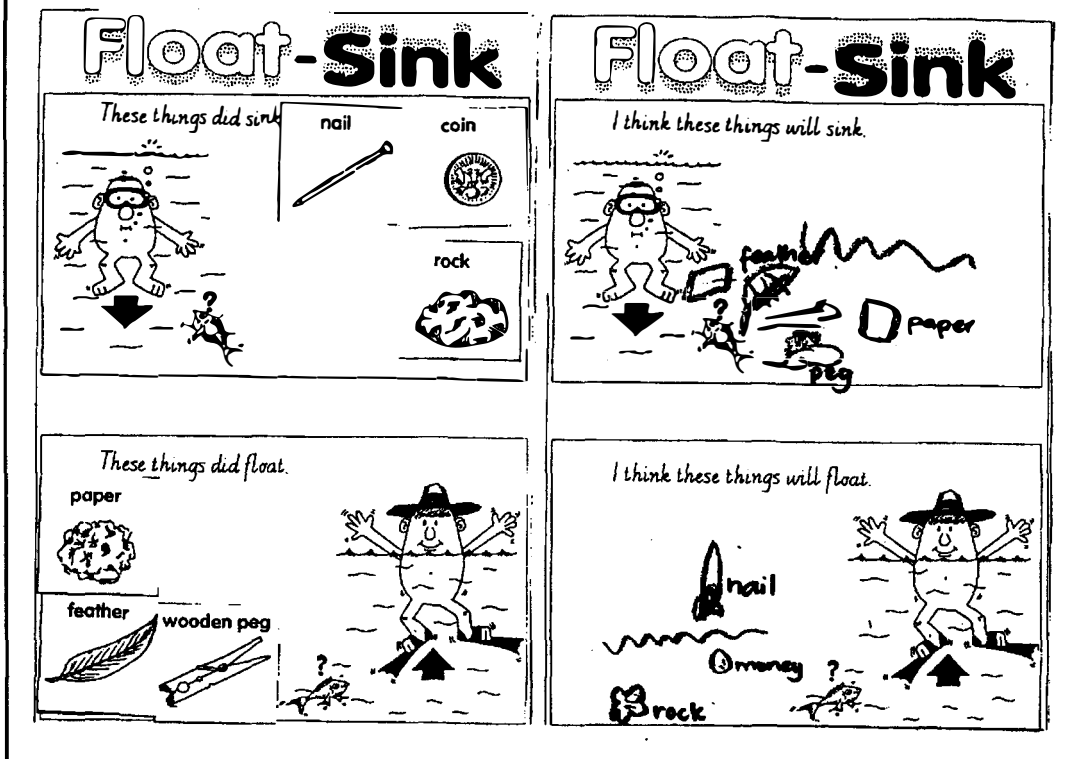
FLOATING AND SINKING

*The children were asked to:
 Predict which items they thought
 would sink or float.
 Group the test materials into
 two groups.
 Identify why some things sink and
 why some things float.*

	1	2	3
<i>Predictum</i>	✓		
<i>Grouping test materials according to test results</i>	✓		
<i>Heavy items sink</i>			✓
<i>Light items float</i>			✓

1	<i>Achieved without any help</i>
2	<i>Achieved with some help</i>
3	<i>Achieved with a lot of help</i>

Sample 3: A Classroom Task in Science (cont.)

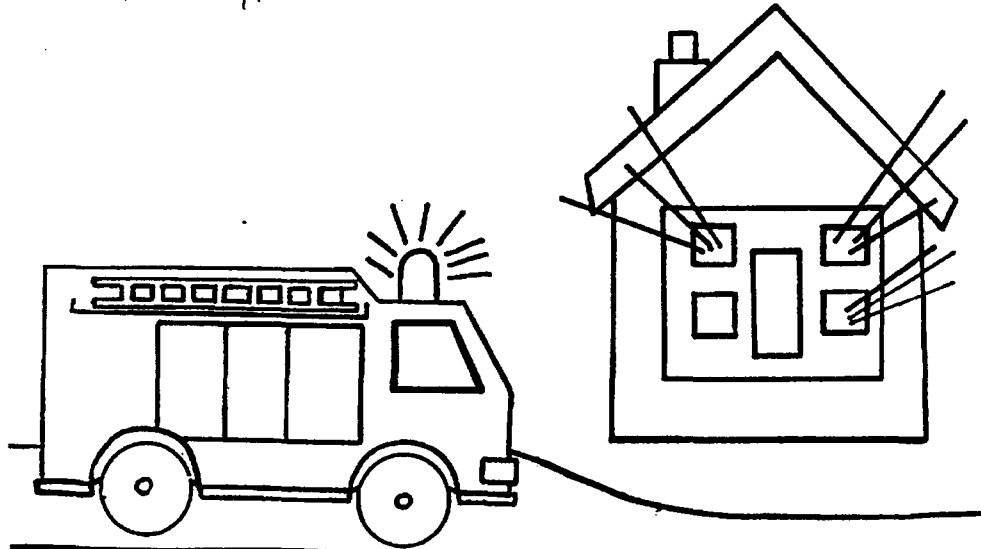


Another writing task, typical of those undertaken later in the school year, is described by Kylie (see Sample 4):

They were given a sheet with just the picture on it and they were asked, "What's happening in the picture?" So, they look at the picture and they said, you know, "The house is on fire and the fire engine's coming." And so my aide said, "OK, you can write that story for me. If you need some help, the letters are up on the window," which they are. They were evaluated on whether they could write the story, could they do it by themselves or did they need help. Some children will just draw circles for everything. But last week they were evaluated on if they could give a meaning to the story. Could they dictate what their story says? Ashia has written her story on the top. She is a bit inhibited, but someone like Kathy (who has written on the second picture) will actually sound out the words. That's fantastic. I know her mum does heaps of stuff with her at home. She just sat there and did it. No prompting, no nothing. And that's what I aim for. If she can do that, that's great. Grade 1 is going to be a breeze. She's on the way and that's all I expect.

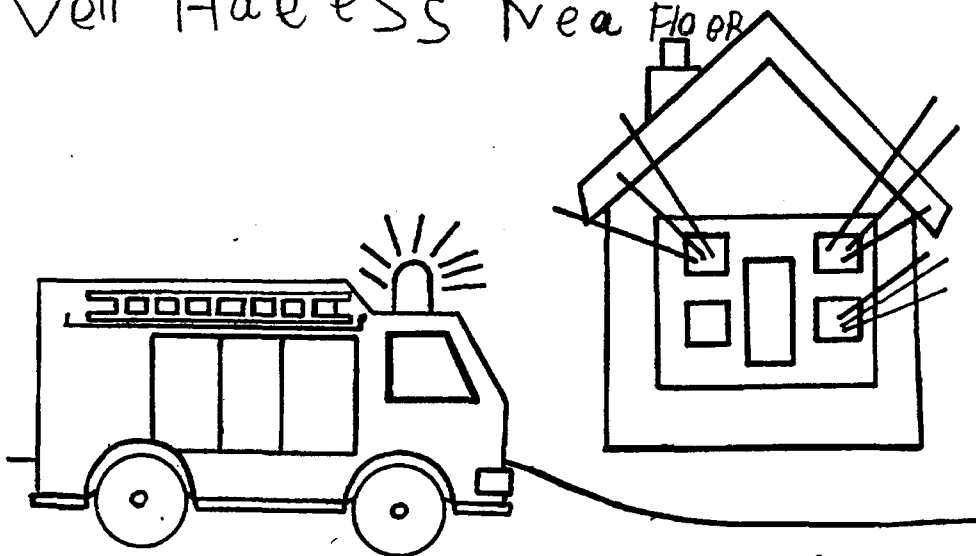
Sample 4: Tasks completed by Ashia and Kathy

FOSY TWRUAILS



There was a fire in the house
and a cat was caught in the fire.
The fire engine came.

Ver Haess Nea Floor



The house is on fire.

Asked if she tended to use the students who will have a go at a task or who are confident as her criteria for judging all the children, Kylie replied:

They need to have confidence to take a risk because no one in Grade 1 is going to sit over them and say, "Now do this letter, now do that letter," They need to be able to sit there and say, "This is my work," and work independently. "This is my story, this is what it says." And if they have the confidence to sit there and do that and take that risk, then it's going to be easier for them to learn. That's a problem with some of the children I have. Like Ashia, they are hung up on

spelling it correctly, on doing it like I do it. And no matter how many times I tell them, "I've been writing for years and years and years. You need to practice and this is your practice writing." It still isn't good enough. I say to Ashia, "You know, just practice darling, that's how you get really good at it, that's how you learn to write like me." No, that's not enough. She needs to do it right from day one. She's like that with everything. Everything has to be absolutely perfect with Ashia, so she writes very little very carefully.

As the year progresses, Kylie works through the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds. She will occasionally assess each child's growing knowledge of these with reference to a particular story book or wall chart and record their progress on the sheet illustrated by Sample 5. Here again, Kylie, her aide or her volunteer parent helper will assess the child's achievements using the three point scale.

Sample 5: An Assessment of Letters and Sounds Work

ALPHABET

*The children were asked to:
Recognize the letter name.
Recognize the sound that it carries.
Sing the song that goes with each letter.*

	letter	sound	song
Aa	1	1	1
Bb	1	1	1
Cc	1	1	1
Dd	1	1	1
Ee	1	1	1
Ff	1	1	1
Gg	1	1	1
Hh	1	1	2
Ii	1	2	2
Jj	1	1	1

1	<i>Achieved without any help</i>
2	<i>Achieved with some help</i>
3	<i>Achieved with a lot of help</i>

In a typical term, Kylie will undertake 12 assessment tasks with each child of the kind illustrated in Samples 2, 3 and 5. And these will be sent home in a work sample folder with an overall report at the end of the term. In all, therefore, Kylie will assess different tasks undertaken by each individual child in both her groups 48 times during the year; a total of over 2000 assessments:

Some things are done individually, some things are done together. When I did this one I actually had two or three children around me; one doing that, the other doing this, and the third doing something else. Spoken language ones are done from gut feeling, just knowing

the child over the year. It's usually the Cognitive ones I test for, like ordering biggest to smallest. In sequencing story cards I'll sit and say, "The girl wants to brush her teeth, which one does she do first?" And, as they do it, as they pick out the picture, I'll say, "Well, what's she doing in the picture?" And I'll write it down, so they're telling me a story at the same time. They're sequencing and narrating at the same time.

Using the Frameworks

We have seen that Kylie, on the basis of trying to apply the Continua particularly in Writing and Spelling, is sceptical of the appropriateness of First Steps to her pre-primary students. On the other hand she has benefited from professional development support in the District relating to the Student Outcome statements. Through the active local network of pre-primary teachers, she has worked with this framework in order to select those pointers within Level 1 of the Outcomes which she and her pre-primary colleagues believe can be achieved in a year by their students:

I've done quite a bit of stuff actually. What I wanted to do this year is put all my goals into Outcome Statements terms. When I thought about it, it was too hard. So I went through each of the learning areas except LOTE and I've gone through all the pointers and picked out ones that I think are pre-primary, ones that can cover pre-primary. The only one that's fully complete is the Health area. So I went through and worked with it on the computer at Level 1 taking the Outcome Statements and the pointers that I thought were applicable to what my children would be able to do.

In the context of the District initiative towards the gradual adoption of the Student Outcome Statements in all schools, Kylie was encouraged in her work with the framework by her Principal:

He wanted me to build my budget around the Outcome Statements in the learning areas, so we started off and just went the whole hog basically. We went through a whole day and I found that I was really concerned that I wasn't doing Technology the way it should be done, like I wasn't using the computer. But, looking at the Technology area, my children are playing with blocks, they are building stuff. I could say to them, "Build me a house that has six rooms," and they would go and do it. It's Design, making something and then appraising it. I didn't realise I was doing the Design part, but I was. Even down to routines and things like that it was part of the Technology process. So that was what came out of it for me; just so amazing that I was doing things without thinking about them. That's what makes me believe that you don't have to change things you teach. I mean, if every teacher sat down and took a look at the Outcome Statements, they'd find they were doing everything anyway.

So, Kylie believes that the Student Outcome Statements provide her with explicit confirmation of the kinds of achievements she seeks in her students at pre-primary level. She sees the framework as informing her own goals and, thereby, her planning. But she does not see them as implying a change in her teaching strategies or the content of her program. When applying the pointers she has selected from the Outcome Statements, Kylie deduces that:

I think some of them have hit Level 1 fully, a few of the really good ones, but I don't think any of them are hitting Level 2. It's hard to tell because it's not as concrete as First Steps for instance where they have those indicators and once they've got all of them they're on to whatever. So it's not as clear cut, which is what I think scares off a

lot of people. They want it to be clearer. They want it to say, "Right, my children have to do this and this and this, then they're on Level 2." Even though the Outcome Statements aren't like that, if you went through and said, "I do this and this in a day," and you can say, "Yes, my children can do it." If you pinpoint what you do in the day and then say, "OK, how did they achieve?" then you have a basis for evaluation. But there's a lot of people out there who want the Outcome Statements to do it all for them.

Kylie is staunchly committed to integrating pre-primary education with the work of the primary school and resists any assumptions that pre-primary is merely a pre-school 'play' situation and something of a luxury for a few children. Because of this, she is keen to relate her children's achievements to a framework which she sees as being adopted in the primary school across all the learning areas. Consistent with this motive, she would not want some distinct pre-primary assessment framework in Student Outcome Statements:

I mean that just isolates pre-primary again, doesn't it? You can't say these are my goals, these are my outcomes, this is what I'm achieving. You still need other documentation to say, "Yes, I am doing things with them. They are achieving." Once I start using Student Outcome Statements full on, I wouldn't stop doing what I'm doing now. They may not be at Level 1, but my children are working towards it and I need the other documentation to show that. I might have one child who has demonstrated all the pointers in a Level and I might have a child who has demonstrated just one. They're both still working towards Level 1.

For Kylie, therefore, the selected pointers in Level 1 of the Student Outcome Statements provide her with planning criteria to which she relates her own pre-primary goals. The framework serves as a link to the work of the primary school. But she relies still upon her own framework of goals as major criteria and on the kind of evidence of children's achievements provided by the tasks they undertake which are collected in the work sample folders for her own reference and for reporting to parents.


Reporting to Parents and the Principal

Kylie sends a work sample book home to parents at the end of each term which contains 12 selected assessed pieces of work. For Kylie, it is important that each sample is accompanied by an assessment sheet because she wants to make clear to the parents what the child has actually achieved. She has herself received work sample books from other teachers without their comments and she has found these of little use or guidance to her because she could not know what the purpose of a task was or how the child had achieved it, whether with little teacher help or with a great deal. She is strongly motivated in her particular use of the work sample book:

I did the book purely because there are a range of parents who never set foot in the place and they also believe that you go to pre-primary to play and paint. So the book goes home once a term to say we just don't play and paint, we learn all this stuff. So they know their child is not just sitting here and playing with the blocks all day because there's lots of them who will say, "Why do you go, you don't learn anything?" A lot of the work they do is pinned on the walls like most of the construction activities, but the parents might not come in and see it. So the book goes home making clear what we do. These are the skills, and they will know that the child can cut and paste and paint and write and do lots of things.

Kylie attaches to the front of the work sample book a brief description of what the parent will find inside the book, which she identifies for parents as a 'Progress Package' (see Sample 6). Below this, she will offer a brief comment on the child's overall progress. She also requires parents to sign the sheet and offer their own comment.

TERM TWO
Progress Package



Once again your child has been working very solidly throughout the term. I have taken a range of the activities that have been completed over the term to put in the package.


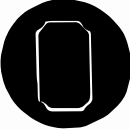


Each activity has a progress checklist attached with a description of the activity to help explain what was expected of your child upon commencement of the activity and to show your child's progress in a variety of Pre-Primary experiences.

Please comment on your child's package in the space provided.


The package needs to be returned to Pre-Primary on:
Thursday 4th July

Teacher's comment:
skills and concept understanding have developed very well over the term. Aysha has become very confident in the class and enjoys telling news to the class.

Parent comments:
Well done

TERM THREE
Progress Package



Once again your child has been working very solidly throughout the term. I have taken a range of the activities that have been completed over the term to put in the package.



Each activity has a progress checklist attached with a description of the activity to help explain what was expected of your child upon commencement of the activity and to show your child's progress in a variety of Pre-Primary experiences.

Please comment on your child's package in the space provided.

The package needs to be returned to Pre-Primary on:
Thursday 27th September

Teacher's comment:
has a well developed understanding of the concepts about animals covered this term. She has shown a solid understanding of the maths concepts covered, her awareness of letter names and letter sounds is excellent.

Parent comments:

Kylie explains the criteria that guide her in this termly report which is attached to the front of the work sample book:

First term it's referring how they've settled in. I don't look at academic things. The comment will be something like, "She's settled in very well, she's made friends." Second term we start telling news, so most of them will have, "X has become very confident in the class setting and enjoys telling news in front of the class." The third term we did lots of animal stuff, so it would be, "has an understanding of animal concepts covered in the class," or something like that. And in third term we started getting into letter names and that sort of thing, so third term refers more to content covered. The fourth term is going to involve a very brief comment that may say, "X has done very well this year, she's been a pleasure to teach." Because I'm writing the report for parents, I'm not going to do anything too complicated.

For Kylie, her termly reports to the parents have emerged from her growing belief that she needed to assert the significance of pre-primary education as an important part of a child's experience. When she started teaching pre-primary:

I felt guilty at the end of the year when I know that every other teacher in the school is writing reports and doing work packages and under all this stress and I'm saying, "End of year, it's just great!" And I thought there's got to be something that goes home from pre-primary as well. Parents expect when I say, "You should take your children to pre-primary every day," they expect written feedback. I mean a lot of parents will say, "Wow, I didn't know you got a report in a pre-primary." And I have said, "This is from me because this is needed." Not that reports are enjoyable!

At the end of the year, Kylie completes a more detailed report for parents which she designed herself as a deliberate synthesis of her eight lists of pre-primary goals (see Sample 7). This report is divided into three lists of achievements against each of which Kylie indicates the child's degree of attainment:

They're the domains which pre-primary teaches. Now, cognitive might include Music, Health, everything. But I didn't include all that because it's just too much information. It's too much like a school report. This is the basics which the child is going to need to get to Grade 1.

In addition to reducing her teaching goals to the key information she feels that parents will be able to understand and relate to, Kylie has a further motive for the items in the lists:

I've only put the ones that I expect them to know at the end of pre-primary and they're all things that the children can do everyday at home. When I first started doing it at the pre-primary in Perth four years ago, I thought that rather than pull each parent aside and say, "Your child can't hold a pencil correctly so practice it," as a parent I can take this home and say, "Oh no, look, can't recognise 1 to 10 without help. We'll have a bit of a go at that over the holidays." They're all things that can be done at home. That's why it's called a "Summary of Development", because it's not a report, it's "Your child can do this." So, it's up to the parent to do with it what they like, whether they practice it over the holidays or whether they don't care what happens to their child next year. It's up to them.

Consistent with her belief in the socialising value of pre-primary for the child's later experience in the primary school, Kylie justifies her focus within the report upon Social and Emotional development:

Because a lot of children come to pre-primary, they've spent four years at home with Mum. no one else, just Mum. No brothers or sisters, so they have no idea how to do any of these things. And until they can do them effectively, they can't do anything else...these are the skills they need when they go to Grade 1. When they have to sit at a desk and wait their turn or when they have to stand up in front of the other children and say something.

Given her detailed work with the Student Outcome Statements, why did Kylie choose not to frame the report in those Outcome Statements which she believed the children achieved during the year?

Because this is for parents. If I put Outcome Statements there, I'd have forty parents come up to me and say, "What about me!" There's a difference in the way I understand things to the way they will understand. I have the background and they don't. I mean, the Outcome Statements are often too abstract even for some teachers.

Parents therefore receive a good deal of information about their children's progress from Kylie, both at the end of each term and at the year's end. Kylie also gives her termly reports to the Grade 1 teacher in the primary school. At the school level, her Principal only requires Kylie to let him go through the yearly reports which he also signs.

However, she is keen to provide the Year 1 teacher with a clear picture of each child's progress over the year and, for this, she has adopted a Pre-primary Assessment framework aimed at 'School Beginners' (see Sample 8). The aspects of a child's 'Language' achievements are illustrated here but the overall profile also includes assessments of 'Cognitive', 'Motor', and 'Social/Emotional' development. Kylie identifies three levels of achievement in the profile; Column 1 indicates the student required no help, Column 2 indicates the student needed some help and Column 3 indicates the student needed lots of help. In all her assessment procedures, Kylie has been eclectic and has collected and adapted ideas and formats from various sources during the years she has been teaching. Of this one, she says:

It was given to me by a School Psych' two years ago and she said to me, "Only do it with children who are at risk." And I thought, "Well, that's ridiculous, why not do it with everyone." So I do it with everyone just to be fair and, I mean, it's a really good pile of information to give to the Grade 1 teacher. Because what Grade 1 teacher is going to wade through pages and pages of a year's worth of records when all they want to know is what can this child do and where do I have to start. It gives them an idea of what the teacher before her thought about the child.

Sample 8: An Extract from Kylie's End-of-Year Profile

LANGUAGE			
WRITTEN			
	1	2	3
Differentiates pictures from print			
Knows a book reads left to right			
Knows right way to hold a book			
Uses letters and their approximations to represent writing			
Identifies own name			
Writes own name			
Recognizes letters in name			
LISTENING			
Acts on 2/3 instructions			
Can answer question related to text			
Listens for 10 minutes when others speak			
Gives a rhyming word			
Retells a simple story or rhyme			

LANGUAGE			
SPOKEN			
	1	2	3
Speaks clearly with a degree of confidence			
Uses expanded sentences			
Can describe an object			
Uses appropriate word order			
Uses past tense correctly			
Stutters			
Difficulty ordering thoughts			
Has difficulty pronouncing sounds eg. 'wed-red'			
Uses baby talk more often than not eg. 'me runned'			
COMMENTS:			

Kylie sees this end of year overview of a child's achievements as in harmony with her pre-primary goals which she sets for her year's work, but also offering her a very specific set of criteria which she sees as more detailed than the information which she gives to parents and the school. As her teaching is based upon her overall aim to prepare her students for Grade 1, she sees the need to provide the Grade 1 teacher with a detailed profile of each child before they enter the primary school.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

Despite or, perhaps, because of missing professional development in First Steps and because of her continuing contact with a strong network of pre-primary teachers, Kylie has clearly developed a thorough assessment system from a range of diverse sources. We have seen that Kylie aims to provide her students with what she sees as the basics for their future work in Year 1 and that she is keen for them to 'have a go', to take risks, and to be confident socially in the context of the classroom. From this perspective, she believes that First Steps as an assessment framework does not cater for the typical pre-primary child:

In Year 1 to 3 in the primary school, its great. But I think in my classroom it's very hard. When it comes to Writing and Spelling and that kind of thing, there are some children who still say, "I can't write", and it's real coaxing. They'll draw a picture. So, basically, without so much as looking at First Steps or putting them on the First Steps Continua, I follow oral language. If I can give them oral skills, then they're a long way ahead of getting nothing at all, aren't they?

Building upon the provision of cooperative professional development in her District in relation to the Outcome Statements, Kylie recognises a particular contribution to her own work:

They've confirmed that I've got to change things in my planning, like my goals have to change so that they are more detailed. My recording can change to suit the Outcome Statements. But it's ultimately what I've actually taught.

Kylie therefore perceives the Outcome Statements primarily as another source she can rely on in order to refine the goals of her teaching. However, she does not see it as implying a significant change in the way she works in the classroom:

I personally believe that you don't have to alter anything in the way you teach. You don't have to alter anything maybe in the way that you program. And you don't have to change the way you stand in front of the class and do things. It's just like the background thinking behind it all. Instead of starting off with a goal, I start off with an Outcome, that's all. I think they fit in really well. Eliza and I last year actually went through the whole of the Outcome Statements and took learning areas, strands, and the sub strand, but then put all the activities that I do during the day in relation to Outcomes. It was really good. I didn't have to make up activities for an Outcome I hadn't covered. I went through my whole day sort of thing and matched it to Outcomes.

We saw earlier, for example, when Kylie was concerned that she was not covering the Technology Outcome Statements, she gradually realised that her students' work with blocks and building houses of particular dimensions did enable them to begin to achieve some of the pointers within the framework. It seems, therefore, that a framework like the Student Outcome Statements which she can see as informing her own pre-primary goals and which harmonises with her perception of her students' achievements across integrated learning areas, Kylie will adapt it to her needs. This is not difficult for her as her whole planning and assessment system has been an on-going adaptation from a range of sources. For her, the impact of these things upon her teaching strategies is primarily to confirm that she is working in appropriate ways.

Assessing and Teaching ESL Children

Within her two groups of children which total 49 students, we have seen that Kylie teaches 10 children who speak a language other than English at home. In her first two years of teaching, Kylie taught a whole K-3 class of Aboriginal children who spoke Nyangumarta in the community. This experience made a strong impression on her and confirmed her wish to specialise in pre-primary work. And it provided her with the determination to prepare such children explicitly for the demands of the primary school. In her present teaching, she does not regard herself as adopting very specific strategies for ESL students:

I don't think I approach the ESL children differently. I may spend more time with them and I simplify what I say. The activities are the same for all the children. They do the same activities. They join in with everything in the same way.

Kylie's own priorities as a pre-primary teacher encourage her in this inclusive approach with all her students:

Look at Maths for instance. I mean I have a group of children who can count to 25 or probably 50 and recognise those numbers too. Then I have a group of children who can only recognise 1 to 5 with a bit of help. I have ESL children in both groups so it doesn't really come into account. I don't know whether I'm doing them an injustice or what. But, as far as I'm concerned, I treat them as they are all coming to school and it is their first year at school, whether they've been to playgroup or whether they've done anything at home or not. "This is your first year at school and this is what you need to know at the end of the year"."

Asked if she felt that a child's linguistic background might make a difference to their achievements in school Kylie replied:

I some cases, yes, in some, no. It's really hard to generalise and say that they need heaps because they speak whatever at home. Take Ashia, for instance, she's a real clever cookie but she doesn't have the confidence. When you look at some of my children, the ESL ones are really high and some of the other ones are really low. But that's for whatever reason.

On the other hand, Kylie identified the factors which, for her, did appear to make a significant difference to the children's adaptation to school:

I think it is age that makes a big difference, a big difference. Where they've been the year before. Whether they've been to playgroup. I used to think if day care helps because the children who're been to day care always seem to be brighter, but it varies. The other thing that makes a difference is where they're born in the family, whether they're first born or last born. I had a group of children who are in Grade 2 now and they were all first born in the family. There was a minimal number who had an elder brother or sister. They were a shocking class, real babies. Everything was really hard to get through. They had no models from an elder child. The children who have an older brother or sister, whether it be one or two years older, they seem to come from home with reading books and they bring in writing.

A related significant factor within the child's background experience has been 'How much the parents have helped them. How much time they've spent with them'.

Consistent with the view that, for her, the child's first language may be less of a significant influence upon their early progress in school than other factors, Kylie does not approach the assessment of her ESL students in a way that is distinctive from her judgements of the progress of all of them:

The way I evaluate them is the same. I mean, knowing the child, my expectation might be different. Some of them you know they can do really well. If they do a shocking job, you say, "That's not their work," sort of thing and you make them think about what they're doing. With the ESL children, I suppose it's just knowing them individually. You know what is their best and you know what they can do better. It's not a matter of the ESL child, it's the individual child.

For Kylie, therefore, her judgements of the child's potential and on-going progress is based upon her knowledge of the child. Although she is unsure, she does not believe that she would use an assessment framework specifically designed for ESL students:

I honestly don't know. I honestly don't think that I need one. Not that I don't cater for them, but I don't want to single them out. Some children are up here and some are down there regardless of who they are or their background. but you know, you just know which ones you have to guide along or to which ones you can say, "Go and do it," and you expect them to do it.

Kylie has strong reasons for being doubtful about assessing ESL children in specific ways, not least because she has discovered variation in their achievements in her classroom which mirror variation in achievements among her other students:

Why pinpoint a group of children because they speak a different language at home? Really. I mean, I know, for instance, that ESL children learn better through pictures and doing things, but that's what pre-primary is anyway. That's what they do all the time. We always have pictures and talk about pictures and describe through pictures and all that sort of thing. I don't think pre-primary

teaching needs to set the children aside. This is for normal mainstream children and it is for ESL children. Pre-primary is just right for ESL children.

In essence, Kylie believes that the pre-primary classroom itself provides an inclusive experience for all her students regardless of their linguistic and cultural background. However, just as she has been wary of using the First Steps Continua with her students because she sees it as being designed on the basis of the likely achievements of the older primary school child, she is aware of a dilemma when applying Student Outcomes Statements for English as her assessment of pre-primary ESL children:

You know, it's quite a racist little document isn't it? "You do it our way or you don't do it," all that sort of thing. I mean, education is quite like that, isn't it? I mean we have three girls in one group and they often sit there and speak in Malay. My aide, not the one I have now, she quite often said, "No girls, talk in English." But I don't, I say to them, "Hey, what were you saying to each other?" Maybe the aide thought we're all here to speak English. "You're here, you learn English." But that's such a racist argument, isn't it? "You're here, you do it our way. Don't speak your own language, don't think in your own language, think my way."

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

Kylie feels that she is committed to continue working on the Student Outcome Statements to inform the assessment procedures she has already put in place. A major reason for this is the feeling of support she has in her present position:

I'm under the impression that they're going to come in and there's going to be no ifs and but's, "You'll do it. You'll use them." So I thought to myself, "Well, do it in a setting where you're comfortable, with a Principal with whom you're comfortable, and hash it out now. Rather than go to a new school and be really unfamiliar with people whom you can't go to and talk with them about it".

Kylie has also benefited from support at District level which helped her deal with the initial difficulties she experience in coming to terms with a new framework:

I think that they weren't as easy as I thought it was going to be. It was hard for me. I think some of the things fitted in with my goals, but others didn't. And I was trying to push them into boxes where they weren't really applicable. And then I found, as I was going through them, Like I went through every pointer and I said, "OK, well this pointer here, 'demonstrate personal hygiene rules' which leads back to what it means to be healthy and recall what blah blah blah." I mean we do that every day. We wash our hands before we have our fruit, we flush the toilet, all that sort of stuff. That's not one of my goals though. And I just found that there is so much more in the Outcome Statements that were listed which I hadn't included in my personal goals.

Once Kylie, in cooperation with pre-primary colleagues, could accommodate the new framework in terms of its pointers of students achievements within her own goals and her own daily activities, she realised that there was scope for her own specific interpretations:

I can say I do this, this, and this, and I'm covering the Outcome Statement. But another pre-primary teacher might say, "I do this, this, ad this," and they are slightly different. But they may complement each other, if you know what I mean. They are also doing the same thing. What I do is different to what someone else

does, but it can all be incorporated. so that's why we are doing it as a District, because we can all go away with, "This is it, we've got a workable document that we can all use." It's not just one person, it's six people getting together and saying, "Right e o." But they might have the same assessment goals they may have less, they may have more. I think, by writing our own pointers, it's going to come down to things that you do in the pre-primary classroom that will cover the Outcome Statement.

The initial strangeness of the framework was, for Kylie, a matter of terminology in the framework itself: 'only the wording is different'. She sees this as the major and, perhaps, only problem with the Student Outcomes Statements:

If they were just worded more clearly, in layman's terms I suppose, they would be so simple and no one would worry about them. For the teacher's understanding, especially like recent graduates. I mean, if you're given a pile of Outcome Statements in a book without the pointers, without looking at the pointers at first glance, you'd say, "What are they talking about?" It's only once you've got the pointers that you can look at them and say, "That's what it actually means. That's what were looking for."

Once able to personalise and relate interpretation to her way of working, Kylie sees particular potential in the Student Outcome Statements as a source of refinement in her own work:

I'm not happy with my goals at present. They need to be changed. Not changed, but updated. After looking at the Outcome Statements, there's heaps of stuff that I'm doing, but I'm not listing it down as goals. They have more scope. They include more things than I ever thought of. They ARE my goals. Mine are really basic for language, but there's a whole range of things in the Outcome Statements for English that I do anyway. I don't have them down as goals at present because I do them informally. So, that's why my goals need to be re-hashed.

One thing Kylie feels sure about is that the new framework will not demand a radical shift in the way she teaches. For her, what she describes as 'the unstructured environment' of the pre-primary classroom has to be maintained:

I don't think I would change what I do in the classroom. I see Outcome Statements as a change in my actual programming. They are a change for me. It's not a change for what other people would see in my classroom or in the reports.

Kylie also believes that she would not base her reporting to parents on the Outcome Statements:

My children can be in Level 1 and they can be in Level 1 up to Grade 2 as well. And parents don't see that the child is making any progress. I mean, some of the Statements are really airy fairy too and, being a teacher for seven years, you can sort of get your own general gist of it. But, I mean, there's a lot of people out there who have no idea of anything that actually goes on in the pre-primary. So it needs to be really basic. A five page document is no good for parents. Parents want to know whether their child can write their name, count, or whether they can't yet read and that sort of thing.

Kylie believes that she is 'obligated' to report to parents in a thorough but clear way. She would therefore maintain her present system of work sample books with its task assessment sheets and her annual 'Summary of Development'. The Outcome Statements framework she sees serving only as an internal documentation for her and the school and, therefore, as inappropriate for feedback to parents:

No, it wouldn't be in Outcomes purely for the fact that they could be on Level 1 through their primary school career and the parents will say, "Well, what do you teach at that school?" So you need to have just the basic things that say, "This is what they've achieved or this is what they haven't achieved. This is what I expected of them." Not in Outcome Statement form though. Not in pointer form either. But in the form that I'm doing now that says, "This is what I wanted them to do, and they've attained it, partially attained it, or haven't attained it at all."

On the other hand, if she was required to report to the Principal using Student Outcome Statements criteria:

I think I'd have to. That's a hard question. I think I'd cope with it. It's just a matter of this is what I've done at the moment, this is easiest at the moment. I'll keep with it.

However, she imagines that the Outcome Statements could serve as a recording system for her and, crucially, as a basis for information for the Grade 1 teacher in the primary school instead of her present use of the 'Pre-Primary Assessment for School Beginners' with which she is a little uneasy given that it was originally designed for children with learning risks:

You could possibly do your actual year records with just Outcomes. Names down the side, Outcomes across the top, then a number 1,2 or 3. I mean, that would be the most idealistic way of recording. That would be so simple...It doesn't matter if you have thirty Outcomes and thirty children. You would have a file for each child. By doing it like this, you can take it to the Grade 1 teacher and she would say, "Right, Mark, let's have a good look at Mark. This is what they said last year, this is what I say this year." And it's a scale with all the work on.

Kylie has a number of reasons for her present enthusiasm for the Student Outcome Statements. She appreciates the potential of teachers sharing a common language for assessment purposes and what this might mean for the individual child during schooling:

If every teacher recorded in Outcome Statements it would be perfect. It's like the Rigby Maths system that came out years ago. And they had record books that started in pre-primary and went all the way up to Grade 7. So you had all the Maths records of each child in this book...And everyone was thinking along the same lines. Everyone's understanding of the concept was the same. If that happens with Student Outcome Statements, it would be perfect, because it could be produced so that, "This is the record book of Johnny Smith, starting at pre-primary and going up to Grade 7, and his records are in here." And it could go from teacher to teacher and school to school and it would be just passed on and it could also be your class record.

However, Kylie has an even stronger motive for becoming more familiar with the Student Outcome Statements and for integrating them in more detail in her own planning and assessment practices in the future:

Student Outcome Statements, if everyone takes them on, will actually put junior primary teachers back one step closer to what pre-primary is. Because pre-primary is totally integrated and I see the Outcome Statements are like that too.

As we have seen, this motive to keep forming links between pre-primary education and the child's subsequent school experience is a major reason why Kylie does not want a distinct pre-primary assessment framework but prefers a common assessment framework:

I think it will draw pre-primary back into the school. I mean, there's a lot of changes in pre-primary happening at the moment with it going full-time and that sort of thing. I mean, I'm quite happy about it because I truly believe that pre-primary is part of the school and should be included. But there are a lot of teachers who don't share this view. They say, "We're over here and we'll stay over here. We won't share anything." That sort of thing. I get along with the primary teachers but I don't like the thought of believing that I'm special and I should be included in everything without saying anything. I want to make sure my children are included in the same kind of assessment as the primary children.

Perhaps it is understandable, therefore, that this wish for inclusivity is also echoed in her uncertainties about any distinct assessment of the ESL child in the future. For Kylie, close personal knowledge of her students and their progress is the basis on which she strives to prepare them for entry into the primary classroom. She recognises differences in her students backgrounds, but regards linguistic diversity as but one of a range of factors which she has to accommodate and work with during her teaching. She also believes that the assessment system which she has developed, based upon a specific set of pre-primary goals, is sufficiently inclusive for all her students to reveal those capabilities which she regards as the foundation for their later success in the primary school.

PERTH METROPOLITAN CASE STUDIES

**Janet at Greenway Intensive Language
Centre**

**Marion at Greenway Intensive Language
Centre**

**Yuen at Greenway Intensive Language
Centre**

Aimee at Southern Primary

Rose at Harthill Primary

Elizabeth at Harthill Pre Primary

Linda at Harthill Pre-Primary

Janet at Greenway Intensive Language Centre

Mary Rohl

The School Context

The teachers who are the subjects of the following three case studies, Janet, Marion and Yuen all teach at Greenway Intensive Language Centre (ILC), which is part of Greenway Primary School. The main school is 80 years old and is situated in Greenway, an established suburban area which contains some new housing development. During the late 1970's a number of refugees were placed in a short term hostel in Greenway. The Intensive Language Centre evolved from the need to accommodate the needs of the refugee children. Initially the staff at the centre consisted of three specialist teachers who worked in three classes. Although the Greenway Primary School Principal has overall responsibility for the centre, it is managed by a Deputy Principal. There are six classroom teachers in the centre who are helped by full time Vietnamese and Chinese assistants and a part time assistant from Bosnia. The Deputy Principal believes it is extremely important for the Intensive Language Centre to be involved in appropriate aspects of the mainstream school planning and policy decision making processes. All six centre teachers are involved in creating the School Development Plan, which consists of three sections, Performance Indicators for the school as a whole, Performance Indicators for the mainstream school and Performance Indicators for the Intensive Language Centre. This gives recognition to the different needs of the school population. The staff of the mainstream school have recently formulated a monitoring and evaluation system which relates to each of the eight learning areas identified in the Student Outcome Statements. The Intensive Language Centre teachers feel that these are inappropriate for their children and have developed their own system of monitoring and evaluation which is based on the **ALL Framework** and incorporates the ESL Bandscales. This system is documented in the statement on the next page of this introduction.

There are approximately 95 enrolments in the Intensive Language Centre and 189 in the main school, which caters for Kindergarten to Year 7. The mainstream school consists of children from the local area and children from a residential hospital. Many of the children who come to the Intensive Language Centre are refugees: approximately 50% of the most recent arrivals come from Bosnia; the others come from China and various other countries. The children are bussed into the Intensive Language Centre from surrounding suburbs. The Intensive Language Centre classes are divided into three levels: Junior (5- and 6-year-olds); Intermediate (mature 7-year-olds, 8- and 9-year-olds and immature 10-year-olds); and Senior (mature 10-year-olds and 11- and 12-year olds). At each level there is a Phase 1 and a Phase 2 class. Phase 1 is for children in the early stages of learning English as a second language and Phase 2 is for children who have developed some English but are still need a great deal of support.

Children arrive at the Intensive Language Centre through out the year. When new children arrive, the Deputy Principal has an informal interview with the parents in order to collect an extensive range of information, which is used to determine whether to place the children in Phase 1 or Phase 2. On the whole it is expected that new arrivals will go into Phase 1, but occasionally a child who has learned English as a foreign language in his or her home country will go directly into Phase 2.

GREENWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROGRAM NUMBER: 10.1

PROGRAM NAME: Intensive Language Centre Program

LINE MANAGER:

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program is for students who are newly arrived in Australia and have commenced school with no or limited English skills due to a non-English speaking background. Each student is eligible for a maximum of four terms of full-time English instruction.

The program is based on the ALL Curriculum model which addresses the five interrelated goals of second language learning: Sociocultural, Learning how to learn, Language awareness, General Knowledge and Communication.

These goals are not planned for or evaluated as discrete elements, but are achieved and evaluated through the same activities

SYSTEM DATA TO BE COLLECTED

For the purpose of judging the effectiveness of this program, information on students' background and academic performance will be gathered via the ILC's focussed evaluation process on the degree of progress the learner exiting the program has made in meeting the interrelated goals of the program.

Such data will then be used to place the student on the ESL Bandscales

STANDARDS FOR JUDGING THE PROGRAM

Because of the fact that the extremely diverse range of student backgrounds makes qualitative judgements of achievements difficult, and that the Bandscales are yet to be benchmarked, the 0-5 standards for judging will not be applied. The ILC Deputy will instead, collate the achievements as expressed by the ESL Bandscales placement to demonstrate the number of students achieving at each Bandscale level.

This information will be viewed in the light of student entry points.

This data will, over time, provide a means to make comparative judgements of the success of the program

When the children are ready to leave the Intensive Language Centre they spend some time if it is possible, in an 'on site' mainstream classroom to give them experience of a new environment and help ease the transition from the Intensive Language Centre to a mainstream school.

The teachers in the Intensive Language Centre assess the children using a process called Negotiated Evaluation (Woodward, 1993), which forms the basis of reports to parents. Negotiated Evaluation is also used to place the children on the ESL Bandscales (McKay, 1994). The teachers have spent two to three years examining the content and use of the Bandscales and in the year following our study, they plan to explore ways of using the Bandscales to report to mainstream schools. On the whole they feel that the Bandscales enable them to give a detailed and accurate picture of the children's attainments which reflects the nature of second language development.

In addition to their work with the ESL Bandscales, during the year preceding the study, the teachers at Greenway Intensive Language Centre were involved in a number of workshops that explored the appropriateness of the English Student Outcome Statements for use with ESL children. Teachers from other Primary and Secondary Intensive Language Centres, as well as other ESL staff from the Education Department of Western Australia were also involved in the workshops. As a result of these workshops and consultation across all the Intensive language Centres, a letter was sent to the Director of Curriculum. The letter outlined a number of concerns identified by the teachers about the English Student Outcome Statements. It is not possible to capture the richness and complexity of the debate in this introduction to the case studies at Greenway. However, a brief outline of some of the teachers' concerns is given below. Six of the teachers at the Intensive Language Centre as a group met with the researchers and explained their responses to the Student Outcome Statements as follows:

1. The inclusivity and effectiveness of the Student Outcome Statements in relation to newly arrived ESL children in their first twelve months in school.

The teachers are concerned that the Student Outcome Statements have been written essentially for English speaking children. However, the teachers do acknowledge that in the introduction to the Student Outcome Statements, it is stated that the inclusivity and effectiveness of these for ESL and newly arrived children in the first twelve months of school in Australia are being monitored. They would like information on who is doing the monitoring and where and how it is being carried out.

2. Other documents specifically written for the purpose of assessing ESL children.

Although some of the teachers argued that the Student Outcome Statements could be modified to make them more inclusive, they felt this would result in an unwieldy document. In addition to this, they pointed to other assessment documents specifically designed for ESL learners, that they feel are appropriate. They commented on the usefulness of the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales and the ESL Framework of Stages (1991). Their feeling is that even if it were possible to modify the Student Outcome Statements, it might still be problematic in relation to older ESL children who are literate in their home language. To suggest that newly arrived ESL children in Year 5 (for example) are at Level 1 of the Student Outcome Statements, when they can read and write in their own languages would be to misrepresent their language and literacy attainments.

3. First and second language acquisition.

The teachers argued that although some of the processes involved in first and second language acquisition are similar, the Student Outcome Statements are based on the premise that children have been speaking English from birth. This assumes that they have completed the early phases of English language acquisition. In addition to this the school context, age and level of literacy in a first language influences the ESL learners progress. The Student Outcome Statements do not take these differences into account and therefore do not acknowledge the diverse developmental profiles and progress of ESL children.

4. Assumptions of implicit knowledge of English.

This reflects the teachers' concern about a particular aspect of Level 1 Listening and Speaking of the Student Outcome Statements. The subsection on Linguistic Structures states that children will draw on their own implicit knowledge of English. ESL learners in the early stages of development may have implicit linguistic knowledge in their home language, but not in English. Thus, this particular Student Outcome Statement discriminates against ESL learners.

5. The stages of progress for newly arrived ESL children in their first twelve months of school in Australia.

The teachers noted that many ESL children make rapid progress in their first twelve months of school in Australia. This progress happens within Level 1 of the Student Outcome Statements. Thus the stages of development are not recognised or documented. Consequently ESL children may not appear to have made any progress during their first year in school.

6. The use of the Student Outcome Statements for reporting to children and parents.

Because the Student Outcome Statements do not allow for fine indicators of progress, newly arrived ESL children are likely to remain in Level 1 for the first year of schooling. Using this information for reporting to parents gives a false and potentially damaging profile of the child. Such misrepresentation also has implications for the children's self esteem and their future placement in school.

In conclusion, one of the teachers summarised the position with the following comments:

At some point in time an ESL student's progress could be fairly plotted using either the Student Outcome Statements, the Bandscales or the ESL Scales. This time would vary from student to student. However in our experience and professional judgement we feel that this would not be within the first twelve months of learning English as a second language. We believe that the Bandscales or the ESL Scales should be used for this first year of assessment, planning and reporting. After that time the Student Outcome Statements document would suffice, provided some changes are made that recognise the process of ESL learning and ESL students, rather than being in deficit, are given credit for their progress.

For further discussion of these issues see the section entitled *Janet's Views on Assessment Frameworks*.

The Classroom Context

Janet is a teacher at the Intensive Language Centre (ILC) at Greenway Primary School. She feels as if she's been there a *hundred and thirteen years*, but admits to *about sixteen to eighteen years; before it was a Language Centre...before Language Centres existed*. Her classroom is a transportable building which houses two classes and which she shares with Kathy who teaches *the Phase Ones, the new kids*. Janet is sometimes helped by an assistant who speaks Vietnamese and French. At the very end of the year as her class has grown from 18 to 25 students, she is helped by another teacher for 50% of the time.

Janet's classroom walls display some children's artwork and towards the end of the year, one area has taken on an underwater theme, but the main emphasis seems to be on learning the English vocabulary and constructions which will help the children survive in Australian schools and society. An extract from material on the blackboard which is targeted at the children with the least amount of English follows:

Did you have a good time at the beach?

I had a good swim.

I found a beautiful shell.

I made a sandcastle.

I wore my hat and put on my sunscreen.

The sand got in my lunch.

I played on my boogie board.

A seagull ate my sandwich.

In Janet's classroom it is not unusual to see children jumping up and down for joy at their linguistic achievements. When I comment on this excitement Janet describes an incident:

You should have been here this afternoon. Jeffrey wrote a story. Jeffrey has always written two lines before, and then covered the rest of it with ferocious looking fighting men and today he wrote a page and a half and brought it out and so you make a celebration. You say, 'Jeffrey come here', and you shake his hand, or you give him a high five, and you say to the kids, 'Listen to this!' and they all clap. Jeffrey goes home feeling a million dollars and because they've done it to him, he does it to others and you develop this thing in your classroom. And a lot of it is due to negotiated evaluation, I think it's this celebration of success. Someone does something. You celebrate, you say 'Would you believe this? This is a miracle!' and everybody knows and they laugh at each other and they get pleased for each other.

Janet teaches a group of children who are in the Year 3, 4 and 5 chronological age range. Most of the children have arrived in Australia towards the beginning of the year, although several arrived the previous year and have been in the *first phase* class before being placed with Janet. In August, at the time of our first interview with Janet, there are 18 children in the class, which she says is a big number for the Centre. These children come from a wide variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Six are Serbian, Bosnian or Croatian, one of them having a Hungarian parent. Two children speak Italian and two speak Mandarin. There are two girls from Ethiopia who speak different African languages and there are individual speakers of French, Kurdish, Japanese, Thai, Romanian and Tamil. Janet points out that *the biggest language [group] is Bosnian*.

Janet organises the classroom so that on the whole the children do not speak their own languages, although *it doesn't bother me if they do so long as it's not exclusive for other children*. Initially children may write in their own language *for the first couple of months*. However, as many of the children have come from war-ravaged countries, their level of literacy in their own language may be very low:

The two Ethiopians hadn't been to school in their own country because of the war; the two Chinese boys, one of them had two or three years [of schooling], the other virtually none.

As Janet explains, there are many differences in the children's backgrounds which she has to consider when planning her program:

The kids out of Bosnia and the boy from Japan are very sophisticated in their learning. So you not only have the difference in schooling, but you have a degree of sophistication that comes with dealing with ideas and concepts that are much more advanced. So you get the two girls from Ethiopia that are older, but really don't have the faintest idea about the world around them and what language does, and the younger Bosnian girls who come from well educated families. You have the educational difference in schooling, the language difference in a sense that some have English in their homes and you have the conceptual level between the kids.

The composition of the class at any one time is a function of *global warfare* and *current immigration laws*. Some of the children have witnessed terrible atrocities in their home countries:

I don't think any of us will ever know what it's done to them. Not, certainly while they're at school. I mean these things sit in kids heads...occasionally it comes out at school but occasionally they have nightmares. They make associations that you don't think they're going to, bit frightening, but I don't think we really know what those Bosnian kids, what the Kurds...They say, "I saw my grandfather shot", or, "We went out in the morning and there was a head on the doorstep". They tell you things like that. But, I don't think that's really hit them yet.

As we shall see later when we look at evaluation, every activity in this classroom has been carefully planned to facilitate some aspect of language development and there is an emphasis on oral language, which results in a busy, noisy classroom: *It gets very noisy sometimes. It doesn't bother me because so long as it's a working noise I don't really care.* The children usually work in small groups and have learned to be independent. Janet explains how she has trained the children to work in groups:

If you're going to have an ESL class you're going to have to work in groups, you just can't work as a class. It becomes teacher centred and not enough kids get to talk, so you've got to have kids who can work in groups and you've got to be able to leave them because you can't, I mean it's just something that is a focus and in the early days of a class, you spend a huge amount of time getting kids to work together. And there are heaps of collaborative learning strategies and cooperative learning strategies that you do until they become independent. And they are kids and they will still muck around sometimes and that's fine, and they will still get into trouble and if they do I say, 'Fine. Go and sit in the chair. And when you are ready you can come back and join the group', and that's all that has to happen, they are just excluded temporarily.

Apart from the few occasions when children are reminded, *Go and sit on your chair*, there is very little visible control in this classroom, but as Janet explains:

It's a velvet glove, but inside it's an iron fist and they know. They know that there's a dragon and that it's very wise to leave it sleeping.

The children have to learn to cooperate in order to complete the many group activities in this classroom:

There's very little individual stuff. They can work individually and sometimes they do have to work individually, but it seems to me, that they're in here to learn English and you don't learn English terribly well if you're writing on a piece of paper by yourself for too long. And one of the things that you notice with working collaboratively and cooperatively is that they argue so much about the language, about who's right and who's wrong and that's got to be a good thing because they're saying, 'No, it doesn't go there because...' And as soon as they start saying that, well I'm happy, because they're negotiating meaning...Our purpose is to remove the teacher as much possible and let kids talk and read.

Janet plans for two or three different levels in her classroom. Whilst she points out that this is not ideal, it's what works for her in her classroom:

When people say, 'I teach for individual differences and I have a program for each of the children', I think, 'Pigs feet you do.' It's not possible to meet that range of demands. So there isn't an easy answer.

She uses a range of activities which require the children to interact with her and each other and she has perfected these over her time in the Centre. Her use of modelled writing as the basis for her reading program is particularly interesting. During this activity she sits at the easel, on which she has placed large sheets of butchers' paper, while the children sit in a semi-circle on the floor around her. Janet composes a story, thinking aloud in order to demonstrate the writing process to the children. As she writes the story she edits, again thinking aloud and draws the children's attention to various linguistic features. The story may be about the class theme, it may be an adaptation of a book or poem they've read, or it may be a story she has created which contains the names of the children in the class.

On one occasion she writes the story of *The Owl and the Pussycat* in a prose format. Janet tells the children, *You can't use the words of the poem.* She writes *Owl and Pussycat* and then says, *If you have a noun you must have an article.* Accordingly she inserts *the* in front of both nouns. She continues to talk and write: *It was a beautiful sunny day. The sea was blue and sparkling.* After more discussion she inserts *calm and* in front of *blue*. She continues the story as follows, allowing the children to predict what she's going to write and to discuss linguistic features:

An owl and a pussycat were walking on the beach. They found a small wooden boat with a red sail.

'Let's go sailing', said the owl. We'll ask this man if we can borrow his boat.'

Yes', said the pussycat, 'I love sailing. I'll just go home and get my hat and sunscreen'.

'And I'll get my hat and my guitar. I'll also get some honey for tea and some money', said the owl.

Janet returns to the beginning of the story for editing and continues to talk and write. Then it's the children's turn to write the story. Janet revises the use of paragraphs and models a format for the story structure:

1. *Getting ready*
2. *Being in the boat*
3. *What happened when they bought the ring*
4. *Getting married*
5. *After the wedding*

The children then write their own stories in five paragraphs. This session is a very carefully planned component of Janet's integrated program which relates to the ongoing theme of *transport* in that the animals go on a voyage. Further, *The Owl and the Pussycat* poem which is being performed by the class at the whole school assembly is the catalyst for various language activities as Janet brings in books about owls which she uses to teach research skills and the writing of expository texts. In the session which has just been described Janet has a focus on narrative structure, nouns, adjectives, articles, editing and paragraphing. The themes of *transport* and *The Owl and the Pussycat* run through many of the activities and written outputs that will be described in the course of this case study.

Janet spends about an hour every day in the modelled writing/reading process. She explains how she came to use modelled writing as the basis of her reading program:

We [Janet and a teacher who was previously at the Centre] found a group of kids who were not learning to read and we looked at them and we said, 'Basically they have a common factor. It is the fact that they are not literate in their own language'. We worked out what we thought was happening with these kids' reading, did lots of teaching and tried lots of ideas about how to try and make things better for them. At the end of that time we came up with some conclusions with what was happening with these kids and when we looked at them we thought basically that's the same for all ESL kids: there are lots of factors in kid's learning to read in the second language that we are ignoring. But one of the things that came out very strongly was that we were ignoring the use of writing when we taught these kids to read. And that picking up a book that was written for first language speakers and trying to use that for reading is a nightmare for kids because the syntax is unpredictable, the vocab is too much, the cultural thing of it is so far removed, the content in it is babyish and you can't hang anything on it.

Having identified the nature of the problem, Janet and her colleague devised a way of teaching reading to her ESL students through modelled writing:

So what we did was, worked out a way of writing text for kids that included the content of the classroom. The language we were actually using in the classroom incorporated aspects of the language that we wanted to teach them. Then, we suddenly thought, 'We do modelled writing everyday. Why don't we use modelled writing, not only as a medium to teach modelled writing, but why don't we use it as a way of creating texts for kids to read as we write?' And normally on a good day, once I've written [the story], I sit down very quickly, write it on a piece of paper which gets photocopied which goes into a scrap book which is their reading for the night. So they actually read that when they go home. Modelled writing is geared closely to creating a text that I can use tomorrow and the next day and they can take and read to their parents.

Janet explains how she plans for and teaches the skills and concepts that she has identified as important and how she adds others that assume importance during the course of a lesson:

I work out at the beginning of term the kind of things I want to happen in writing and I build that into it. So all the time when you are writing you are thinking, 'Hello, here's an opportunity for me to drop in a new word because its not going to throw them. It's in context and its not too much for them.' I ask them sometimes about spelling words. I say to them, 'Is this a singular or plural word?' So I actually discuss the grammar of the language whilst I'm doing it. So they're watching the process of writing and they're involved in thinking about what word might come next, that kind of stuff.

In addition to making the writing process explicit and providing customised reading material, Janet may use the text for other language-based activities such as oral cloze, punctuation, text reconstruction and identifying errors in oral reading: *They like it when I read it, and read it with mistakes.*

Sample 1: Scenario for the group activity

You are going on a sailing boat to an island. People live on the island and there are shops there. Your boat is 10 metres long and your voyage will take 3 days and 2 nights. There are 3 of you and you have to sail the ship yourselves. What will you need to take? Think about:

1. What kind of food and how much?
2. The weather may be hot or cold, rainy or windy. What will you need to feel comfortable?
3. How will you know which way to go? What will you need to guide you.
4. What other things will you need?

Get a piece of paper and write a list. Make your list under 3 headings.

1. Food.
2. clothes
3. Other things.

This seems to be the most teacher-directed activity of the day. Many other activities are conducted independently after a structured lead in discussion with Janet. These activities she refers to as *travelling clusters*, as children initially work with a partner or small group and then with the information they've gained from discussion and perhaps reading with the group, they either join with another group or the groups reform. These group activities are often based on the class theme, but on one occasion the content involves ways in which the school council may work to make the school a better place.

On another occasion, again on the theme of *transport*, the children are given a brief scenario to read in their groups and they are required to reason with each other about the things they will need to take with them on a voyage. See Sample 1

There is lots of excited chatter as the groups begin to decide on the favourite foods that they would like to take. They then move on to the other items they will need, constantly referring to the text for instructions. Janet moves from group to group and focuses the children on the directions: *What sort of clothes will you need for hot weather? For cold weather? What else will you need? What if someone falls in the sea?* The groups write their lists as instructed, orally justify them to Janet and join with another group to compare lists. They are then required to reduce their lists to ten items only, justifying the reasons for inclusion and exclusion. Janet models an appropriate sentence format: *Say, 'I agree with you', or, 'I don't agree with you'. We're going to take ___ because...* Finally the groups get together with Janet and she writes down the thirteen items that remain across the lists which are then further reduced by the whole group. *Meat* is one item deleted *because there's no fridge*, whereas *sunscreen* is approved of by all children. Janet explains her purposes for this activity, beginning with the oral language component:

I wanted to get them justifying their opinions and I could have done that by orally saying, 'This is what you're going to do', but we think here that at every opportunity, you present them with a text. And one of the things these kids have trouble with when they leave here is following instructions and that's feedback from schools. So since I last saw you, we spent lots of time doing science experiments and following instructions. So that's why [the piece of reading] didn't start off to be the most important thing, but the speaking in groups and justifying and thinking and making logical decisions and all that stuff was.

She then outlines the reading and writing purposes of the activity:

*But it just seemed an ideal opportunity to make it into a reading exercise. You just stick reading in everywhere basically. So yes the reading had information. I dropped in two words that I thought they wouldn't know but I thought that the text would give enough clues. So *voyage* was one and I figured that *comfortable* they might not have come across, but there wasn't a group that couldn't work it out...I wanted to direct their thinking. That's why the four sections are there, otherwise they just rush around all over the place. And the headings were because this term in the library I want to do more research skills and then get them to look at how things are set out and to actually use headings to find information. And making a list was just a writing form.*

This language activity is typical of Janet's program in which she integrates modes of language. Such activities have a particular emphasis on oral language interactions which require the children to cooperate, to reason and to use oral language in order to complete tasks successfully. She may also use some short motivating activities to give children practice in concepts she's teaching. One of these is the *pronoun game* in which about eight children, sitting in a circle pass a

small soft toy to each other. As each child gets the toy Janet asks a predetermined set of questions which require appropriate responses:

Whose is it? It's mine/ours.

Who will you give it to? I'll give it to him/her/them.

Who's got it? She's/He's got it/They've got it.

If the children give an incorrect response they're out. As the game progresses and the more advanced language users are still in the pace quickens and there is lots of excitement and laughter. The other teacher in the room plays the game very slowly with the children whose language is more limited and only asks the first two questions. Janet explains how she invented the idea, showing the amount of thought that, even after so many years of teaching, she puts into such a short, simple activity:

I struggled for years and years. Every time you write down you are going to do pronouns. I've tried over the years to develop all sorts of complex games and I've had books and coats and shoes and kids taking things and doing things, and on the whole it's tedious. And so, a couple of months ago I was thinking, 'What am I going to do with these pronouns after all this time?' And I was working out something complicated and I thought I would start off with doing that, and I thought, 'I don't have to any more than that basically. That will knock it on the head, and so if once a week I just do that for ten minutes, it's an automatic response'... They tend to be the pronouns that they use incorrectly, so yes, it is a very easy way of doing it...It becomes very automatic, which is really what we want them to do. Stuff like pronouns, we don't want the kids to have to think, 'Now do I say he or she or her or whatever?' So an automatic thing that takes ten minutes. It's a very easy way to do it. In fact I am pleased about it.

The activities which have been described are only a very small sample of the many interactive language experiences observed in Janet's classroom. She also addresses other areas of the curriculum. Maths is taught as a subject in its own right, whereas Science, Health and Social Studies topics are primarily seen as vehicles for language learning, although skills and content from the curriculum areas are taught through language.

Janet's Views on Intensive Language Centres

When Janet arrived at Greenway Primary School the children were initially taught on a withdrawal basis. The ESL staff were not happy with this arrangement so *we investigated the Language Centres*. Janet explains her justification for Intensive Language Centres on several occasions and how the fact that she is situated in a Centre affects her evaluation and pedagogy. At our first interview she tells why she was instrumental in the setting up of the Centre in its present form. She begins by pointing out some of the disadvantages of placing new arrivals in mainstream classrooms:

Well, taking kids out of their class is pretty foolish and I wouldn't do that if I was an ESL teacher in a mainstream school anyway. I think language is a context based thing and you don't teach it by removing them and trying to fix up what the classroom teacher thought was wrong. So, if the classroom teacher gives a kid an activity because it's too hard, a tendency was to say, 'Look, this kid can't do this activity. We will teach you how to do it'. Which is not necessarily what the kid needed at all. It was just random shots, hoping that you hit something and ignoring the total understanding

of language learning. It seems like a foolish thing to do. There are largish groups of children whose schooling has been dislocated because they have been taken out and given this 'Mickey Mouse' type language program.

She contrasts this with where she sees the positive aspects of intensive Language Centres:

It seemed better to put them together and develop a program which will improve the total education of the child and be the language part of it and be the content and let them - the most important thing - let them go at the speed they want to. Sit quietly for three weeks if they didn't want to talk. I am conscious of the fact that there are two schools [of thought]: one says Language Centres; and one says Mainstream and give them support. I believe in Language Centres or I wouldn't be here...It's a case of what we think is the best way to go. I've worked in these places, I've seen what we can do with kids and I believe very strongly [in Intensive Language Centres].

Janet also has very definite ideas about the social and emotional aspects of the children's development in the Centre in general and in her own classroom in particular:

I watch kids come into the classroom and I can only speak for what happens here, and what I get from people who are doing the mainstream class, where teachers are unsympathetic, or the class is too big or a million reasons why the kid has been shattered. And frequently I've picked up the trauma at the end, after kids have been to a mainstream school sometimes for a term and nothing is working. And I get the kid and it takes me ages to undo the damage to the self-esteem that kids have. We believe very strongly in building up kids' identity...not protecting them in the sense of shielding them, but creating situations where they can come at things at their own speed and not feel embarrassed and not be laughed at and not think they are a failure. So we give them things they can do.

Janet gives an example of how she is able to use particular strategies to help children settle in to the Centre, which might not be possible in a mainstream classroom:

You watch kids come and sit quietly for the first couple of days and you get cunning, and I'll tell you how you get cunning, because this is a good story. Ken, the Japanese boy, really just lovely, came maybe last term sometime and he was just totally bereft and upset and his eyes were filled with tears each morning...In the Language Centre we have the freedom to feel for these kids. So at 2 o'clock I would do nice things so he would get involved and not want to go home, but it was still a struggle. His mother would come at 2 o'clock, and she would say, "Do you want to come home?", and I would start things just before 2, so he would say, "No, I'll just finish this". I gradually strung him along, until I changed modelled writing time to 2 o'clock and wrote a story with Ken as the hero, and it was an exercise for two weeks everyday. Ken did this wonderful thing, saved children in the classroom and everyone said he was a hero. At the end of two weeks Ken couldn't wait 'til 2 o'clock. He didn't want to go home at all. It took that [to settle him in].

Now mainstream teachers don't have the feel for it or the freedom to do that kind of thing... In terms of making friends and feeling good and just the socialness of it, this is a very warm place. Kids leave thinking, 'I'm pretty good'...It's hard enough to learn English in your own country, it's hard enough to go to school in another

country and suffer the difficulties of dislocation of shifting countries without having to fail. That's why we think Language Centres work better.

When asked if she sees the Intensive Language Centre as a *sheltered* environment, Janet has some reservations about the use of this word to describe her classroom:

It's sheltered, although that's a bad word, because it almost presumes a mother-hen type thing. I don't protect them from the nasties of the world. They still have to go out to the playground and get on with mainstream kids and sport and that kind of stuff. It's not sheltered. It's geared at success, it's geared at them working together and being cooperative.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Janet says that she doesn't often use the word *assessment* and feels very worried with it as it has, for her, connotations of tests and numerical records. She finds *evaluation* a much more gentle term and is *comfortable* with it as she sees it as *planning for a child's future*, whereas she sees *assessment* as associated with *school profiles and comparison of children*. Accordingly, in the following discussion of Janet's theories and practices the term *evaluation* will be used.

Negotiated Evaluation

Janet uses a process called *Negotiated Evaluation* in order to ensure that the three *stakeholders* (child, teacher and parent) are all involved in the evaluation of each child's language. She has written a document for the Education Department of Western Australia in which she explains the use of this process:

Sample 2: Janet's Written Explanation of Negotiated Evaluation

Negotiated Evaluation And Bandscales

Negotiated Evaluation is based on Helen Woodward's work "Negotiated Evaluation" (PETA 1993). It is based on a model Woodward represents thus.



asserting that the three stakeholders should be involved in the process of evaluation The model requires that:

- children and teachers should share achievements and expectations
- these should be negotiated with students
- these should be negotiated with parents
- these should be shared when they happen.

To enable these to happen the following procedure is followed at GILC. While this incorporates the essence of Woodward's ideas, they have been modified to suit GILC.

1. Teachers identify key features to be observed (these come from the ESL Bandscales).
2. They choose 3 or 4 students.
3. An observation sheet is made available on which both teacher and student record information.
4. The child and teacher negotiate and evaluate for 5 days.
5. The child writes a self evaluation and the teacher writes a report. This is discussed and the two form the final report which is sent home.
6. The child is placed on the ESL Bandscale following each evaluation. This provides a record of their progress in Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing
7. Parents may comment on the report or request an interview.

8. The report is returned to the school. The cycle is repeated with different students each week. Thus in a year the child would receive four reports.

Language knowledge is a very complex area as evidenced by the Bachman and Palmer model in Part I of this report. To attempt to obtain specific detail on each child in a class at any one time is extremely difficult and the validity of knowledge gained is open to question. Negotiated Evaluation provides a strategy which meets the requirements of the Bandscales in the following ways.

- it selects a few learners on whom to focus over a period of time and in different
- tasks and contexts
- it provides a means of focussing on specific language detail as set out in Bandscales Observation Guides
- it makes assessment activities a normal part of the teaching cycle
- it is a continual process with all learners being assessed at regular intervals (once a term)
- it provides the specific information necessary to place learners on the Bandscales at regular intervals (once a term)
- it includes the learner in the assessment process
- it provides the structure to regularly inform parents of the learner's progress

The process of Negotiated Evaluation enables teachers to focus in depth on all children equally. This provides a means of collecting the specific data necessary to place children on Bandscales with a degree of confidence. Negotiated Evaluation provides the "how" of assessment and Bandscales provides the "what." In short, they complement each other.

Janet began to use *Negotiated Evaluation* after 'years and years and years and years trying to work out what was the best way to work out what these kids were doing with their language'. She rejected check lists and standardised tests:

because check lists tend to be here today, gone tomorrow...you can say you know what red is today, and tomorrow you don't. And standardised tests because of the culturally biased thing.

At a State Reading Conference she heard about *Negotiated Evaluation*, contacted Helen Woodward the speaker after the conference and:

worked out the way to go about it, made it a school priority in the Language Centre and spent I suppose two years exploring it and refining it and working out what was the best thing for us to use in the Language Centre, because obviously you can't just use something that's been used in an ordinary class and just superimpose it on our kids.

Janet explains that she has adapted *Negotiated Evaluation* for the needs of her particular children and that it involves a rolling process in that she focuses on about three children at any one time. In the following section the implementation of this process is illustrated with reference to Nerma, a student from Bosnia who has been at the Centre for eight months. Janet prefaces this evaluation with a discussion of the child's difficult family background and the fact that all her previous schooling was in a refugee camp, since Janet feels it important to take the child's background into account in her evaluation. The output of this process as negotiated by Nerma and Janet can be seen in Sample 3.

Janet explains how the process works:

At the beginning of a term, perhaps 2 or 3 weeks into the term, I choose three children. And I watch those children for 5 school days, it may be a complete week or it might go over 5. If I'm having a bad week and there's lots of interruptions, it may be 6 days. And during that time I write down all the things that they are actually doing. She [the author of Negotiated Evaluation] says you write down what they do. I find that I have to write down what they're

struggling with too. And as you write them down you say to the child, 'I'm writing this down. This is what I'm seeing you do. This is what I would like you to do next', or, 'This is the next thing that I want you to improve'. That's the negotiated bit.' So there's that negotiation, you write down the things that they're doing. On the bottom of each one of those sheets is a space for them to write down anything that they have noticed that they're doing or that you want them to remember, so they write down what it is that they want to do. At the end of the week, at the end of the 5 days I write a report...and I write it in parent friendly language.

Sample 3: Negotiated Evaluation: Teacher and Child

Date: TH WK 4

Name: Nerma

LANGUAGE

Pronoun game - had most, gets flustered "us's" much better attempts at spelling
Spelled dafin despite R&R. "That's how much they are big" "This one is the biggest one". "These are" attempts to sand, recognises "face in "surface". This together goes...
sea/see can't sub/verb not consistent thinks/things

COMMUNICATION

Has trouble explaining. better when volunteer TC. Had 4 sentences (with V) written with one opposite meaning i.e can/can't. Had connection

L.H.T.L (Reading, Writing, Independent.)

Report - Used my notes step by step. Needed only minor alterations to syntax, some spelling errors.

R&R - Record. read quickly. Underlined 2. Found meaning in groups volunteered meanings correctly. Had 6 points quickly - good ones but added an info to eating - (in 2 days they'd be dead).

Cloze - Dolphins - All finished and correct - some grammar not flash but meaning good.

Recognises which sentence completes the paragraph - reads (skims) & then sorts - uses key words.

Writing - recant, good sentences and detail. Present tense & no subj/verb agree. Most full stops at the end of paragraph only - knew capitals but no consistent use.

SOCIO CULTURAL/GEN KNOWLEDGE

Doesn't use sentence punctuation

FOR ME
Today we went to beach we swim and looking for crabs we saw many of them. I read book at my home

The children also write a report on themselves in which they answer five questions. Janet explains that these questions are not standardised throughout the Centre and she has developed her own set. Janet directs the children to their part in the evaluation process:

I say to them, 'Go away for 5 minutes. I want you to write something that you've learned this week. I want you to write what you think you're good at, what you want, what's hard for you, what do you like to do best at school and then (as a forward looking thing) what would you like to get better at and how do you think you could do that?' So the child goes away and writes that. Usually it's one or two sentences and then I correct it if there's any errors in it and then what the child thinks about his progress also gets written onto the report for the parents. So I've written on the top half of the page my comments. I say to the child, 'This is what I've written', and I know what the child's written so before it goes anywhere out of the school everybody knows what we're all talking about.

An example of Nerma's self evaluation can be seen in Sample 4.

Sample 4: Nerma's self-evaluation

What is something you have learned this week?

This week I learned about owls.

What are you good at?

I am good at reading.

What is hard for you?

for me is hard reading

What do you like to do best at school?

for me is best thing Math reading and rating

What would you like to get better at? How could you do that?

I like to be better at rating. I will all the time at home with my mother or my sister.

Janet analyses Nerma's evaluation and suggests some possible reasons for her comments:

She says something she's learned about this week was owls, she thinks that she's good at reading now, but she also acknowledges that reading is still hard for her, but what she means is that she suddenly has discovered that she can read, and she's pretty pleased with herself, but it is still hard. She likes doing Maths and Reading and Writing best, she works at beginning Year 3 level for Maths.

Things that she'd like to be better at would be Writing, and she's going to do that by all the time writing at home with her mother and her sister.

Janet then discusses Nerma's perceptions of her own progress:

I don't think she's very perceptive about her own ability. I think she would be aware of the fact that she's improved at reading. She certainly would also be conscious of the fact that she badly wants always to work with that group of older children... she's sort of waiting, and she's hoping that she'll be included, so there's a certain expectation on herself to be better at it. She likes Maths because I've dropped her down to another level where she can do things because she was struggling so much at the beginning of the year, so that's been useful.

Finally, Janet explains the part that the parents play in the evaluation process. See sample 5:

Sample 5: Nerma's Progress Record

Progress Record for _____ Date 12.11.1956

Teacher Comment Nerma has been learning about poems and about the beach. She has learned a lot of new vocabulary and is able to use this. She is better at speaking when she has time to think about what she wants to say but gets flustered when she has to respond quickly. Her understanding of English has improved. She is beginning to use pronouns correctly and her spelling is much better. She has written a report which was very good and is now writing a recount. This has good sentences and includes good details. She still has to make more consistent use of punctuation. Her reading is also better. She is more confident and is able to find missing words, main ideas and to work out meaning of words. _____
Teacher Signature

Child Comment Please continue to read with her every night.

Parent Comment _____

_____ Parent Signature

Janet has only just written this report and so Nerma and her parents have yet to write in their comments. Janet will discuss her comments with Nerma before it goes home and if her parents write a comment this will be also be discussed :

There is a space on there for the parents to also write. And the parent may or may not write comments. Often in my comments I'll say,

Profiling ESL Children

'I'd like you to try and do this at home', and sometimes the parents will say, 'Yes, okay we will try and do that'.

During the 10 weeks of each term Janet follows this procedure with all of her children, so that during the year each child has four reports. She sees the rolling process as being most important for children who are learning so rapidly:

When a kid does something really well that's the time that you write the report home to the parents. You don't wait 'til six months later when you've forgotten and the child's forgotten because these things are milestones. We celebrate successes when they happen.

The report itself goes to the parents in English with a standardised explanation of the evaluative process in the home language and a telephone number to contact for more information. At first there may be no comment from the parents, but as the year progresses they are able to add more to the evaluative process:

The first time it goes home usually there's no comment at all from the parents. It's too new a thing. The second time you might get, 'Thank you very much, this is nice'. Now, as their education, their English gets better, you find that their comments become better. And their comments become more perceptive as well.

If, towards the end of the year, the parents return a report without a comment Janet may ask the child to take the report home again and explain to the parents that a comment from them is expected and that it may be written in the home language.

Views on Assessment Frameworks

First Steps

Janet does not use First Steps for either planning or evaluation and makes her feelings about the documents very clear on several occasions:

First Steps has had no impact on my teaching full-stop. First Steps is a misnomer in the sense that, well the concept is, I mean it's almost like there wasn't a light before First Steps and that the only way you were a creative, in touch teacher was if you had read First Steps. But some of us were actually born before First Steps was written, and some of us actually did think and collaborate with other teachers before First Steps was written. And all First Steps did was go around and pick up those things. The strategies and all that stuff were just put together and they were based on good teachers' ideas.

She explains that she's attended at least five full days professional development in First Steps and has all the materials, but *I don't read them unless I am desperate and can't think of something myself.* She feels the Developmental Continua are inappropriate for her ESL learners *because of the discrepancy between what kids can actually show you they can do with language and what actually is in their heads.* She discusses how one of her children would be placed at *a stage one of First Steps* for his English writing but in his own language he can write *a page of lyrical, beautiful, narrative writing, with full stops, capital letters and absolutely beautiful script.* She points out that First Steps does not take into account the level of children's writing in their own first language.

Student Outcome Statements (SOS)

Janet and the other teachers at Greenway Intensive Language Centre have spent a great deal of time examining the Student Outcome Statements. They do not, however, see them as appropriate for use with ESL children since they have been designed for children who speak English as their first language. The teachers feel

so strongly on the issue that they have sent a letter to the Education Department detailing their concerns that this framework does not give a valid indication of ESL children's language levels. This is an extract from a very long transcript in which Janet talks about the draft of the letter:

This is not a criticism of SOS, it is a statement that says SOS is not appropriate for use with ESL students within the first 12 months. SOS was written for mainstream kids, for first language speakers...In Level 1 it assumes 5 years of oral language development in English, it starts from that point. The Speaking and Listening outcomes, it's very visible, they are quite advanced language concepts, whereas the Reading, Writing and Viewing ones start from a point that seems to indicate that that's a new thing. The Level 1 outcome for the substrand Linguistic Features and Structures says, and I quote, 'That children will draw on an implicit knowledge of the linguistic structures and the features of their own variety of English. But children who come in with no English don't have an implicit knowledge of English. So it's a wrong assumption, it's a false starting point, you can't draw on implicit knowledge if you don't have an implicit knowledge. It isn't where they are...There's this huge discrepancy between cognitive and linguistic levels that in the first 12 months ESL kids don't show their true cognitive level because of the linguistic barrier. Frequently... they write stuff here that looks like they are about 5 years old and you see them write in their own language and you realise that they have this sophisticated language understanding for writing, so you are making the wrong assumption.

Janet continues by stating her belief that the Student Outcome Statements are also unsuitable for ESL children as they are not sensitive to the large gains in English language and literacy that these children make within a short time frame:

ESL kids come in with nothing basically, and make huge leaps that aren't reflected if you say, 'Yes he came in Level 1 in February and here he is in December in Level 1'. So what? It doesn't tell you a thing, it doesn't plot the kid's huge jumps in language and it doesn't inform the teaching. They are not going through the same steps as the mainstream kids are... you don't want a deficit model where it says down the bottom that ESL children can't do this, this and this.

Janet has written a document for the Reporting and Assessment Materials Project at the Education Department of WA in which she explicitly documents her concerns about the use of this mainstream evaluative framework with ESL children. An extract from this document may be seen in Sample 6.

Sample 6: An Extract from Janet's Report on the Use of Student Outcome Statements with ESL Children

Bandscales and Student Outcome Statements

S.O.S. is based on student outcomes. There is no conflict between the 2 documents. S.O.S. was written for learners for whom English is the first language. [In the introduction to the English S.O.S. document it is acknowledged that the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the Statements in relation to the performance of ESL and NESB students is an issue to be monitored. Bandscales was written for ESL students. Bandscales states "The National English Profile"(S.O.S) cannot include both first and second language learners in the activities described unless the ESL learner is at an advanced level of ESL (and even in these cases,) the important differences and therefore needs of ESL learner performance will be subsumed and not brought to the teachers attention to inform further teachings." Pg A3 I Bandscales The two documents then, are complementary. Bandscales fits under S.O.S. and provides the statements which reflect ESL progress and needs. There are a number of issues still to be clarified on the use of S.O.S. and Bandscales. These include: The issue of inclusively already mentioned.

The interlanguage period of ESL students is well documented in second language research. For at least the first 12 months of students ESL education, the Bandscales provide a valid means of monitoring student outcomes. This covers basically (in primary schools) the first level of English S.O.S. During this period Bandscales needs to be used for assessment, planning and reporting (i.e. accountability). After this point Bandscales continues to provide a valid framework but S.O.S. and the Bandscales merge. This needs to be reflected in S.O.S. not in a deficit model but in one which accurately documents children's acquisition of a second language and gives credence to their progress.

In the first 12 months the newly arrived NESB child makes very rapid progress in English. This progress is identified in the Bandscales. However most, if not all of this happens within the first level of S.O.S. i.e. S.O.S. doesn't identify these stages for NESB children at this time because the descriptions are so broad. Because Bandscales does identify these stages (levels 1 - 4) teachers can assess and plan development, plan and report with confidence. They can also demonstrate accountability. This progress needs to be conveyed to students parents, other teachers and to the system. Bandscales provides the framework to report this whereas S O. S., because of the broad descriptions, doesn't fulfil this function. NESB children, in their first 12 months of school are unable to show their true cognitive level because of the linguistic barrier. To assume that what they can show and express in an ESL situation is a true indication of their understanding and skills of language per se is a wrong assumption. It can lead to a wrong diagnosis which leads to a wrong plan of action by the teacher

The only way teachers can know what NESB children can do with language is to observe them in a first language situation. Bandscales reflects this discrepancy between cognitive and linguistic levels whereas S.O.S. doesn't.

While there are similarities in the process of acquiring first and second language, the early phases of first language acquisition are completed by the time a child enters school. S.O.S. assumes 5 years of oral language development in English prior to Year 1. The Level One Outcome starts from this point. The Speaking and Listening Outcome Statements reflect this. In the sub-strand Linguistic Structures and Features, S.O.S. says that children "draw on implicit knowledge of the linguistic structures and their features of their own variety of English." The newly arrived ESL child does not have an implicit knowledge of English. This of course, has implications for Reading and Viewing and Writing as well. Bandscales starts from the point of children in Level 1 Bandscales being "new to English: drawing on knowledge of the world in L1" (their first language). It is therefore more appropriate for ESL children to start on the Bandscale model rather than on S.O.S.

Considerable discussion on the relationship of the Bandscales and SO S. has already taken place:

- at departmental level
- with all staff of the 4 primary Intensive Language Centres
- with secondary, primary ILC staff and ESL support teachers

The consensus of the LCs is that they will be used in Primary ILCs on a trial basis. This is for the first 12 months of school for ESL children. After this point there needs to be some direction as to how the information gained through the use of Bandscales can be used.

ESL teachers in support roles in mainstream classes are having to decide how to use Bandscales and/or S.O.S. during the first 12 months.

What has emerged from all the discussion is that there is a need to use a document written specifically for ESL learners to allow for a reliable and accurate way of measuring and describing their proficiency in English. Bandscales fulfils this role and complements the S.O.S. document.

The ESL Bandscales

Janet is now using the Bandscales but, as we have seen, her approach to outcomes-based evaluation of ESL learners has been modified over many years' experience with various documents and with her own classes of children. She points out the problems inherent in evaluating and reporting ESL children's progress and she discusses the ways in which teachers in Intensive Language Centres can demonstrate accountability when using the Bandscales:

Our problem in the ILC's at the moment is to find a valid measuring and reporting system that shows, that allows us to plot kids' progress accurately, that allows us to report to parents and allows us to justify our own existence basically. And if, from purely a self-centred point of view, if you're in an ILC - and ILC's are always fair game - at the end of the year you say, 'Well, he came in on Level 1, there he is still at Level 1', and he goes into a mainstream class, and they say, 'Well, he came in at a Level 1 and there he is at Level 1.' They are going to say, 'Well why the hell are we spending all this money on Intensive Language Centres?' We have to actually justify our own existence, be able to show this progress, and it's huge...What we are hoping will happen, and what all the ILC's want to do, is that Band Scales will be the way that we measure kids in ILC's.

Janet has been highly involved in the development of the Bandscales and responded to the 1992 Draft version. She has also been involved in providing professional development for the staff of the other three Intensive Language Centres in Perth in the use of Bandscales. She has also contributed to Professional Development sessions for ESL teachers in mainstream classes in which she has talked about the use of Bandscales. Further, as we have seen, she has written various documents on the subject. In comparing Bandscales to Student Outcome Statements she writes:

Bandscales is a document written specifically for assessing and reporting on ESL students...It enables teachers to better understand the language learning processes of these learners and to assess and record their progress in English and English across the curriculum. It provides a valid means of reporting to other teachers, to parents and learners and to administrators. It 'fills in the gaps' in Student Outcome statements in relation to ESL learners so that their needs and their performance are not subsumed but are recognised and valued.

Janet has documented the reasons that Bandscales have not been widely used in Western Australia. She feels that the most influential factors seem to be that First Steps was widely promoted, is imposed by many Principals and that one of the Intensive Language Centres has adapted the First Steps Writing materials for ESL children. Whilst Janet is very enthusiastic about the use of Bandscales, she points out that no evaluation scale is perfect and that Bandscales are somewhat limited in that they have been tailored for the needs of ESL children in the mainstream, not for those in Intensive Language Centres. Janet explains that the staff at the Centre voiced these concerns in their feedback to the Draft version in 1992:

What happens in the context of a mainstream class is quite different, so you can't say children will only be doing this. We tackle things in a language class like paragraphing, quite complex ideas like that, but we tackle them at a simple language level so the concept is there. I mean the cognitive thing is there, but the language is simple enough for them to get hold of the idea; whereas in a mainstream class people tend to say, 'Oh that too hard for them, because they can only use simple language'. So we were saying that some of the things that it says here, won't be able to do this or this, we were saying will be able to do this or this because of the context of ILC. It's a different thing. You structure lessons differently, you have smaller groups, you have a much more specific language focus instead of perhaps a social focus, or a maths focus or a something else focus. So what you can do in an ILC is very, very different to what you can do in a mainstream class.

Janet describes how she uses the Bandscales to provide a focus for her observation of children in the classroom:

At the back of the Bandscales are the Observation Guide points and I find those to be far more useful [than First Steps indicators], so what happens is, I look at the back of it for the group of kids at the beginning of term and I say, 'Right, for this group of children these are the things I will focus on when I observe kids'. So when I'm walking around looking at kids I will look specifically for those points.

Sample 7: Nerma's Progress over the Year in Terms of Bandscales

STUDENT NAME: NERMA

	<u>BANDSCALE LEVEL</u>	<u>ASSESSMENT PERIOD</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
SPEAKING	1/2	T1 WK 8	
	3	T2 WK 6	
	3	T3 WK 6	
	4	T4 WK 5	
LISTENING			
	2	T1 WK 8	
	3	T2 WK 6	
	3	T3 WK 6	
READING			
	1	T1 WK 8	
	2	T2 WK 6	
	3	T3 WK 6	
WRITING			
	2	T1 WK 8	
	3	T2 WK 6	
	4	T3 WK 6	
	4	T4 WK 5	

Extract from Bandscales p B13

NLLIA JUNIOR PRIMARY ESL BANDSCALES

Speaking: Level 4

Junior Primary
ESL S4

JP Bandscales

Extending the range of language beyond own immediate social environment and experimenting with learning through English; drawing on knowledge of the world in L1 and English, and on L1 and English language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Are able to communicate in a growing range of social and learning situations with interlocutor and contextual support. Can sustain a conversation with an attentive adult on a familiar topic (e.g., on autobiographical information; describing past and present events). Can give a short morning talk about a familiar item. Can answer questions (What's that? What sort of ... is that? What happened then? Why are you doing that?), about an item being studied e.g., a classroom pet. Extended discourse will be fragmented and approximations to standard forms will be evident.

Will still need help from the interlocutor, e.g., interlocutor needs to allow time for learners to process thoughts and express themselves in English. May wish to be given opportunity to express themselves without interruption or correction from peers or interlocutor.

Language is fragmented as they search through their English resource to express thoughts in English and as they search for appropriate language to convey more precisely the meaning they intend. Are intent on conveying meaning. (e.g., Yeah, but because I go to ... I want to go ... on Sunday I want to go to my ... my ... my friend's bir ... I think it's last week ... I got to go ... to my friend Sarah's birthday but I got to go to my new house and my mum say don't ... and my mum was angry to me.
(Anna, Age 8, Year 3, 9 months in Australia)

May choose to explore more complex ideas in L1 with L1 peers.

Will make frequent errors in syntax and expression as they test their hypotheses, though this will not impede general comprehension by the interlocutor. Will use a small range of connectors (e.g., and, but, because). Awareness and use of tense is developing (e.g., we buy CiCi; Sun always ... um ... blow ... blew the candle). Use of prepositions is developing - inaccuracies occur because of generalisations in use of known prepositions e.g., CiCi fall on the swimming pool.

Vocabulary and concepts are widening, with curriculum-related vocabulary and concepts growing. Because of this, have a growing ability to express ideas in cross-curriculum areas.

Pronunciation in English is developing features of Australian English though this will vary depending on age and L1 and experience with English (i.e., older children may take longer to develop Australian-English pronunciation).

At various times Janet refers to the *validity* of the Bandscales and, as we 'walk through' her evaluation of several students, we see that she is extremely familiar with their use. We will examine in some detail one of Janet's 'think aloud' evaluations, once again looking at her evaluation of Nerma, the eight year-old girl from Bosnia, who arrived in Australia about eight months ago. The 'think aloud' begins as we look at Nerma's Bandscale development over the year (See Sample 7).

Janet looks first at Nerma's previous evaluations in *Speaking*.

At the end of Term 1 I had her between the first and second Level in Speaking. The first one basically says you can't say boo, and the second one says you can't say very much more, but she wasn't certainly anywhere. By the end of Term 2 she moved, and this is the Junior Band Scale, and when I look at that I probably guess I should have put her on 2 there. In Term 3 she's still a 3.

She then refers to Nerma's present level, checking with the Bandscales document to see if her latest placement of Nerma at Level 4 is justified.

I think now, looking at her this week, she's probably moved onto about a Level 4. She can communicate in a growing range of social and learning situations, but she needs interlocutor and contextual support still. She can sustain a conversation with an attentive adult on a familiar topic. She can, but bearing in mind that it's got to be on her terms and at her speed, otherwise she gets very confused. She can give a short morning talk. Yes she can do that. She can answer questions, but it's pretty simple, and I guess that she's still better off there, but it has to be about something that she's got a fair bit of understanding of, but the discourse is still very fragmented and it's very approximate...Still needs a lot of help from the interlocutor and still needs time.

Janet interrupts her analysis in order to explain the importance of ESL children being given time to prepare their oral language output:

This thing about needing time, and this is a crucial thing for when she's in the mainstream school, that sometimes they need the time to get it wrong, stop, get it right, go away, come back and get it right, rather than have the pressure of 'Come on, I want your answer. Would you hurry up, I'm waiting for you? Do you mean? What about this?' And the kid never has the opportunity to process what she wants to say. And she's very much at that stage, and given the opportunity, then she can actually say what she wants to. But if you interrupt her and want to sort of push her along, then she can't. She's very much sitting in.

Next, Janet points out that she finds the examples of children's language, which are given in Bandscales as illustrations of the different levels, to be extremely useful:

It's fragmented, her thoughts are there, her thoughts and the appropriate language to say what she wants, but if you look at the example that they give here, and that's basically how she would speak, 'But because I go to... I want to go... on Sunday I want to go my friend's bir'. That's where she's at and if you look at that [example in the Bandscales], that's a girl who's 8, and has been here for 8 months. So often these examples are pretty well right. So that's it pretty well I think. Frequent errors in syntax. Doesn't really upset the comprehension, so that's pretty well where she is for Speaking.

Janet then proceeds to look at the Bandscales descriptors for *Listening*, referring to specific incidents she has recalled about Nerma's ability to listen and to comprehend spoken language. She adds her own comments about the usefulness of the Bandscales: *I think the usefulness of these Bandscales is that there are certain things that jump out and you say, 'That's exactly what she's done.'* Janet decides that Level 4 is appropriate and moves on to examine Nerma's *Reading*. This proves to be more difficult and Janet looks at the descriptors for Levels 3, 4 and 5 before making a decision:

Anyway, Level 5 is basically you should be able to read at the level of your peers. Well, she's nowhere near that, which makes you think that she's not really at a 4 either, so in the end I decided she's a 3. Able to read with contextual support short written texts...[Janet continues to match Nerma's development with the descriptors.] So while I said she's a Level 3, she's bordering on a 4, but I guess most of us tend to go for the lower rather than the higher level. And so, I still consider that she's there...it's easy to get fooled. If I had a whole bunch of these and Nerma was the best, I'd go, 'She's probably Level 4, but having got this other kid who's far more advanced than she is, I'd say she's a Level 3'.

Janet considers that children should have reached Level 4 on the Bandscales before they are ready to join a mainstream class. She relates what she knows about Nerma's reading to the levels in a mainstream class where Nerma will be placed at the end of the term. She suggests that the descriptors for Level 3 suggest a Year One reading level:

You've got to, I think, balance it and say, 'Yes well, if you look at what Year 1s can do, she's miles in front, but she's not in Year 1, she's a Year 3 Level, so that's probably what she's got'. Reading is the most difficult one to put on. All of us find Reading really hard.

Extract from Bandscales p B27

NL/LIA Junior Primary ESL Bandscales

Junior Primary
ESL W4

JP Bandscales

Writing: Level 4

Applying understandings about text types to writing in English: drawing on knowledge of the world in L1 and English, and on L1 and English language and literacy (to varying degrees).

Can write simple short versions of an expanding range of text types on familiar topics (e.g., simple letters without format, greetings in cards, simple descriptions, simple recounts). However, even though early text structure is evident, ESL features are clearly present (see sample below) and meaning will sometimes break down. Need strong support (e.g., pre-task and post-task talk, modelling, joint construction of texts, conferencing by teacher, provision of vocabulary) and need more time than their native-speaking peers. Writing will be influenced by overall proficiency in English.

Are beginning to write texts containing related ideas around a central topic or theme. Are becoming more aware of audience and purpose.

May wish to express themselves in writing in L1 (if able to do so).

Writing will continue to reflect ESL features of learners' spoken language in English including errors in verb tense/time orientation, subject/verb agreement, pronouns etc., as they form hypotheses about English. Will use a small range of connectors (e.g., but, and, and other cohesive devices e.g., will use pronouns to refer back to prior text (The man ... he/his)). (See sample).

Spelling may reflect learners' oral pronunciation.

SAMPLE

One day moon robot and sun robot go to Earth. Help the word man. They sit a spaceship go. The spaceship will go too. In the Earth Help the word man, but has danger come back the robot and the space monster kick the danger. He name is Paul. Now they Help too.

I was, age 8, after 4 months, arrived in Australia mid-Year 2.

Then Janet examines Nerma's writing progress over the year in terms of the Bandscales descriptors. (See extract from Bp B27)

Writing, she's made progress, as you see from that. She can in writing do very, very, very, very, very little sentences ...'I have a dog', 'This is brown'. It would be very formal like that, so she was a Level 2. Moved up to a Level 3, and she's actually moved along very nicely here, and moved into, I think, towards the Level 4 at the end of last term, and I'd say she's a pretty solid Level 4 now. Can write simple short versions of an expanding range of text types on familiar topics. Yes, she can do that. She can write simple letters, she can write recounts. Early text structure is still evident, ESL features are still clearly present. Meaning sometimes breaks down but on the whole it's pretty good. Needs strong support, modelling. Like I was saying before, she worked with me, I didn't let her off with the others to do it on their own. Joint construction of texts, that kind of stuff. Needs more time, although she writes decently. Texts contain related ideas around a central topic. Yes. She can do that. Still some ESL features.

Janet talks about the way in which she reflects at length on each child's progress and may change her mind several times before she writes the parents' report. She is again influenced by what she knows about the levels of mainstream children:

I had her on Level 5 and I changed it. There was something I didn't like. No, I meant to put her on Level 5. I rubbed it out. I looked at this [piece of writing] and I thought, no that's Year 1... Because when I knew I was going to talk to you about this, I went and I checked these, and I changed that one. And I actually change things as well. I change things enormously. I sit down and write it the first day, and then by the time I go to write the report for the parents a couple of days later I'll often change my mind, and I often sit between two for a couple of days and then I make myself make a decision, because it's so easy to sit on the fence. So I actually meant to change it to a 5 and I haven't. I'm not sure that I do want to change it to a 5, because I still think that if I had a look at a Year 3 [mainstream] kid and what they were writing.

Once she has finished her assessment of Nerma, Janet will write a report to the class teacher in the mainstream school that she's going to attend next year. As she has not yet written Nerma's report, the report, which is included as Sample 8, is that of another child in the class whose report has been completed. In this report she has relied on her Bandscales assessment to document the child's stage of development in English.

(This report format has been modified in 1997 in order to include Bandscales assessment.)

Sample 8: Example of a Report to the Receiving Mainstream Teacher

LANGUAGE CLASS REPORT	Greenway Primary School
Date: November 1996	
Name: Assan	Date of Birth: 18/11/88
Place of Birth: Iran	Nationality: Kurdish
Language spoken at home: Kurdish	
Names of parents:	Occupation of parents (country of origin):
Occupation of parents (in Australia):	Position in family:

BACKGROUND OF STUDENT

Date of arrival: 19/01/96

Date of admission: 30/01/96

in Australia:

to Intensive Class:

Prior schooling: Nil

Number of terms at Greenway Intensive Language Centre: 4 terms

PROGRESS OF STUDENT

- Phases**
1. settling, socialization and basic English survival language
 2. acquiring and using vocabulary and language patterns
 3. beginning to use and manipulate known language
 4. language enrichment and extension, some curriculum content at own level

MATHEMATICS

Appropriate working level

SPACE 3

NB *As a NESB child it must

NUMBER 3

be appreciated that this

MEASUREMENT 3

student's ability and experiences are

spread across

many levels within each strand

MEASUREMENT

Volume/Capacity has had experience with

Mass kg/grams, litres/mls

Length metres/cm

SHAPE

Names and attributes of 2D shapes.

NUMBER

Understands addition and subtraction to 100 (uses MAB). Understands multiplication and tables 2, 3 and 5. Using concrete aids can do basic division

Soundings

Number patterns Good understanding

Money

SPORT & PHYS ED

Has been involved in school PE and dance programme. Also swimming at a basic level

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Speaking Reading Listening Spelling Writing

Child is able to comprehend social English in familiar contexts, and in the classroom interaction around activities with only occasional help being given. He can follow classroom instructions if explained and presented clearly. He will have difficulty following at a native speaker speed. He sometimes gives the impression that full comprehension has taken place which can be misleading in learning activities. He can communicate in a growing range of social and learning situations. He will still need help from the interlocutor eg - time to process thoughts and express himself in English. There are frequent errors in syntax and expressions as he experiments with the language. In reading he can gain meaning from texts where there are not too many unknown or culturally based words. He has been using teacher made texts to find main ideas, sequence, answer questions etc. He will have more trouble with commercial texts at his age level because of vocabulary and will get the main idea but not the details - and give the impression that he understands fully. In writing he has had experience with narrative, report, recount and procedures although there are still ESL features (eg tense, subject/verb agreement). These do not impede meaning. He needs a scaffold and some modelling to handle these terms well

MATERIALS RECENTLY READ

Teacher made texts - see attached sheet for example level.

Commercial texts for home readings include Young Australia 5&6. Story Box, Sunshine and Eureka 2&3

GENERAL COMMENTS

This is Assan's first year of school and his first year of English. Given these factors his progress is quite outstanding. There are still big gaps everywhere and he obviously can't work at the level of his mainstream peers. However with initial support he will do very well. He is highly motivated and works hard. He does tend to take off before he has got the whole idea and then tends to rely on others to get on track. He is a late birthday and because of this and his lack of previous schooling we are recommending a Year 3 in 1997.

CLASS TEACHER: Janet

Janet is aware that this report may not be read by the receiving teacher if it goes to the Principal first. Further, she is keen to do some professional development for mainstream teachers in how to understand better the needs of ESL children and how to interpret the Bandscales.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

The teachers at Greenway Intensive Language Centre use a planning format which they have developed over time. (See Sample 9)

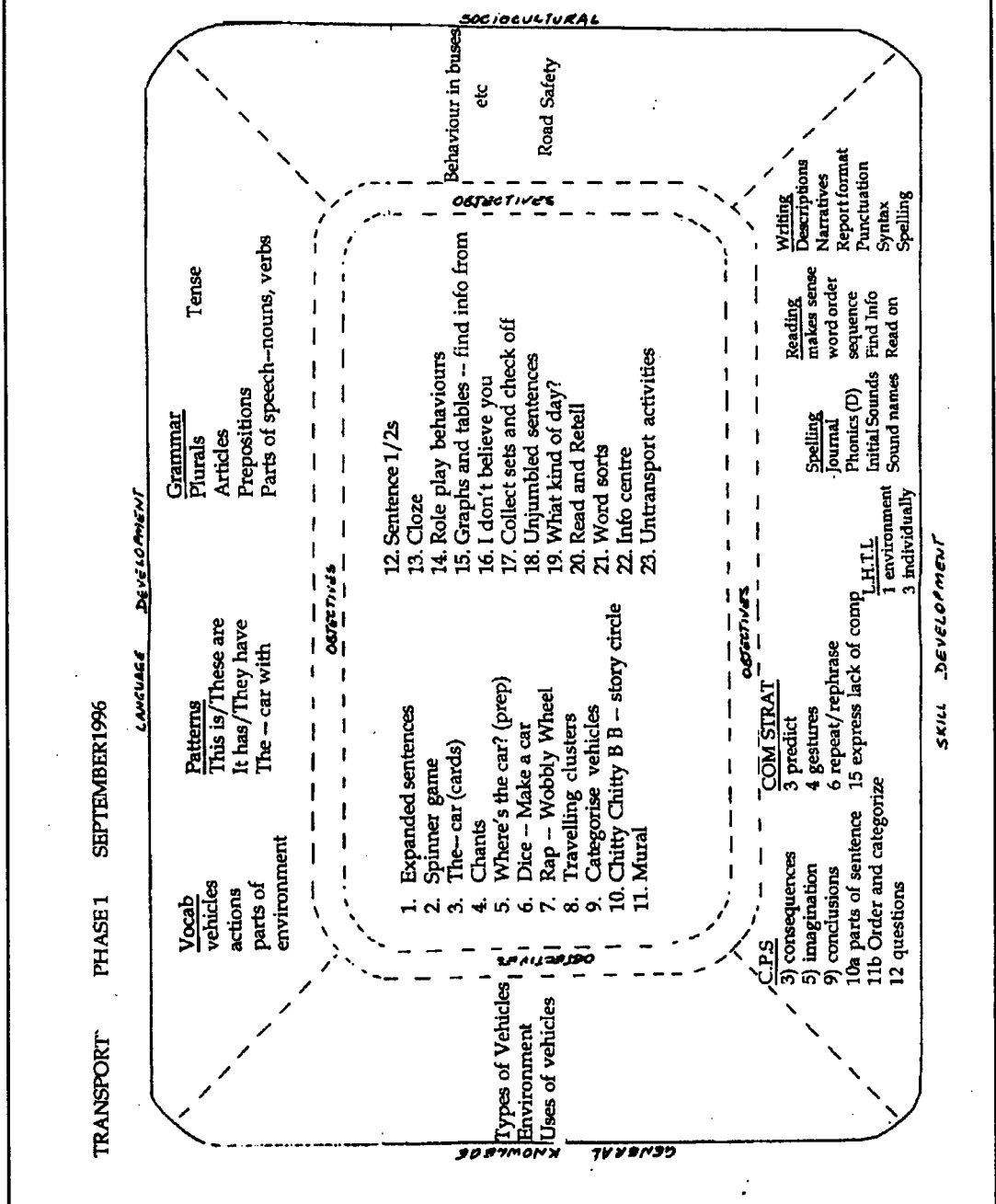
Janet explains how this planning framework links with some of the other documents she has talked about and how she was involved in trialing it:

Right. This is going back in history. About eight years ago, there came a program out of South Australia called the Australian Language Levels. It was written as a framework for planning. At the time we became interested in it because it seemed to give us a valid framework for planning and I became involved in trialing it and spent half my time in the classroom and half going around to schools talking about it. It gives people a framework and it's actually in the Bandscales because the Bandscales came out of it. The Australian Language Levels thing came first, then it was followed by the Framework of Stages which also came out of South Australia and which I also worked closely with. And out of that came the Bandscales.

Janet then explains the theoretical basis of the framework and how it is used in the Centre:

What we did was to take it and adapt it and all of us here at Greenway use it as our planning format. It basically says that there are eight principles of language learning and as teachers we've said, 'Yes we agree with them'. The principles of language learning make us do certain things in our classroom, so we have a list of things that we think good language teachers should do. Basically it says you've got to have five areas when you do your planning. That you've got to have a socio-cultural aspect of teaching; you've got to have the nuts and bolts of the language, if you like the grammar and the structure and all that stuff;...and how different cultures handle language. You've got to have a content part, which is basically the content of the syllabus; you've got to have the cognitive processing skills and communication strategies that make us able to handle our own learning. And you should have all of those things happening in a communicative way, so that everybody is actually talking. The basis of the class is a communicative approach. So we use that structured plan.

Sample 9: The Planning Format used at Greenway Intensive Language Centre: Janet's Transport Theme



Janet uses the format for her classroom planning over a two-to three-week period:

When I plan I look at the specific language structure that I want the kids to learn. I look at the vocabulary, I look at language patterns, I may look at grammatical features as well. I look at any general knowledge I want them to learn and really for these kids, it doesn't matter whether I teach them about the Pharaohs, or that I teach them about water systems in Australia, so long as it's part of their interest and basically related to the curriculum. The socio-cultural aspects we like to build in. There's a whole lot of skills that we want them to be able to learn. And communication strategies, there's a whole lot of spelling stuff, writing stuff, and reading stuff that I want them to actually be able to do. So I write all that stuff down,

then I figure out about 28 activities that I could do during the couple of weeks that would teach those things.

As the students in her class come from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds and have been learning English for varying periods of time, Janet creates two documents for each planning period:

I can't have the same thing for both groups and I can't actually plan for three, so I basically have 'the top' and 'the towards the bottom', and 'the middle' kids do a fair bit of floating between the two. Having done that, then I sit down with a week's thing and fill it in the best I can. And so I plan the week ahead.

Janet uses information from her evaluation of the students in terms of Bandscales in order to plan in the five areas that she has identified and uses appropriate activities in order to achieve her planned outcomes:

The crucial factor I think of this planning exercise is, if you write something here [in skill development], you should've actually written an activity down here [in the middle] section that's going to make it happen and one of the things we discovered was that with ESL kids, if you do an activity, it's probably good to do the same thing three times during the week so they get the hang of it.

Janet finally explains how, within a particular two or three week theme, she integrates what she has observed that the children need to know, how she's going to achieve this and how she's going to evaluate it, all in terms of the documents and strategies she has adapted to her own particular needs:

Now we are into Transport, probably for three weeks. This is about mark 15 of a planning sheet...Every time I do it, I do refer always to those lists of things because you, you can just forget what's on them. So I do look at that and go through it and think, 'Yep, haven't done that for a while, I'll do that'. I do it very roughly. I do it in pencil because I know it will change. That's my initial planning, that's what I think I'd like to do. And I write it in pencil because I'm forever rubbing it out and changing it. But as far as I'm concerned, it's based on a valid system of planning, which is the Australian Language Levels, which is I think, just about spot on in terms of how it makes you hold things together. It's based on the things in Bandscales, which I think are pretty valid as well, which is so similar to the ones that we've devised as well. I think that's valid. It's evaluated through Negotiated Evaluation, which once again I think is a very valid and sensible way to go. So I think in terms of accountability it's pretty well sewn up.

We have seen, yet again, how much effort and reflection Janet puts into all aspects of her program and how she is able to justify her practice. She feels that this is all worthwhile and that her experience with the documents and strategies has given her confidence and certainty in her teaching:

I have better weeks and worse weeks, but I can say to you or to Principals, or to parents, or anybody else, 'There you go. That's how it happens', and I'm very comfortable that I'm not having too many big holes. There are always going to be things you don't do so well, things that escape, because you're trying to keep your finger on so many things, but on the whole I think I know what I'm doing. I know where I'm going. I can say, 'Yes, I'm on the way there.' And I'm not, I'm not like I used to be, I think in the early days, when we didn't have anything. You're always kind of searching for things and you could never get hold of something and think, 'Now I've gotcha'. And then you go with confidence. So I think doing it this way just is the sensible way to go.

Janet is a very experienced ESL teacher who has a class of junior and middle primary students in an Intensive Language Centre. She chooses not to use the State mainstream frameworks, First Steps and Student Outcome Statements. Rather, she uses the Bandscales to plan for and evaluate her students' language development. Whilst she feels that the Bandscales should take account of the fact that some ESL children are not placed in mainstream classrooms but are in Intensive Language Centres, she appreciates the fact that the Bandscales take account of the specific language features of ESL children. She is taking an active part in the professional development of other teachers in the use of the Bandscales. Janet also uses the Australian Language Levels and Negotiated Evaluation to plan for and evaluate her ESL children within an integrated program.

Marion at Greenway Intensive Language Centre

Caroline Barratt-Pugh

The School Context

Marion shares the same school context as Janet at the Greenway Intensive Language Centre.

The Classroom Context

Marion introduces her class:

There are 18 children in the class, they come from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds, including Turkey, Iran, Vietnam, Philippines, several from Bosnia that's probably the largest group, so there is a mixture of different language backgrounds. Most of the children have been here six months or less and the majority of them started in the Phase 1 class, sometime during this year. They're basically turning 6 or 7 this year, so they are in the Year 1 or 2 range. There are a few children who have been to a pre-school here, so some of them have got quite good oral language skills, they've just been sent here because the parents don't speak English and because the pre-school teacher thought that they may benefit from a term or semester here.

Most of the children have been in Phase 1 for at least 6 months where Marion suggests the emphasis is on oracy. In Phase 2 Marion 'continues to improve their confidence, orally and develop their vocabulary and sentence structure'. She also begins to develop literacy skills but still uses talk as a basis for their reading and writing development. This is evident from one of Marion's programmes which covers about 6 weeks of work. See Sample 1 on the next page.

The GOALS in the left hand column are taken from the Australian Language Levels Guidelines (1988). Marion considers the children's needs, what level they are at and what will fit in with the theme she is working on. On the basis of this she selects the most appropriate general goals from the Australian Language Levels Guidelines. Because Communication is so important the goals are extended onto another sheet. See Sample 2: Extension of Communication goals.

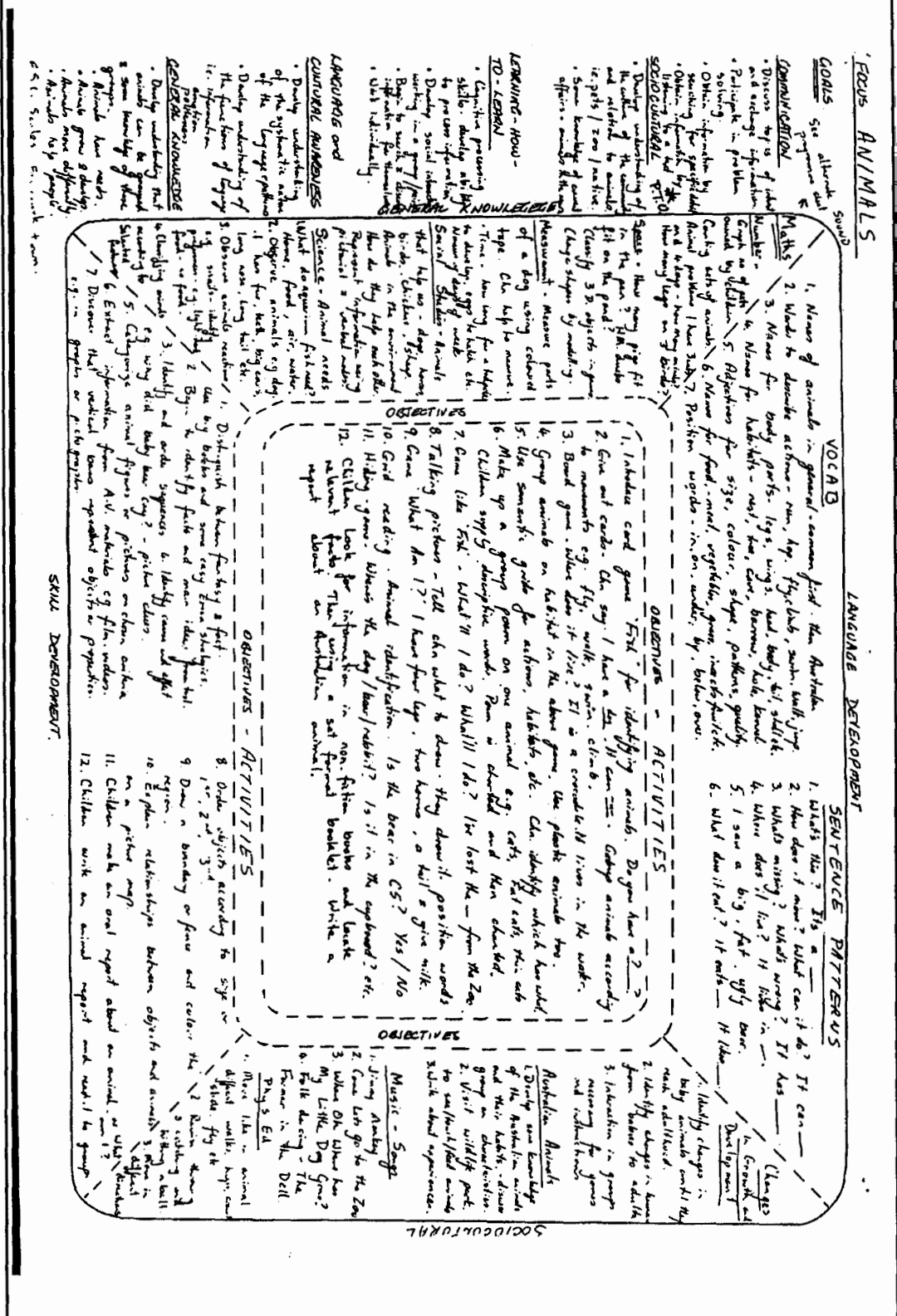
Sample 2: Extension of Communication goals.

Communication

Specific Goals

3. Obtain information by searching in text. Then process this information
4. Obtain info by listening to spoken or written text. Then process info obtained
5. Give info in spoken or written form.
6. Listen to, read or view and respond personally to a story, song, video or poem.
7. Be involved in spoken or written expression to create a dramatic episode or play.

Sample 1: Marion's Programme.



On the basis of her general goals Marion plans the content areas under 5 headings. These are general knowledge, socio-cultural, language development, skill development and objectives and activities. Two of these, General Knowledge, Socio-Cultural, relate directly to the Australian Language Levels Guidelines Goals (see Sample 1). The other 3 Australian Language Levels Guidelines goals, Communication, Learning how to Learn and Language and Cultural Awareness are embodied within all learning areas. General Knowledge

encompasses Maths (which is divided into number, space and measurement) Social Studies and Science. Language Development is divided into Vocabulary and Sentence patterns, which Marion feels it is important to keep in mind in order to encourage the children to use full sentences. Socio-cultural contains Changes in Growth and Development, Australian Animals, Music - Songs and Physical Education. By naming specific areas Marion makes sure she covers all curricular areas. In addition Marion has added Skill Development as she feels this is an important aspect of learning. In the centre of the programme Marion records specific Objectives and Activities.

Marion describes how she actually implements the programme in her classroom. Each topic is introduced and expanded through substantial oral work, many of the activities are based on talk. Marion explains that this is possible because of the small class sizes. Marion gives an example using the topic of Australian Animals:

I use games to introduce the names of the animals. They make up little cards, and they play fish 'have you got the kangaroo/wombat' so that they're just developing their vocabulary, basically. And then other games like Animal Classification, where they put the animals into groups and then the other children have to try and guess why they've been put into groups. For example 'these animals all have fur and these don't, or these ones can fly and these ones cant'. So as well as developing their cognitive and thinking skills you develop more language skills, and you do other things like 'what am I' games, just developing their description of the animals.

During the games Marion and the Chi the aide model language structures. In addition to oral games, Marion involves the children in whole class activities in which she models and indirectly corrects children's use of English, as well as demonstrating particular genre frameworks. These whole class activities include daily charts, puppets, big books, modelled writing and news time. In order to help the children understand and use new language Marion uses visual aids. She talks about her use of puppets:

I have a lot of the Australian animal puppets and so they can do like a 'what am I' game, or they can say, they can just choose a puppet and say 'I am a Kangaroo, I live in the bush, I eat'. If they don't have the puppet they can have the picture of their animal. Then they can get up and talk without having to try to read.

The language from the oral activities is consolidated through a number of related literacy activities. Marion gives the following example of work the children are doing on aeroplanes. The whole class were involved in looking at pictures of aeroplanes and naming different parts:

Well, they did that as a word recognition thing and language vocabulary development. This afternoon they are writing a description of an aeroplane, so the teacher will be modelling how to write a description and the children will write a description of their aeroplane, and they can use some of the vocabulary that they used this morning.

In addition to descriptions the children are learning to write recounts, procedures, imaginative stories and reports. Marion points to the connection between two of her general Communication goals, 'obtaining information by searching for specific information' and 'obtaining information by listening to a text' and report writing. Report writing is also linked to a strategy called Effective Reading in Content Areas. Marion feels this is an important Learning to Learn Skill, which the children need when they go into the mainstream classroom. Marion talks about helping the children to write a report by themselves using Sample 3: Work sheet - The Echidna or Spiny Anteater, as an illustration:

They work independently but with a lot of help. So they will have a work sheet, which has the basic framework and they will have to find information, they do that by looking in books for pictures by looking at their previous reports if they have done a little mini report or by asking. They use the words in the word box, which we've read. So it's the very beginning, very simply to get them to find the information and process it and write it and be able to give it back again. So the little reports that they will write will be very specific, you know it might say 'this animal is a', and then 'it has', and they will have to write down how it lives, or if its got fur, so its basically sentence completion type activity so its fairly structured.

Sample 3: Work sheet - The Echidna or Spiny Anteater.

The Echidna or Spiny Anteater.

The echidna eats _____

Echidnas have _____



They can _____

Mother echidna _____

Baby echidna _____

Echidnas _____









Word Box		
sticky	feeds	
lick	milk	
powerful	pouch	
quickly	funny	
curl	eggs	
spines	into	burrow
long	balls	marsupials
tongues	protect	mammals

Draw an echidna eating some ants.

As well as genre writing Marion does a lot of work on sound / symbol correspondence, whole word recognition and sentence reconstruction. She feels that this is a means of supporting the children's reading development. Typically all the class will be involved in the sentence, word or sound activity which is followed by written activity. Sample 4: Missing 'ee' Words and Sample 5: I Can Read are examples of these activities.

Sample 4: Missing 'ee' Words.

Missing "ee" Words.

1. I see a green _____. 
2. The ____ is on the flower. 
3. A  mouse likes to eat _____. 
4. I can count to _____. 3.
5. I have two _____. 
6. I planted some _____. 
7. I see three _____. 
8. I _____ in a bed. 

tree three sheep
 bee feet sleep
 cheese. seeds

Sample 5: I Can Read - word recognition sheet

I Can Read -

I	kangaroo	the
can	koala	is
hop	wombat	a
run	possum	went
jump	echidna	to
sit	crocodile	eggs
stand	emu	hatch
walk	snake	milk
fly	cockatoo	drink
skip	platypus	eat

In addition to this the children have word folders, Marion explains:

I'll give them one of these folders, and I'll give them five words that they don't know, from our topic. So each child might have a different set of words. Then a few times every week, they'll have time to practice their words, and they can do it with a partner, or with an aide or with me. They're supposed to read their words and if they know them, then they go onto the next box. So they end up doing 5 tests with their friends. Supposedly after 5 days they get to here, and they come and ask the teacher or an aide to listen and if they know them after that then they can be ticked off on my list.

Four afternoons a week the Phase 1 and Phase 2 children work together for half an hour. They have two maths sessions and two language sessions. The teachers plan the activities together and relate them as far as possible to their classroom topics. There are usually six activities, each group of 4 or 5 children work on one activity in each session. So it takes three weeks for all the children to do all the activities. Sample 6: Phase 1 & 2 Junior Primary Activities, is an example of the language and mathematical activities planned for term 2.

Sample 6: Phase 1 & 2 Junior Primary Activities.

Phase 1 & 2 JUNIOR PRIMARY ACTIVITIES Term 2 1996

<i>Mathematics Activities</i>	<i>Language Activities</i>
1. NUMBER: Lots-of worksheet.	1. Classify food items
2. PROBLEM SOLVING: Number on my back.	2. Label picture worksheet. Family members
3. MEASUREMENT: How Many Steps?	3. Fish Game: Hair/facial description
4. SPACE: Classifying Shapes & graphing	4. Sequencing Worksheet: Plant Growth
5. MEASUREMENT: Make a clock	5. Barrier Game: Where is the ball? (Prepositions)
6. NUMBER: Number Bingo	6. Barrier Game: Where is the chalk? (preposition use cup and box)

Phase 1 & 2 JUNIOR PRIMARY ACTIVITIES Term 2 1996

<i>Mathematics Activities</i>	<i>Language Activities</i>
1. MEASUREMENT: Shopping with Australian coins.	1. Guessing Game: use different fruits, chr. ask questions.
2. MEASUREMENT: Weigh food items using blocks.	2. Fruit Bingo
3. SPACE: Classify fruits & vegs.	3. Food concentration
4. NUMBER: Lots-of worksheet.	4. Classify food items
5. NUMBER: Cars in the car park barrier game	5. Sequencing worksheet: Shopping
6. PROBLEM SOLVING: Shape on my back (crescent, circle, square, triangle, oval, star)	6. Secret Person: Describe person eg. boy, girl, man, woman, then physical features

Phase 1 & 2 JUNIOR PRIMARY ACTIVITIES Term 2 1996

<i>Mathematics Activities</i>	<i>Language Activities</i>
1. MEASUREMENT: Shopping Board Game.	1. Find the toothbrush.
2. MEASUREMENT: Shopping, buy then record on sheet.	2. Food groups game.
3. MEASUREMENT: Measuring volume with beans.	3. Buying gifts game.
4. NUMBER: Snack/healthy foods board game.	4. Listening Post: More Spaghetti! I Say & sequencing activity.
5. NUMBER: Ten Silly Sheep: listening post and subtraction activity.	5. Classify cooking utensils.
6. NUMBER: Addition with two-coloured counters.	6. Barrier Game: Food on Plate.

The two teachers, two aides and sometimes the Deputy Principal join a group and work closely with the children providing intensive language input. Marion feels the integrated activities help to develop not only language and mathematical skills but also enable the Phase 1 children get to know the Phase 2 children and gives the group leaders (Phase 2 children) confidence as well as developing social skills. Marion describes some of the activities:

One of the games is an 'Animal Classification' game. Another game they'd be playing would be 'Bingo' just be developing the names or the vocabulary, so its sort of reinforcing the vocabulary. Another group might be playing 'fish' with animals cards, so 'do you have a kangaroo' and then some of the groups will be working with the teacher. One of the games I have is a grid, where you have a large piece of wrapping paper and its divided up into a squares. You have ABCD at the top and 12345 and then there's a set of cards that goes with that. It might say 'is the Koala in A5?' and they have to look, they have to find A5 and put it in the 'yes' or 'no' box. So as well as developing reading and language skills you are developing other skills as well.

In the maths, you might have 1 group playing skittles, and then they have to write down take-away sums, like 10-3. I might have another group working on Tangram puzzles, where they have to cut out the shapes and try and make the patterns that they've got. Another group doing a board game, where they are counting and taking it in turns, another group working on shapes. Like last term we did fruits, and so they had a whole lot of different fruits. They had to classify them according to the shape of the fruit, so they had a round shape so they had to put all the round fruits into one pile and make a graph, or they might put all the long ones in another group. So there's lots of different things, we're doing measuring, measuring length, measuring volume. Just a real mixture of activities, and they move around so they all get a chance to do everything.

Reading is also an integral part of Marion's programme. At the beginning of the term children take a book home. Each book is selected by Marion from Literacy Links or Sunshine Readers. Marion refers to these as supplementary readers which she uses to encourage the children to get into the habit of reading at home. They are predictable and encourage the children to use their prediction skills for vocabulary that is new. At the beginning of the year parents receive a letter explaining about the reading books and asking them 'not to expect the children to read all the words, but to sit down and talk about the pictures and help them to read through it'.

As the children become more fluent Marion introduces them to 'proper reading text, from a reading scheme, like they may encounter next year'. She places a selection of books in a tray and each morning they chose the book they want to take home and read it to Marion, 'so they have some idea about what's it about'. Marion asks them to find an easier one if she thinks it's too hard. The children take a card home with the date and the name of the book, for the parents to sign. On some days the children are asked to chose a book, find someone who has the same one and read it together and then by themselves.

Marion also develops their reading through 'reading lessons, which could take the form of a big book or today we were doing the labelling of aeroplanes'. On another day Marion wrote a story on the large easel about Shirley. The story contained many words with 'ir' in them. As she wrote Marion made reference to punctuation, sounds and capital letters. She illustrated a new sentence by writing each one in a different colour. Particular items were illustrated pictorially and on completion the children read the story while Marion pointed to the words. Then a child

circled all the 'ir's' and the children used their writing pads to copy all the 'ir' words which Marion wrote on the board. This is an activity that Marion does frequently as she feels it integrates, oracy and literacy.

Marion organises the children on the basis of her assessment of their level of language and literacy:

Last term I had quite a big difference between the children. I had a group of mainly Year 2 children who had been at the Intensive Language Centre for six months the year before. So they were just about ready to exit, but they weren't quite, so they needed another six months. Then I got a group of mainly year 1 children, who had some English, most of them had been to a pre-school for a term. So I had a definite Year 1 and Year 2 group. Because there was such a big difference, I had to take them as two separate groups for most of the first term. For our oral language activities, we had them all together. But as far as the reading and the writing with the Year 1's, I had to go back and teach them the basic letters and printing. Whereas the year 2's, most of them already had that, so we were doing other things, teaching them their double sounds and things. Reading groups were separate as well. But these children are pretty much at the same level, so I try and keep them doing the same things.

In order to meet the different needs Marion tends to work with the whole class and then give extra support to particular children. Several children in Marion's class are working on individually prepared work sheets. Hans was in Marion's class last year and he is working 'on a mainstream type book because he will be going into mainstream fairly soon'. At other times Marion organises the class in to 2 or 3 groups. One group may be involved in completing a work sheet from a whole class activity, while the other group works with Marion practicing a particular aspect of their oracy. When working with puppets Marion tape recorded each child's description of themselves as an Australian animal.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Marion uses 2 forms of formal assessment which have been developed and implemented by all the Intensive Language Centre teachers. These are Negotiated Evaluation which forms the basis of a Report written for parents and the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales (1993).

Using Negotiated Evaluation to assess the students

Each week Marion chooses 3 children in her class to assess using the Negotiated Evaluation sheet. When Marion has chosen the children she is going to focus on during the week, she tapes a Negotiated Evaluation sheet to their desks. The main headings on the Negotiated Evaluation sheet come from the Australian Language Levels Guidelines (1988). Marion has developed the minor headings to help her focus on particular aspects of development, these also relate to some aspects of her programme. Sample 7 is an example of a Negotiated Evaluation Sheet.

Sample 7: Negotiated Evaluation Sheet.

Negotiated Evaluation - Phase 1 - Juniors ILC

Date: 9. 6.96

Name:

Language:

Vocab - Sometimes talkative instead of listening.

Sentence Structures - Needs some encouragement to develop ideas for news

Class Theme - Able to describe a plant or part of a plant

Communication:

Confidence - Speaks quietly in front of group.

Clarity - Generally chatters a lot and expresses self well

Retells -

Learning How To Learn Skills:

Reading - Becoming independent - Able to tackle some unknown words by sounding or guessing

Writing - Able to write independently - Learning to punctuate when reminded.

Listening - Improving - doesn't always listen to other children (easily distracted)

Spelling - Able to sound out 3 letter words and match to pictures.

Handwriting -

Socio Cultural:

Co-operation - Generally cooperates well in class

Independence -

Task Coping - Able to cope confidently in most situations

General:

Science - Able to classify parts of plants according to their common features

Soc Studs -

Health -

Music -

Maths:

Number - Learning to do grouping for "lots of" problems

Space -

Measurement -

Marion completes the Negotiated Evaluation sheet while she is observing and interacting with the three target children. She explains how this is done for oral language:

For example, when they are having their news telling in the morning while they're in their little groups, or when they've picked out their best one to speak to the class, I'll go and sit down at their desk and jot down how the child is speaking. What sort of language, proper sentences, whether they are missing out the prepositions and things like that, whether they are using past tense or future tense, if they are using any colloquial terms. Just to make some comment about their level of language, about their confidence, their clarity.

Marion observes a variety of activities to assess the chosen child's literacy development:

For example, when we were doing the phonic activity, I would try and check and see first of all if the children could manage that activity by themselves. Decoding, putting the word into the right space, and I observed while we were doing the other activity on the Echidna, that's to do with locating information. These are some of the specific communication goals (see Sample 2), 'obtain information by searching the text'. Now they can actually do that to a degree, so they are obtaining information by listening to me read and then processing the information. And then they are learning to locate the words that they want, to fit into the sentences. So I would make some comment about whether they needed help in doing that or whether they could do it independently.

In addition to oracy and literacy there is a general section on the Negotiated Evaluation sheet:

The general section includes science, social studies, health and anything else. I mean, it's up to the teachers to work out how they do their own Negotiated Evaluation sheet. But I sort of adapted mine from another teacher who'd been teaching for a long time. We also have a section for maths. We would look at those three children that we are concentrating on and try and sit with them during one of the activities or ask the teacher or the aide who is working with that group how they cope with that situation. For example last term, we were doing lots of money and shopping games, and we were both doing that because we were doing the shopping centre. So we were looking at things like coin recognition, whether they knew the values of coins whether they could match them to the appropriate cards and things like that.

Marion uses the following large chart that she inherited from the previous teacher, to remind her of specific aspects of language and learning as she assesses each child. The headings on the chart are taken from the Australian Language Levels Guidelines (1988) and therefore correspond to the headings on the Negotiated Evaluation sheet. It is stuck on the wall above her desk as illustrated in Sample 8.

Sample 8: Language Chart.

<u>ASSESSMENT</u>	
	5. LEARNING HOW TO LEARN
,signal words)	A. <u>Reading</u> - information - use book - predict - use clues - main points - sequence - note taking
	B. <u>Listening</u> - as above - follow instructions
	C. <u>Speaking</u> - clarity - focus - transfer language - awareness - coherent
	D. <u>Writing</u> - structure - sentence - spelling - punctuation - focus ? - edit - quality - coherent - genre - narrative - report - recount - procedure
to Social Behaviour	
ness	E. <u>Independent</u> - organize - risk take - complete work - responsible - realistic expectatic
	6. MATHS
	7. HANDWRITING

Although Marion assesses the children through her observation and interaction in everyday classroom activities she reflects 'occasionally, if there was something particular that you said 'Oops, I haven't done that, you know, how am I going to evaluate that' then you may think of a special activity'. When Marion has completed the Negotiated Evaluation sheet, she uses this as a basis for the report for parents:

The report to parents is just based on what the children are actually doing each week, so instead of writing a report at the end of each term, every week we chose three children in the class. You look at those three children closely, using the Negotiated Evaluation sheet. The report to the parents will basically be saying 'what the children can do and what they have been doing in that week'. I might say 'they are learning about Australian animals and your child is able to describe an animal in different or simple terms or in science'. I might say 'they can classify animals according to certain features'. And in maths we might say what they've been doing that week, like at the moment we're learning multiplication. All this information comes from the Negotiated Evaluation sheet and my head.

Sample 9 Report to Parents

GREENWAY INTENSIVE LANGUAGE CENTRE

Progress Records for

hana

Date 14.6.96

Teacher Comment

hana speaks confidently with prepared items or poems but she speaks very quietly when telling news to the class. She usually listens well but sometimes need instructions repeated. hana is able to describe a plant or part of a plant in simple words.

In reading hana is becoming more independent by guessing or sounding out unknown words. She is able to complete simple comprehension activity such as missing words, yes and no or read and draw.

In writing hana is also independent but she needs to be reminded about putting in fullstops to make sentences. She usually works well in class.

In science hana can classify parts of plants according to their common features.

In maths hana is learning to do grouping of numbers for "lots of" or times
e.g $3(2) = 6, 3 \times 2 = 6$

Teacher Signature _____

Parent Comment

Ja uspjech u Engleskom jeziku mi imamo da zahvalimo najviše vam. Je odvajek bila veoma stidna i zbog toga ona tko priča ali se mi radimo da će se ona ubrzo osloboditi stidljivosti.

Parent Signature _____

The children are encouraged to write their own comments on their report to parents:

We explain it to the children. We have a space for the children, on the back of the report to parents. Once they're in Phase 2, they can make a comment about their progress. So we call it negotiated evaluation. The ones we did last week, usually they want to write down what they like doing at school, so I let them write that first. So they'll write 'I like reading, I like painting' whatever, and then I try and encourage them to write what they have learnt that week. So they might write 'I learnt about the kangaroo', or something like that. So they're putting input into what's going home to the parents. (See Sample 10: The Child's Comment on her Report to her Parents).

Sample 10: The Child's Comment on her Report to her Parents.

CHILD COMMENT At school ~~anita~~

We like learning
 about plans at r
 school we plant
 some kids when we
 Kam Bak to school
 the water was yolo
 I like to sit a
~~store~~ and I like
~~to~~ play.

Date 29-2-96

Teacher Comment ~~anita~~ vocabulary is developing well.
 She is able to ask and answer questions. At

There is a preface in the front of the report saying that if an interpreter is needed, they can contact the school. Parents are asked to sign and comment on the report before it goes back to Marion. Sometimes parents will write comments in their first language and this is translated at school, as illustrated in Sample 11: Parent's Comments on the Report.

Sample 11: Parent's Comments on the Report.

For Jess's progress in English, we can thank you the most. Jess has always been very shy and that is why she speaks in a soft voice, but we do hope that she will soon overcome her shyness.
 (mother)

As well as sending a report home there is an open day once every other term. The parents have the opportunity to come to the classroom for half a day and observe the children working. Marion has an informal interview with parents in the other terms. She finds that very often parents do not understand everything in their child's report. Marion makes sure she has an interpreter so the parents can ask questions or clarify particular points. Marion talks about an interview with parents:

Well after you go through the report, and ask them questions, usually I just go through and be positive about what the child is learning and what they've been doing. If they have any problems, we try and give them suggestions on ways that they can help the child at home, even if its just things like listening to them reading. I had one little girl who had very poor coordination, so when I her parents came for the interview last term, we were trying to encourage them to get out and play some games with the children. Get them to actually do things, get her to do colouring in and cutting out and that sort of thing, a bit more throwing and catching the ball. So, it just depends on the individual child.

Using the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales to assess the students

When Marion has written the report for parents, for the three children she is assessing, she places them on the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales (1993). She explains that when the young children arrive at the Intensive Language Centre most will be in Junior Primary ESL Level 1. They would be expected to progress to level 4 before they exit. Thus Marion feels it is important to be familiar with the Junior Primary ESL Levels 1 to 4. She talks through the process of placing Malenar on the Bandscales. Marion has Malenar's most recent Negotiated Evaluation sheet and Report in front of her. She is evaluating the Speaking strand of the Junior Primary ESL Bandscales. She points to the section under Language on the Negotiated Evaluation sheet and reads her comments:

She can ask and answer questions effectively, she's been learning the names of different parts of vehicles, she uses conjunctions like 'and' and 'because' and contractions. She still uses present tense of verbs, and she speaks clearly in front of the classroom and is very confident. So, thinking about that, then I would go to the oral language section of the Bandscales and rather than going back to the book, I would look at our shorthand version of it, which are a list of the main descriptors for each strand, levels 1 to 4. This makes it easier to locate. I know she'd be beyond a 1 or a 2, so I'd look through the points that we've got listed down here, say for level 3, 'participates in routine exchanges and initiates them', 'initiates face to face interaction, responds to teacher's questions'. She doesn't really have many breakdowns, she's fairly fluent. I'd started thinking, no, I think she's passed this, so then I look, see a lot of the points which are down here, she's beyond level 3 and then I'd look at level 4.

Marion continues to read the descriptors for level 4, giving examples of Malenar's use of English and confirming or refuting her use of each aspect of Speaking level 4. Towards the end of the descriptors Marion makes a general comment:

'Frequent errors in syntax in expression', yes, she still has quite a few of those. 'Uses a small range of connectors', yes I think she does in her reports. 'Awareness of tense developing and prepositions', what I've found with a lot of these children, is that when they start becoming aware of past tense, they start using 'did', like 'I did go', and 'I did make', so it shows me that they are aware that there's a past tense, but they don't know what it is. 'May not want corrections', so, I mean, like for example, verb tenses, you may correct

her verb tenses, but she will continue using the present tense, that's what she knows, that's what she's familiar with, she's not ready yet to make that step into using past tense. 'Fragmented language but intent on conveying meaning', yes, she'll get her meaning across one way or the other. 'May choose L1 for complex ideas', well we don't have the facilities for her to do that, but if we had a teacher aide who spoke her language, she may want to do that. 'Vocabulary and concepts widening, pronunciation developing Australian features', you often find that they're starting to use some colloquial expressions. So looking at all that I say yes, she's speaking at a level 4.

Marion follows a similar process for placing Malenar on the Listening, Reading and Writing Bandscales. With Listening and Reading Marion notes that Malenar was on Level 3 and says *'I can cheat a bit and I can look at what I had her on last time, we had her down as level 3, so we'll see if she's still on level 3 or whether she's up to level 4'*. Marion starts by reading the level 4 descriptors. After satisfying herself the Malenar has achieved most of the descriptors she places her on level 4 for Listening and Reading. As she looks at the section on Writing on the Negotiated Evaluation form, she explains how she is able to write so much detail:

I look at their writing folder where they keep all their writing. And at the end of each term I usually go through it and keep maybe four samples, one from the beginning, middle and end, so that you can see the progression that they've made during that term. And so the writing one is fairly easy, just look at the writing folder. Or you can be aware of them during the writing lessons, whether they are sounding out the words for themselves or whether they've got their hand up all the time asking you for help. Whether they can actually write about something that you've asked them to write about, for example, if you were doing procedures like something about how to make an aeroplane. Whether they can actually do a sequence like first you have to cut this, then you have to do that. Or whether they just write my aeroplane is this, or something. Quite often where you're trying to teach them a particular genre of writing, these children won't, they'll just write down what they want to write. Write what they saw on TV last night. So you're sort of observing them during the lessons as well, and if you forget, then you can always just grab their writing folder and have a look back at that.

On the basis of her Negotiated evaluation, report and her in-head knowledge, Marion feels that Malenar is beyond Level 3 for Writing. Marion comments that Malenar has been doing most of the things that are mentioned at level 4 and anything she is unsure about she can check by looking in her writing folder or writing scrap book. She concludes by placing Malenar in level 4 and adds, *'sometimes there may be one or two things that don't happen, but you'd say generally she's got 90% of the things here'*.

Having placed all the children on the Bandscales at least twice during the year, Marion explains what happens to them:

Well at the moment it's just staying within the Intensive Language Centre, because they want to try and see if there are any patterns happening, like whether most children are sitting on certain levels or what's happening. So last term the Deputy Principal collected all the Bandscales sheets and they were doing a survey to see where the children were and how they were progressing and whether it's going to be useful. And now the next step is whether we can actually use the information in the Bandscales when we're reporting to mainstream teachers, because when the children exit, we write a completely separate report for the mainstream teacher. We've found

that often some of the descriptors in the Bandscales are very useful. How can we use these to report to mainstream teachers, so we quite often just take that (the descriptors) and write that in the report because it gives a very good description of what the child is actually doing.

The Relationship Between Assessment and Teaching

How and what Marion teaches and her methods of evaluation are interrelated. The Negotiated Evaluation headings and the Goals for her programme (see Sample 1: Marion's Programme) come from the Goals of Language Learning in the Australian Language Levels Guidelines (1988). The Australian Language Levels Guidelines do not have activities which relate to particular goals and the goals are general, they do not relate to specific levels of attainment. But Marion feels that the Australian Language Levels goals are appropriate for her Phase 2 children. Therefore Marion plans activities that will lead to particular goals.

In addition to this when Marion has placed a child on the Bandscales she considers what the next step should be:

You do often, after you've looked at it, you would think where am I going to go now, what do I have to do next. But I'm not sure how you do it, whether you do it sort of intuitively, or from your goals or whether you'd actually read on and say 'they need to do this next'. I suppose you're sort of aware or you check and see what they should be doing in the next stage if you weren't sure. But you're not actually teaching to the Bandscales. I don't think it's designed to do that, you're mainly teaching to your goals from your programme. But I suppose you could look at it, there wouldn't be any harm looking at it and seeing where they should be.

At other times Marion's evaluation does inform particular activities. If Marion identifies a 'problem area', through her Negotiated Evaluation observation, she checks to ascertain if it is just the target child or a group of children that need help. On the basis of her observation she would either ask the aide to work with the individual child or plan a small group activity for a number of children.

Sometimes evaluation activities emerge from everyday classroom activities. For example, as the children complete a series of worksheets on Australian Animals, Marion has been systematically checking which children can recognise isolated words related to the topic. Then, each child is given a set of words they do not recognise, to practice during the week at home and with a friend. In addition Marion sometimes tape records a small group of children doing an oral activity.

On other occasions Marion gives the children an opportunity to practice giving an oral report in a non-threatening situation. As this is one of her goals she uses it as an evaluation activity. Each child in the small group chose an Australian Animal puppet and described its characteristics. Marion records each child so that she can listen to the tape later, in order to complete the Negotiated Evaluation sheet and help her place each child on the Bandscales.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks.

Marion talks about the Negotiated Evaluation:

So it is time consuming, it is something that takes a lot of practice to make sure that you write something down on their observation papers, especially with the junior grades because the children are a lot more demanding. You can't just say 'Off you go and do that', you've got half a dozen children who want your help or want your attention. So the hardest thing is to discipline yourself to write something down, and if it's sort of getting towards the end of the week and you think 'I haven't written much down there', sometimes you have to sit in at a lunchtime and think 'Now what has that child been doing'. That's the hardest thing to do that, and once you've done that the report writing is easy and it's easy to put them on the Bandscales.

Marion explains that the staff were using the Negotiated Evaluation, before they introduced the Bandscales, she says '(Negotiated Evaluation) really hasn't got anything to do with Bandscales'. She recalls that the teachers in the Intensive Language Centre, felt they had to use the West Australian Student Outcome Statements or some other form of more standardised evaluation. It was a choice between the ESL Scales and the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales (1993). They opted for the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales and attended a professional development day with staff from the other Intensive Language Centres. Marion recalls their early school meetings about the Bandscales:

When we first had a look at the Bandscales we were all a bit wary of it because it was quite a daunting document when we first looked at it, but I think most of us found that it fits in with what we are already doing. We don't have to change our teaching. We don't have to change our goals, and we don't have to change the outcomes that we're doing, it just fits in with what we are already doing. I think it makes the evaluation easier because it gives you these concise little descriptions of what the children are going to be doing at that level, so it makes the outcomes and the reporting at the end easier.

Initially at the meetings about the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales, it was decided to focus on the Speaking strand. Each teacher brought an audio tape of a child talking which was discussed in relation to what the child had achieved and where they would fit on the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales. The teachers found that the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales were 'rather large and difficult to get around' so in order to make them more accessible they listed the main descriptors for Level 1 to 4 in each strand. In addition to the main descriptors, the most appropriate points from the general Observation Guide - Speaking which is at the end of the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales, were also listed. The main descriptors and observation guides for Speaking are reproduced in Sample 12: Main Descriptors for Speaking Level 1 and Level 2 and Observation Guide.

Sample 12: Main Descriptors for Speaking Level 1 & 2 and Observation Guide

Junior Primary Bandscales.

SPEAKING : LEVEL 1 (1 or 2 words)

- labelling - immediate needs - isolated words
- non-verbal response
- copy actions - point, pick up, etc.
- watch other children
- silent period - active listening
- use L1 to communicate
- use gestures - body language
- echo words & phrases

Obs. guide. for Speaking - key things!

- avoidance - reliance on peers - familiar speech
- some (appears to be) appropriate responses to questions
- making approximate pronunciations
- initiates on needs level

USES - LEVEL 2

- routine social language
- combines words - creatively
- begins directing others - my turn
- joins repetitive stories, poems, songs
- repeats other Q's or statements
- relies heavily on interlocutor
- uses pictures to help communicate
- beginning to use intonation for meaning
- growing vocab.
- L1 with L1 speakers
- describing objects - simply

Marion uses the Observation Guide to inform her observations:

It's a general guide so, for example, when I start to listen to the tapes or look at their writing, or I'd even be listening to them speaking while reading the observation guide, 'appropriate response, features of speech, formality, pronunciation, body language, interaction with audience'. So before I was going to assess them I'd probably look through that. That would sort of guide my thinking.

Marion recalls that teachers found the Listening strand the hardest to assess:

We did find listening perhaps the hardest to assess. I mean with the writing, you just take the student's writing folder and look through that and see exactly what they're doing. With reading you've got to listen to the reading and set them a little cloze activity or whatever, it's easier to assess. With the listening, it's hard to know what can be what can't be done. They 'can follow the steps of instructions' or, 'they have difficulty following instructions and they often need repetition'. It's difficult to know.

Marion finds that it is sometimes difficult to place children in one level. Marion feels that the decision is based on 'the interpretation of the Bandscale itself'. She argues, 'the pressure is on us to make the decision about one level'. She explains that sometimes children appear to be in between levels:

I put her (Malenar) down as a 3/4, cheating a little bit, but she's starting to show some of the characteristics of the next level.

Probably by the end of the year I'll assess her and I'll put her down as a 4 for Speaking and Listening. And really to be on that level she should be doing I guess the vast majority of things on there. I think I probably put them across the two levels just for my own information just so that I knew that she had made some progress.

Marion argues that it is important to remember that the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales were originally written for mainstream teachers who had ESL children in their classes. She believes that they relate to whether ESL children can understand and use English at a native speaker rate. Marion is concerned about mainstream teachers:

In an Intensive Language Centre the teacher is more aware of basic things like speaking slowly, using simple terms, whereas if a child goes into a mainstream class the teacher will probably be speaking a lot more quickly. That's one of the main problems that children find when they go into a mainstream class, they can't understand the teacher because they speak too quickly. They use too many instructions in terminology that they don't understand, they don't demonstrate what their explaining, and that's where a lot of the children fall in a hole going into a mainstream class.

On reflection, although Marion feels the Negotiated Evaluation sheet is time consuming she feels it does enable her to assess each child in some detail throughout the year. In addition she feels it is a good basis for reporting to parents, as well as giving the children the opportunity to reflect on their own learning by contributing to the report. In addition Marion believes that the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales complement the Negotiated Evaluation, enabling her to make informed judgements about each child's achievement on the basis of detailed descriptors. She feels confident that this fine tuned assessment allows her to make accurate judgements about where best to place each child in the following term.

References

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Yuen at Greenway Intensive Language Centre

Caroline Barratt-Pugh

The School Context

Yuen shares the same school context as Janet and Marion at the Greenway Intensive Language Centre.

Yuen came to Australia from Malaysia when she was 10 years old. She speaks Mandarin, but her first two home languages are Cantonese and Hokkien. At school Yuen was taught in Malay, English was taught as a second language and other languages learned were Arabic and Mandarin. Yuen has vivid memories of being an ESL learner in two Australian schools. Yuen gained her Diploma in Education in 1987 and worked in a small rural town as a music specialist for two years. Then Yuen gained a Bachelor of Education and worked as a music specialist and a general support teacher before moving to an inner city Educational Priority School as a mainstream teacher. She studied for her Masters degree between 1994 and 1995 while working in a school with predominantly ESL students, as a contract relief teacher. Yuen began teaching at Greenway Intensive Language Centre in 1996. This is her first year in an Intensive Language Centre and although she has previously worked with ESL students, she regards herself as a newcomer.

The Classroom Context

Yuen is responsible for one of the Junior Primary Phase 1 classes. Through-out the year as the children become more fluent they move into Phase 2. Thus Yuen's class is fluid and this term (term 4) she has eight new children. Two of the new children have not been to school before and the other six children are not literate in their own language. The other 7 Children have been with Yuen since the beginning of the year.

Imagine you are spending the day in Yuen's classroom in early September. As the children arrive they choose something to play with from around the class, while Yuen hears individual children read. At 9.15 all the children gather round Yuen at the easel. For the next 20 minutes the whole class are involved in a series of activities which focus on oracy. The children are invited to take turns counting, naming, drawing and moving words and numbers around on a days of the week, date and weather chart. Then the class form a circle and a questioning game begins. The questions range from 'How are you? How old are you?' to 'Where do you come from? and What colour is?' Yuen models the questions and answers and encourages the children to answer in full sentences. This session ends with a game of *Simon Says*.

The children return to the easel and Yuen introduces a big book, *Are You my Mother?* She invites the children to describe what they can see and discuss the cover. After reading the title, Yuen begins to read the text while pointing to the words. She invites the children to join-in repeated sections of the text and asks a number of questions. Then Yuen explains that they are going to write the story of *Are You my Mother?* on the large easel. Yuen encourages the children to offer sentences and reminds them of punctuation and capital letters as she writes. The

class read their shared story together and then Yuen asks the children to identify and circle particular words and sounds.

Now it is time for the children to write their own story about Are You My Mother? The children sit at their desks with their names and an alphabet card taped to the table top. Yuen reminds them to write on the lines and to look for words from around the room, on the board or in the boxes which are placed in alphabetical order in a corner of the classroom. Yuen moves around the room responding to each child differently. Some just draw, others write initial sounds, others write sentences. She writes sentences for the new children to copy while encouraging the more advanced writers to try to spell new words by sounding the first letter, identifying this on their alphabet chart and then using the classroom resources.

After recess the children complete their writing, helped by Chi, the aide and put it in their Writing Folder. It is time for mathematics. Yuen explains that the class is divided into groups which change according to what she is doing. Yuen walks round the class marking and talking to each group. She makes a point of talking to Huang and writes 'Can work independently. Has mastered division' on a sheet titled Negotiated Evaluation which is in a clear folder, taped to his desk.

At 11.45 the children are directed to a variety of language games, these include picture dominoes, snap and various card games. One group is given a large sheet of paper on the floor. The jointly constructed story, Are you My Mother? is cut up into words and the group is asked to re-make the sentences and stick them on the large sheet of paper.

During lunch time, Yuen explains that the mornings activities are typical of her everyday work with the students. Initially when the children come to her class her main aim is socialisation:

Socio-culture has to be looked after before the linguistic. When they come here, most of them are stressed. So things like they have to be happy, they have to be motivated to learn, to be comfortable at school and if they're naughty they have to learn to be good first, before I can work out on the linguistic side. For instance, the eight new children, at the moment there's more training them to be schoolised, to go to the toilet at recess and lunch and not just walk out whenever you feel like it, to listen to an adult when they're talking, not to push, not to hit and when you're playing games you take turns, you can't have a turn every time, you can't be the leader every time, not throwing tantrums if you don't win, or you don't get what you want. So things like that, so the eight children that's our main focus for the last 2 to 3 weeks. Once I've got them doing that, then the secondary thing is for them to read, write, draw, the academic side of school.

Yuen begins with simple phrases which the children need when they first arrive. These are incorporated into all the activities that she plans, oracy being the main focus initially. She explains:

I guess you look at what basic things you feel children at their age need to learn to cope socially, in the environment and in their school when they go into main stream. So the first things I would teach them are things like classroom things, toilet things are important, the colours, then I teach them things like clothing items, food items. Like all my new ones, like the language activities I have in the class is to learn these basic sights words and to develop cooperative skills. At the same time they love playing, so it's sort of enjoyment too that they have interacting and for my better ones they learn to teach the others. The topic I choose is different from those games we play. The

topics I choose, like say in Term 1, I chose things like colours, food and then I started to get all sorts of new kids right throughout Term 2 and Term 3. Then I have to go into more advanced topics but still reasonably basic so my new ones that come in can still join in. Term 3 I did animals which is fairly basic and transport which is fairly basic.

Sample 1 is an example of Yuen's Programme Planner which she completes each term. Yuen derives her weekly activities from the Programme Planner and records them on a Weekly Planner, as illustrated in Sample 2.

Sample 1: Term 3 Programme Planner.

Term 3 1996

PROGRAMME PLANNER			
Language Awareness			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms of greeting eg. 'good morning', hello/hi, 'How are you?' Polite phrases eg. 'thank you', 'please', 'excuse me' Ways of addressing people: adults/ children eg. 'Mr/Mrs', use name Explore sounds and rhythm in the English Language Vocabulary: colour, family, occupation, places, animals, clothing, body, transport, food, location words eg. up/down, high, low, front, back, backwards, forwards, upside-down, over, under, right, left, inside/ outside Sentence structures: Asking questions: what, when, where, who, why; Basic past tense eg. 'I have', 'I can't', 'I can', 'I don't like...'; Use I/ my/ me/ mine, he/ she, him/ her, our/ we/ us 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal events, sequence story Words carry meaning Learn commonly used basic sight words eg. I, a, can, see, is, this, my, Alphabet sounds a-z Identify two and three letter words eg. 'or', 'us' Use initial sounds, class dictionary boxes and environment cards print in constructed own sentences in writing Illustrate to match writing (if vice-versa) Communicate through verbal (one/ two-word phrases, invent own sentences, routine phrases), action or visual means (pointing to object/ picture) 	
General Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm Animal and their features eg. body parts, covering, young, eggs etc. Australian animals Transport eg. vehicles and ways to get to places, road/ traffic Aust. culture: birthday celebration. 	Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> songs/ musical games role playing morning routine: songs/ rhymes day and date greeting shared book experiences: role play sequencing activities class events record books basic class chants/ rhyme Teacher-student readers 	Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal drawing/ writing Writing: favourite part of _____ Investigative tasks: sorting/ categorizing Mystery object/ animal/ person etc.; Qs/ ans. to identify Language games: barrier games, conversation large fish guests my _____ (fruit) 	Sociocultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolerance differences: interests/ opinions attitudes/ talents Appreciate and respects different interests and opinion Turn-taking Co-operate in group activities Take on leadership roles Share class games/ toys/ stationary School routines
Learning how to learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for help/ ask questions Listen for instructions Use pictorial cues for comprehension Use single-syllable sounds in reading and writing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express opinions on stories, songs etc. Express preferences/ likes/ interests Retrieve information to complete tasks Take risks by participating in new or difficult tasks 	

Sample 2: Term 3 Weekly Planner.

WEEKLY PLANNER			
Week	Theme	Resources	Additional Ideas
1	Animals	Books: The Little Red Hen Animals	Story map, box collage, reconstructed book, conversation, make own list/ don't like books, barrier game
2	Land/ Sea Animals	Books: The Three Little Pigs (video) Jungle Animals Zoo Life in the Sea	Classifying, sequencing, role-play, sentence reconstruction, piggy houses, secret animal, grid references, cartoonish grid.
3	Animal Body-parts	Books: Animals What am I?	What am I?, secret animal, animal figure (guessing), classifying, Jump in the Lake
4	Animal Covering Animal Categorization	Books: Animals Animals can Talk	Fur collage, Ma Se Lok, classifying
5	Eggs	Books: Chickens Aren't The Only Ones Eggs (2 books) Chickens	Make own books on animals which come from eggs. Skyside of a hen
6	Animal and their Young	Golden Egg Farm excursion Books: Animal Babies	Mapping, class report, conversation, Egg Hunt (Father's Day gift)
7	(Revision)	Landside to Farm	Individual report, mapping, Class Map (habitat & features)
8	Transport	Books: Transport	Shapes in vehicles, matching (vehicle & people/journeys), barrier game, one title engine.
9	Transport Sports Carnival	Books: (variety)	Make their own vehicle, procedure
10	Transport	Books: Road Safety Book	Make signs & class 'traffic scene'
Notes			

Yuen explains that the 5 headings on the Programme Planner are taken from the ESL Framework of Stages (1991) p.26, but the minor headings '*come from the top of my head*'. Yuen finds this a useful way of planning as it enables her to focus on different areas of language, while covering a variety of curriculum areas. In addition the 5 headings from the *Programme Planner* form the basis of the Negotiated Evaluation, which Yuen explains later in our discussion.

Next, Yuen talks about her reading program. Yuen feels it is important for each child to be familiar with the text before taking a reading book home. Yuen has made books about colours with repetitive sentences and matching pictures on each page, such as '*I can see a blue boat, I can see a blue ball, I can see a blue bird*'. When Yuen is confident that the children recognise the objects, they take the books home to read to their parents. Yuen finds that this process usually takes 4 to 5 weeks. Parents are asked to sign a card and in the morning selected children read to Yuen and give themselves a stamp if they have read their book at home. As the Children progress through a series of home made books they move onto '*real books*'. These are composed of Sunshine Readers and are graded in boxes A to D. The children choose their own reading books from the appropriate box.

Yuen reflects that initially the children memorise the words and '*rote read with meaning*'. Yuen supplements the reading books with meaningful language games which re-enforce the words and concepts. She feels that rote reading gives the children confidence and helps to avoid stress. She adds that '*in the mist of all this, once they've got a few sight words, we also learn the alphabet sounds*'. This is done in a number of different ways from recording sight words and discussing individual sounds, to playing games and doing flash card activities. These are then re-enforced through a series of grapho-phonetic work sheets.

The bell rings and it is time for the afternoon session. Children gather round the mural they have painted of an island in the ocean just off the main land. Yuen asks each child in turn how they will get from one place or house to another, modelling various sentence structures. The children identify different forms of transport, debating different possibilities with much laughter. Yuen provides a picture of different forms of transport particularly for those children who need a visual aid. With much excitement the children go to their desks and draw, colour, cut-out and stick their form of transport on the mural.

As the children are finishing Yuen reminds them that the Phase 2 class will soon be here for shared language activities. Yuen sets out 6 activities which she has planned with the Phase 2 teacher. Each group is composed of carefully matched phase 1 and 2 children. The Phase 2 children take the role of leader, as their language is more advanced. Soon there is a busy hum as the children concentrate on each game. The activities include a variety of barrier games, a semantic grid, based on different forms of transport, sequencing pictures and matching sentences and a jigsaw featuring some form of transport. Yuen, Marion, Chi and Wang Mo work with different groups. The groups do a different activity at each joint session, so the activities last for three weeks. At the end of the session the children line up to go to recess. As they wait for the bell stickers are given out for good work and behaviour.

At the end of the day the children choose an activity from around the classroom. These range from games and books to dressing up, puppets and masks. Yuen explains that this encourages the children to initiate conversations with her and each other and to use English in an informal way at their own level.

After all the children have gone home, Yuen talks about the afternoon activities. She explains that the shared language activities are important for a number of reasons. They give the Phase 2 children the opportunity to take on the role of leader; they involve the children in small group intensive language activities; they

encourage the children to be independent; they enable the children to work at their own level while introducing some children to new language structures. All of the activities build on or consolidate the classroom topics so children are able to practise as well as extend their language. In addition often there are two teachers, two aides and sometimes the Deputy Principal of the Intensive Language Centre joins the class. Thus the children are exposed to models of language and encouraged to extend their repertoire within a familiar context. At the end of the session the adults make a number of positive evaluative comments about particular children and award stickers.

Finally, Yuen talks about her writing program. Yuen prepares a number of writing activities which range from independent writing to work sheet activities, these are often integrated with reading. On completion each child places their writing in an individual Writing Folder. The writing activities usually follow a class activity involving visual aids, modelling and reminders about the structure and content of the writing, as well as strategies for supporting spelling. Yuen explains that *'all the writing comes from something oral'*. Writing activities are related to a topic or a story and Yuen likes to go on outings as a language and literacy stimulus. Yuen prepares different levels of work sheets and the children pick the one they are able to read, one will be very difficult and one will be very simple. The activities include picture and sentence matching; sequencing stories; filling in the blanks; matching prepositions to pictures; *'What am I?'* descriptions and drawings; story maps; classification; handwriting and sounds. Hand writing is based on copying sounds that have been discussed and modelled on the board.

Yuen explains that the children come with different understandings of literacy. Some children are learning to write in their first language, others have never held a pencil. Yuen gives an example of one child who refused to write his name in English initially as he knew this was not his name in Bosnian. Yuen describes children at different levels in their writing:

Nichol is at the stage where he doesn't recognise anything, he recognises two letters of the alphabet. I say to him, give me a sentence, sometimes he gives me a sentence, then I say what's the first sound, he'll tell me the sound. No idea which letter it is, so I point to him here (alphabet chart, on his desk) or sometimes I'll go up there and point to the picture. And sometimes he'll look himself. Monday is a good day for his writing, um so he can usually look up and tell horse, 'h' and he'll write it down and he just writes 'h', so he's teaching himself to learn because he is able to use that by himself. Others use the dictionary or they ask me to write words on the board, or they ask me which letter is it, or use the blank cards from the dictionary boxes.

Yuen does not correct the children's writing. She encourages them to *'read it back the way they want to'*, but she models the appropriate form at other times, for example during joint story writing.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

The Intensive Language Centre has a system of assessment that has been developed and is used by all the teachers at the Intensive Language Centre. Yuen was introduced to the system when she arrived at the school. New children are assessed by the Deputy Principal through an informal interview with their parents. They are then placed in an appropriate class. Yuen informs the Deputy Principal if she feels any of the new children appear to have more English than was first apparent and they are relocated.

Yuen explains that she begins informal evaluation by observing the new children in play activities and games. From this she identifies their needs and as soon as she feels they are 'schoolised' she says:

When I don't have to focus so much on their behaviour, I will move more onto their work, before I would accept what they have done, now if they don't do it properly I'll correct them.

Yuen makes decisions about appropriate activities for all the children from observing and interacting with them at work and at play. She describes Florie:

Okay, like I've noticed Florie when she first came, she hasn't been to school before this one, so she has actually gone a long way in three weeks. She didn't know things like going to the toilet, flushing the toilet or staying in the classroom. She couldn't sit still for very long. She'd sit still for 5 minutes and then she'd get up and walk off and do something else. Now she stays with the activity, used to play concentration, we played concentration so many times. She had no idea about turns, she would just take a card when she feels like it, but today she did that perfectly, she knew when to take the turn, she knows all her colours, she knows to say 'it's your turn' and she even corrects other people when someone else is not sitting properly. She'll say 'sit sit' so that's good so I know she's ready to begin, understand some of the words.

In addition to continual informal evaluation, Yuen assesses 2 children every week using a more formal system, called Negotiated Evaluation. She starts with those children who seem to have made progress. New children are not usually assessed until they have been in the class for 4 to 5 weeks, sometimes longer. Yuen finds it hard to assess children who are 'not saying anything', and suggests that all she can comment on is their observable behaviour. Yuen gives an example:

Well for instance Hara was very immature. Ishmael is her brother. Ishmael's come along, he can recognise probably about 5 alphabet sounds, he knows the vocabulary, he will ask me questions, he does all that, he can play these games, he can be a leader, Hara can't manage. First of all she doesn't seem to catch on to vocabulary quickly, yet the new children know more vocabulary than she does at the moment. But she's confident, she's still happy to play and all that, she wants to be the leader but she hasn't got the language to cope. So I'm not starting until next week. She's actually been here for about 6 weeks, 7 weeks.

Yuen chooses two children to assess each week. She places a Negotiated Evaluation sheet in a plastic folder on each desk. The Negotiated Evaluation sheet consists of seven categories. In addition to the five taken from the Australian Language Levels Guidelines (1988), there are two additional categories, Mathematics and Other. Under each category Yuen has written focus points to help her assess specific aspects of English. She describes the process involved in evaluating Alex, as presented in Sample 3.

Sample 3: Negotiated Evaluation for Alex

NEGOTIATED EVALUATION

DATE: 30.10.96

NAME: ALEX

COMMUNICATION*Personal Expression: shares his ideas "The mum says "Just look at you".**Recount Can retell procedure in order.**Clarity Improving in speech. Still problems with eg 's' => "sh" I saw = I shaw. Stuttering improved**Confidence √√ very good***LANGUAGE***Phonetics: Rhythm: Know more alphabet sounds eg. 'h', 'b' etc.**Vocabulary: Leaves new words with Repetition/use. eg sun, soil etc.**Sentence Structure: Uses full sentences. Constructs his own in writing & reading***LEARNING HOW-TO-LEARN SKILLS***Speaking: Self corrects if he makes a mistake eg**Listening: Follows instructions. Asks when he doesn't understand**Reading: Uses pictorial cues, knows "I",**Writing: Beginning to find the initial sounds of words when writing by himself. Needs help with finding most**Co-operation: Always**Task-coping: Beginning to try to solve own problems before asking for help***SOCIO CULTURAL***Participation: Very keen**Interaction: Works and plays well with others. Good as follower & leader..... Directs, corrects, helps new children**Tolerance:**Independence: Remembers to take out his reading book & lunch orders in the morning. Tidies his desk. Eats his lunch***GENERAL KNOWLEDGE***Topic/Theme: Knows the 4 things plants need. Remembers to water his plants in the morning.***MATHEMATICS***Number: Can + with fingers. √√ Greatly improved can do them independently. Recogn HO. Learning to x eg 2x3**Measurement: Can measure area informally**Space: Knows names of some basic shapes**Problem Solving:***OTHER***Seems very tired/sleepy most days. needs more sleep?*

In 'Communication' this is getting their message across. In 'Personal Expression' this particular child shares his ideas, for instance you see this is where, to remind myself, and I say 'oh that's really good, I like the way you shared your idea earlier'. I said the mum says 'just look at you' because we were reading a story and he made that comment, so I wrote it down and said 'that's really good that you share your ideas'. That's not what was actually in the story. He said 'mum', meaning, he actually meant the mum probably said 'yes just look at you because you're so dirty'. See, because we read another book called 'Just Look At You' which he took home.

'Recount' in a group of eight, he could retell, we'd just baked some bread from the Little Red Hen and we had an oral recount as well and he was able to tell us orally, and then we model write it.

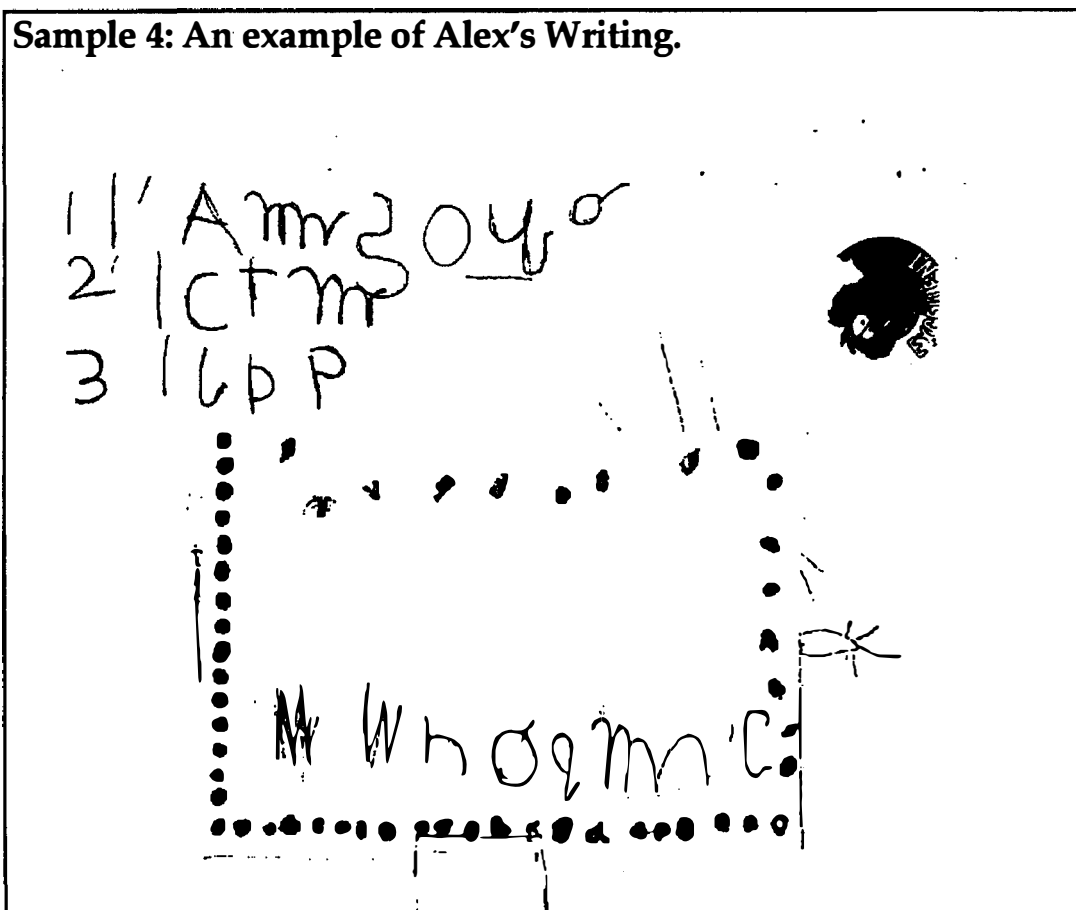
'Clarity', now I know I crossed this off last time. I changed it to social interaction, but I've changed back to clarity and I think that's probably important, but he's the only child in this class who really has the problem now. My Japanese kids have gone. He stutters and he has trouble with saying certain sounds and it was quite difficult to understand him to start with and because he's really improved it was quite a significant issue. You know he would stutter so badly that he won't even get the thing out, he'll just say 'ohh forget it' and he'll walk away. He gave up so it's a big plus with him, he's improved and he doesn't stutter as much. The only problem he really has is with the sound 's' and 'sh'. He's not getting them. .

'Confidence' is very good. He's always been quite confident.

Yuen modifies the form as she assesses each child. She is not sure if she will retain Clarity and include Social Interaction under Socio-Cultural. However, at the moment she says, 'I think I might just leave it out because I don't seem to need to do it for most of the students'. Yuen describes how she completes the section on Language while she is observing or involved in language activities. She explains that while doing a series of activities on plants during the past 4 weeks, Alex seems to have grasped the vocabulary this week. She has written 'uses full sentences' because although his sentences are not grammatically accurate 'he gets his meaning across which is the important thing'.

Yuen explains Learning How to Learn Skills refer to the strategies that children are encouraged to use to help them learn. Yuen writes what Alex can do under each minor heading and some of the strategies he uses to help him learn. Yuen made a note of what Alex can do under Reading when she heard him read that morning. Moving onto Writing, Yuen uses the following sample to describe Alex's writing. This piece of writing is based on a 'Who am I?' activity.

Sample 4: An example of Alex's Writing.



Yuen interprets Alex's writing. It says:

1. I am 30 years old.
2. I come from Malaysia.
3. I like playing the piano.

Who am I?

I remember he can recognise 'I' he can recognise 'c', he can't recognise 'from' and he can't recognise 'Malaysia' so only the ones he can recognise. He can't recognise the number 30, he went up to the chart and counted until he got to 30, copied it down, but when he came to read it he said 20. He doesn't know but learning how to learn skills. He's beginning to find his own way around.

Socio-Cultural assessments are based on observations of the language activities. Yuen looks for things Alex does in his role as a leader. She notes that he organises, directs and corrects members of his group. She notices that he is cooperative and tolerant. For example, in dancing he holds hands with girls and children from other cultures. Assessment of General Knowledge and Mathematics is based on current topics. Yuen explains that '*maths is only a very small component, we don't really have to focus too much on it although I feel it has so much to do with their learning and they love maths*'. Finally, Other, this gives Yuen the opportunity to mention anything else she feels is important. She is concerned that Alex seems to lack concentration and feels that he perhaps stays up too late. This is a sensitive issue which she would prefer to discuss in person with Alex's parents. She writes a tentative question about this on the report in the hope that his parents will respond.

Yuen explains that the children know when she is evaluating them:

These things I write down usually when the children are at the desk, sometimes I'll write it after they've gone home but most of the comments are written when they're here. Some of them will understand what I'm writing, some of them won't but they get the idea that whatever I am writing is about them. I'll say that 'oh I notice that you are asking me questions when you are having trouble, that's very good' and I'll write that down.

Yuen explains to the children why she is writing on the Negotiated Evaluation sheet:

They know that I'm writing things about them and they know that from this sheet I take it off and I write a report about them. So they've got this concept that I write things to help me remember about them, when I write the reports. So I try to keep it very positive. So I always say 'I'm looking for good things that they're doing and things they're learning. Like when Fiona understands some alphabet and I said 'that's very good Fiona, you're getting better' and I say 'you didn't know this last time did you, very good, I'll write this down, that you know this letter now'.

Yuen talks about the children's role and attitude towards the Negotiated Evaluation:

Well I guess they know it goes home and their parents feel very good about them going home, it's usually quite positive, but they don't really do anything different when they know they're being evaluated. I just start them off and I don't really see the finished product. My stage is just giving them the idea that I look at what they do in class, and write about, I remember it, I write it, it goes home to Mum and Dad, Mum and Dad come home and write something.

Yuen explains that in her class the evaluation is not really negotiated:

It's not so much negotiated on my level, but it is with Marion's class, Phase 2. In Phase 1 they don't have enough English yet, you can't really negotiate it, so I just really prepare them for the next level because when I'm writing things, I will tell them what I'm writing and some of them will understand, and some of them will just look. But they can't read it and they don't really necessarily understand that that's as much as we can do. And then when they go to Phase 2, they are able to understand more and they can say what they can improve.

Yuen talks about the difficulty of evaluating some areas. Because Yuen does not plan specific evaluation activities there are 'certain blank areas' on the Negotiated Evaluation form, which do not reflect what the children are learning. In addition to this Yuen talks about the difficulties of making judgements about some writing:

Joseph, he's written something. He can't read it but that's a start. I'd had not a single idea, that's the hard thing about teaching yourself, I don't know whether he knows what he's written in his own language. Or he's just copying what someone else has done. If I could know then I would know he is a stage ahead, 'cos at the moment I'm just assuming he is just writing because everyone else is writing, and I've just written on the board, he's copied. But there's no understanding or maybe there is in his own language.

Yuen uses her 'in head knowledge' and the Negotiated Evaluation form as the basis for writing a Report. The following sample is Alex's report based on the Negotiated Evaluation form, as illustrated in Sample 5.

Sample 5: Alex's Report.	
GREENWAY INTENSIVE LANGUAGE CENTRE	
Progress Record for <u>Alex</u>	Date <u>30/10/96</u>
Teacher Comment	
<p>Alex is keen to learn about new things in class, he works and plays well with other children. He has learnt some good leadership skills; organising the children in his group, giving instructions and helping them if they have difficulty. He has also learnt to be more independent; remembering to take out his lunch order and reading book in the morning, tidies his desk, takes out and packs away activities etc.</p>	
<p>Alex shares his ideas in discussions eg. "The mum saying "Just look at you....messy". he uses full sentences when he speaks and writes. He often invents his own sentences and sometimes self-corrects when he makes a mistake which is good. he gets his meaning across most of the time. Alex's pronunciation has improved and his stuttering has decreased.</p>	
<p>He listens for instructions and will ask for help if he doesn't understand. He is slowly recognising more alphabet sounds and numbers. He uses pictures to help him read and can recognise the word 'f'. It is good to see that he still enjoys reading. He is writing usual initial sounds of the word with my help eg. I can see lots of birds = keob. Some times, he can find the letters himself. Alex can (+) and take-away (-) using blocks to count by himself. He is learning to multiply ('lots of') eg. $2 \times 3 = 6$.</p>	
<p>He uses good manners and is well liked by the other children.</p>	
Teacher Signature:	
Parent Comment:	

Parents receive one or two reports a term, depending upon how many children are in the class and how soon Yuen can begin to make assessments. Yuen writes positively about each child. She feels it is important that parents do not put pressure on their children and make them stressed. Yuen feels that the report

also helps parents, 'a lot of what we're doing is also educating our parents on how to help them at home, our education here is different, we have to educate them'. Yuen finds that many parents attend English classes and often keep the report for several days while they find someone to translate. Comments vary from 'thank-you' or just a signature to more detailed responses, as illustrated in Sample 6. Some parents seem surprised at how much detailed knowledge the teachers have of individual students.

Sample 6: Alex's Report - His mother's comments.

GREENWAY INTENSIVE LANGUAGE CENTRE	
Progress Record for <u>Alex</u>	Date <u>14/8/96</u>
Parent's Comment	Teacher Signature
<p>Parent Comment</p> <p>Dear Mrs. . . .</p> <p>We work with Alex: to improve him saying 'sh's'.</p> <p>On the weekend we teaching him some alphabet sounds (s, i, n, m).</p> <p>Often he will reckon with numbers 1-10. Example:</p> <p>3+5=, 6+2= . . .</p> <p>Alex is enjoy every day, when he go to school!</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>Parent Signature</p>

Yuen keeps all the negotiated evaluation sheets and each term a report is stapled into a Progress record booklet. When the children move into Phase 2, the booklets are handed to the Phase 2 teacher.

As each child is assessed using the Negotiated Evaluation form, they are then placed on the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales (1993). The children are assessed on the four strands, Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing and usually fall between level 1 and 4. Yuen explains that she was not familiar with the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales until she joined the Intensive Language Centre. At first Yuen read all the descriptors for each strand and level in order to make accurate judgements. As she has become familiar with the different levels she just refers to the summary of each level, which is highlighted in the document. She uses the Negotiated Evaluation form which she has just completed, to place individual children on the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales. She describes the process:

I think it's pretty fresh in my mind where they're at. It doesn't take me that long to, but I always still have to flick through the book, I'm not very experienced. I still have to flick through the book and I'll read through, 'oh is he here?', then I'll read on 'no he's not here'. I still um and ah a lot. Sometimes, they have some things in level 4 and some things in level 3 but until they finish level 3 I haven't had them on level 4. They have to have all the things before they go into the next level. So they would not have all the indicators or all the features of level 4. I haven't had them where they've had all the features of level 4 with gaps in level 3. They've always had all the features in level 3 before they got to level 4.

Yuen has been observing Alex closely in week 4, term 4 and has his Negotiated Evaluation sheet in front of her. By completing the Band Scale assessment at the same time as she has completed the Negotiated Evaluation she says, 'a lot of these

(Negotiated Evaluation comments) are just triggers for me more than anything, she uses her in-head knowledge. Yuen describes how she placed Alex on the Bandscales and this is indicated in Sample 7

Sample 7: Bandscale level for Alex			
STUDENT NAME: Alex			
	<u>BANDSCALE LEVEL</u>	<u>ASSESSMENT PERIOD</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
SPEAKING	1	5-12/9/96	stutters and
	1	Wk 3-4 Term 3	pronunciation
	3	Term 4 Week 4	problems
		7	
LISTENING			
	1	5-12/9/96	
	2	Wk 3-4 Term 3	
	3	Term 4 Week 4	
READING			
	1	5-12/9/96	Still developing
	1	Wk 3-4 Term 3	level 1 skills
	1	Term 4 Week 4	
WRITING			
	1	5-12/9/96	as above
	1	Wk 3-4 Term 3	
	2	Term 4 Week 4	

Yuen has placed Alex in Level 3 for Speaking and Listening. She reads out the descriptors and comments, 'like all those things it is just exactly what he does there. It's exactly what he does. So it just fits perfectly to his stage'. In Speaking he has moved from Level 1 to Level 3 in 3 months, and Yuen feels that he has made good progress. However, she has some concerns about his oracy:

Well he just developed really quickly in his speaking, probably just because he's ready. But, it's a bit of a worry, especially with young children. This morning we were talking about talking in different languages. He said he speaks German at home but sometimes he doesn't speak in German because he doesn't know how. I said 'what do you mean, what do you do then?'. He said 'so I say it in English', so he's learned some terminology in English that he doesn't know how to say in German. It's really sad in a way because they really need to develop that language at home. It's hard for them though because they only use it in the family context, whereas in school we use it in so many different contexts. So the sad thing is that maybe he's speaking a bit of English at home and perhaps that makes them jump further to English. It's not so good, I really like them to keep their first language at home but if you notice his reading has stayed at Level 1.

Yuen goes on to describe her view of Alex's reading:

Right, reading level 1. 'Can recognise and name some letters' he's got about 4 to 6. It varies between the other two. And 'words which they encounter frequently', he can read 'I, a, can'. I know because I've just done it with him, and I read with him every morning and I know from his writing, because he is always working

with writing. I know he can write 'I', I know he can write 'a'. When it comes to anything else there will just be initial sounds. 'Commercial logo, signs, labels, stop, police', he can't do those things but he does recognise the stop sign though. 'Can recognise their name', yes. 'Will exhibit reading like behaviour', yes he can do that. He rote reads all the time he knows it by memory. He uses the picture to see what the action is, because he's got the oral and he just points to the word because he knows that the word is, but he can't actually recognise it.

He's in Level 2, this is what I often do, I go past it and read and see whether they fit (the next level). 'Can recognise words and short word clusters in English', no he can't do that straight away. So I know straight away he's not there. He hasn't even got the alphabet to be able to sound out and I think visually he's not ready yet.

Yuen moves onto Writing and confirms that Alex has achieved the descriptors as she reads them out for Level 2. As she looks at the Negotiated Evaluation form, she comments that she has not written everything he can do. She remembers that he drew pictures of what they were going to buy at the growers market, and then matched the word to the picture and copied it. So he does 'copy some words', which relates to a descriptor in Level 2.

Generally when the children are 'schoolised' and have what Yuen considers to be some basic oracy and literacy they may move into Phase 2. At the end of the year, Yuen in discussion with the Deputy Principal decides whether the children go into Phase 2 or into a mainstream school. This depends upon their level of achievement and how long they have been at the Intensive Language Centre. Yuen is unsure about where Alex will go at the end of the year. She feels that he is 'immature in his thinking, his coordination, movements and drawing'. After talking to him the Deputy Principal commented 'he has a short attention span hasn't he?' Yuen has spoken to the Deputy Principal because she thinks he will be in level 4 in a few weeks time in Speaking and Listening, while his 'literacy will still be very weak':

We need to talk to the parents because ultimately it's the parents' decision. I feel that he should go into Grade 1 even though he would be Grade 2 age. Because he's very much like a Grade 1. For seven months he can recognise about let's see, 4, 6 alphabets. He just hasn't increased at all in recognising words. He's just not ready.

Once a decision has been made, the Bandscales record, the year Reports and their Writing folders with about 6 examples of writing from through out the year, are given to the Phase 2 teacher. Alternatively, the mainstream teachers receive a report written especially for them. Yuen describes a report written for a mainstream teacher:

The first page is the details of the students, then the second page we'll write some things about their maths and what year level we think they're working at in terms of school mainstream levels. Sports and physical education, any comments. Language, we write about speaking, reading, listening, spelling and writing, so we write brief comments. Some people like to write screeds like books but I tend to write point form because I think, feeling guilty, as a mainstream teacher, I was so busy that I didn't have time to read story books. You know I just look at points. Okay, I'm worried about these children, how can they speak, how can they read, how can they write, what they're able to do. Then the general comments tends to give a hint for the teacher to see whether the parents are supportive, those kinds of things. I just wrote what I think are helpful for the mainstream teacher. So whether the parents speak

English, whether they're supportive, whether they help with the reading and things like that, or they just can't, they can't cope because Mum hasn't even got literacy in their own language, to be able to help with this. Things like whether the child will need a lot of guidance or not or whether they're confident.

Yuen explains how she uses the ESL Junior Primary Bandscales to write the report for the mainstream teacher:

I don't mention the Bandscales level, because the main stream teachers don't know anything about the Bandscales, or most of them. I write in Bandscale language basically what they can do, what they can't do. I've only written two mainstream reports, and both times I've actually used the Bandscales to help me. I'm terrible with thinking of ways to say things, so I use the observation list at the back of the Bandscales. This is the observation guide to language features. So if I ever talk about Listening there are some language features I can use. - 'student behaviour, comprehension, knowledge'. And some other areas so they sort of give you ideas on how to describe what you're trying to say.

Sample 8: ESL Junior Primary Bandscale Observation Guide - Listening

NLLIA OBSERVATION GUIDES & REPORTING FORMATS

Observation Guide - Listening

cont

task features

- time available for processing information / completing task
- kind of response required (e.g. pictorial / diagrammatic, written, spoken, non-verbal)
- nature of response: spoken / written
- support given (e.g. by classmates, teacher)
- familiarity of task to students

B. the student

task

- familiarity with topic/curriculum area
- understanding instructions / demands of task
- ability to adapt listening style to different tasks / purposes (e.g. listening for main points, details)

behaviours

- use of first language (e.g. to show comprehension; finding links with first language; in translation)
- asking for clarification or repetition in first language or English
- guessing
- predicting (e.g. main points, story line, details, word meanings) from context (e.g. illustrations, earlier discussion)

comprehension

- levels of comprehension:
 - literal - gist / main ideas / characters / events / processes
 - details
 - applied (e.g. generalising, synthesising information from different sources, evaluating arguments, deducing)
 - identifying and distinguishing: fact from opinion; fact from fallacy; implication; attitude expressed by speaker(s)
- understanding of cohesion within texts (see cohesion in Observation Guide - Writing)

knowledge of vocabulary

- recognition / recall (sight vocabulary)
- showing understanding of vocabulary (e.g. by explaining word meanings)
- understanding of idioms (e.g. phrasal verbs such as *go for*; *cut down on*; *live up to*)

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Yuen explains that the Bandscales Observation Guides are not divided into levels:

They're just descriptive observations guide. I guess I would start here, speaking first, then reading, then listening, then spelling, then writing. First point form, I turn over to the band scale level, he's in level 4, turn to level 4, look at some of the things, what are the important things, I write some points on that. If there's more I want to write I might turn to the observation list, if I get stuck on how to describe things, and have a look through to see how I'd write it. Then when I feel I've written all I can, and I try to write the most important things about his speaking, okay, whether he's able to listen, or whether he's familiar with it. Whether he's going to have trouble initially, and I would probably write that he would because he's not exposed to native speakers very much yet. It's only in my context and I speak slowly for the sake of my children, so he will need settling in time in terms of understanding. Reading, I would again turn over to the level on the bandscales, write down what he does and I would also write down whether he's familiar with what I call 'real books' or the teacher made books and mention any books that he's read.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

Yuen explains that she uses the methods of evaluation indirectly to inform her planning. When particular aspects of development come to her attention she will incorporate new skills, concepts and language into her activities. She gives the following example based on Negotiated Evaluation:

For instance, one of the kids I've written on today about reading, they are able to read sight words, they can recognise sounds, they can sound it out, they use pictorial cues. It's made me realise I've got to really push them into another skill now, what am I going to teach him next? Then I guess what I'm going to teach him, is when I read with him individually in the mornings to get him to read on. So if he gets stuck at a word he tends to rely on me or just sounding out, so I get him to skip that word, don't worry about it, if you can't guess it just read on and just get the general idea. And then they can always go back and guess what the word is.

The Bandscales are also useful in thinking about the next step. Now Yuen is more familiar with the Bandscale 'Say if my child is on Level 1 then you know you're aiming for Level 2. You look at the indicators on level 2..... I'll pick one that's easier to sort of see'. Yuen explains how that Band scales almost seem to fall naturally into her teaching program:

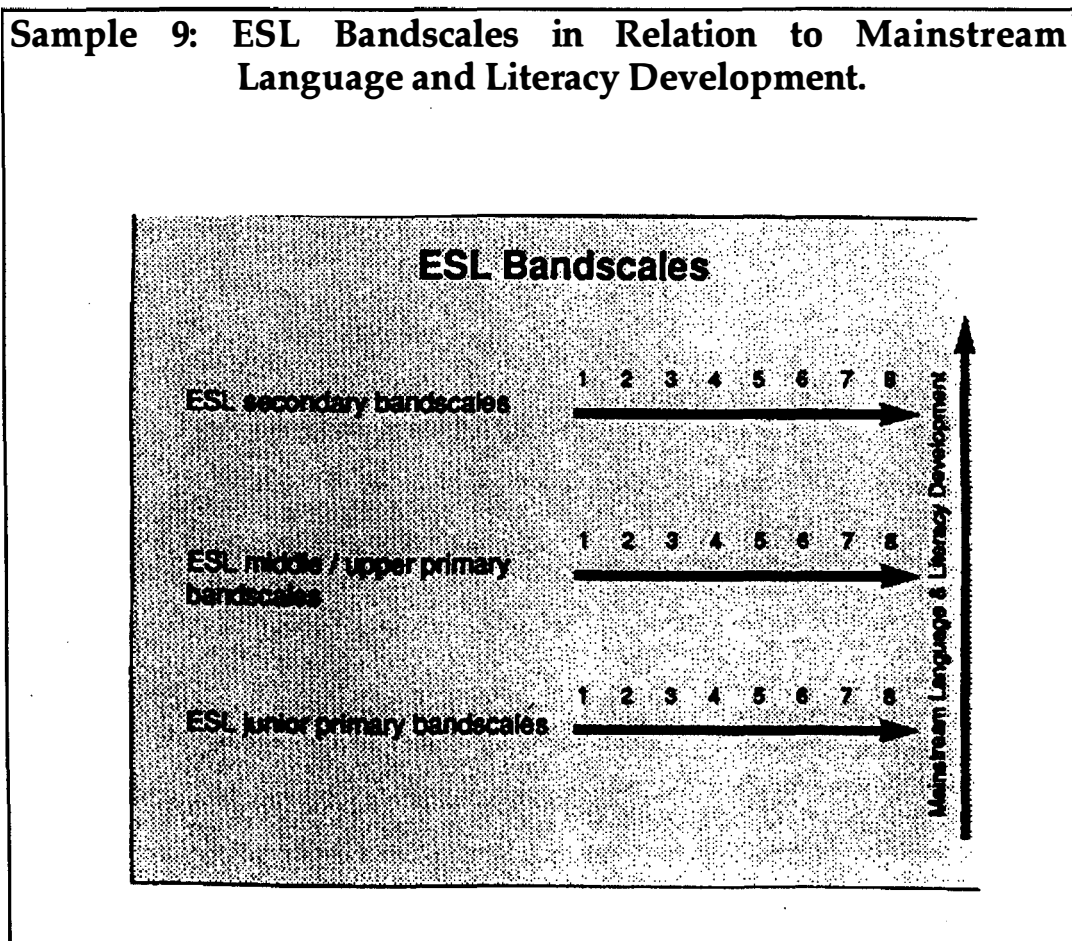
I guess decisions about what to do next come from my experience in teaching, as what the next stage of learning is, and it also falls in with the Bandscale book. Level 2 in writing, 'will draw pictures as a context for their writing' so now they're matching the picture to the writing. 'Illustrate writing just as you write for an illustration', just like, well we do captions for photos and things like that. That's often the next stage you bring them to. 'Can respond to yes no questions in English about their pictures for teachers to expand and scribe, can label pictures and write own name. Will copy from environmental print'. Yes, all that, its accurate.

Views on the Assessment Frameworks

Yuen describes how she was introduced to the ESL Bandscales.

I was given this book (ESL Development: Language and Literacy in Schools Volume 1: Teachers' Manual. The ESL Band scales. 1993) at the start of the term. I basically flicked through it just to get the general idea of what it is about. I had studied it but I hadn't used it before and I found the thing that helped me understand the best was page A17, use of Bandscale diagram, as shown in Sample 9.

Sample 9: ESL Bandscales in Relation to Mainstream Language and Literacy Development.



Yuen explains how she interprets the Bandscales diagram:

As a mainstream teacher when ever I got ESL children coming in, I always saw them as "oh gee they're very weak in their literacy'. So straight away I see them as being low, going into a remedial group. But the first thing that hit me when I saw this diagram was that ESL children are not at the bottom, here, but coming from the side. It is the time between children learning a new language until they have acquired native like competence. It's our rule that children must reach level 4, before that can exit the Intensive Language Centre. Some children have to exit because they've had their time. But I don't think we've had a single student who hasn't reached level 4 this year, with all 4 strands. That means that they've still have all those levels to learn when they're in the mainstream class. The sad thing is, the teachers in the mainstream just don't realise. Even as a mainstream teacher myself I don't think I was ever aware of what a long way our ESL children have come.

Yuen describes the use of the Bandscales in mainstream schools:

We didn't use the Bandscales. We should. We really should. The children who've just arrived from Intensive Language Centres or children who come from ESL background should be placed on that until they've reached level 8 (on the Bandscales), before they go into the mainstream assessment things, like the West Australian Student Outcome Statements is a mainstream one. As much as they say that they don't think it is (just for English speaking children) it is definitely a mainstream assessment. It doesn't cater for ESL children

Yuen feels that she was very lucky coming into a system of evaluation that had been so carefully worked out by experienced teachers. She finds that the evaluation methods all seem to fit so easily and they are much easier than keeping check lists and anecdotal records. Yuen feels that *'these methods are more disciplined, they ensure that all the Children are assessed and you do cover all the areas that you should be reporting on and should be teaching'*. Yuen talks about her initial experience placing the children on the Bandscales:

I think initially I stumbled a little bit. I was really umming and ah-haring and guessing which level, whether they are on a level or not. Things like I was placing all my children on Level 1, even when they weren't there. I didn't realise you could put them on zero. At first I found the descriptors all very confusing. I would like point form. This would enable me to tick each one as they are achieved. But, the other teachers prefer to write the children achievements in full. They don't want it to be point form because we shouldn't be box ticking.

Yuen thinks that as she becomes more experienced she may find the Bandscales easier to use. However, she reflects that the children's development does seem to match the descriptors perfectly and so it is relatively easy to see their progress.

In relation to Negotiated Evaluation Yuen feels that this system enables her to gain detailed knowledge of all the children in her class, in a systematic way. Focussing on two children at a time, every two weeks ensures that no-one is left out. She comments:

I do have to consciously train myself to remember to write things down for the Negotiated Evaluation. I have to make sure I do the Negotiated Evaluation on their desk while the children are there. There are some weeks where I get so busy, like going on excursions last week, I didn't write a lot. So I just take the sheet at the end of the day and sit down and think okay, and I describe the things I've seen.

Finally, Yuen talks about the plan for next year, using the same methods of evaluation.

The Bandscales were the priority for last year. This year it was just to see how it all runs. Last year they did all the planning. Last Wednesday afternoon we had a meeting about what we're going to do next year. So we're going to reassess our Bandscales and how we use them in assessment, in terms of reporting. Who should we be reporting too, when we exit our children into mainstream, should we be reporting to parents, teachers? How we're going to do it, if we decide to do it. Those are the questions we're thinking about. What kind of assessment works best and who's it for?

References

ESL Development: Language and Literacy in Schools Volume 1: Teachers' Manual. The ESL Bandscales. 1993

Aimee at Southern Primary School

Mary Rohl

The School Context

Southern is on the fringe of the Perth Metropolitan area near one of the main highways and in a pleasant suburban area. According to information in the Southern Primary School Development Plan:

The community is in transition from the relatively stable private home ownership (at the lower end of the private real estate market) of the mid 1980's to the ever increasing rental and investment property of the present time.

In this document some of the 'challenges facing school managers and teachers' are seen to be: *'the increasing Homeswest presence, the rising Aboriginal enrolment and the marked ethnicity of the children attending the school'*. The authors of this document feel that *'the Southern community is no longer isolated from the social problems confronting communities undergoing transition.'* In 1996 the school enrolment was 413 children (Pre-primary-Year 7), of whom 12% were Aboriginal. The percentage of children speaking English as a Second Language is not recorded. There is an increasingly large proportion of transient students (more than 150 in 1996). Nevertheless, some positive developments are noted in this document, which include: participation of parents in school-decision making; *'the increasing acceptance by parents of socially apposite problem solving procedures'*; improvement of school buildings and grounds; and *'consistent management of student behaviour'*. The School Profile concludes as follows: *'it is a school seeking continuous improvement.'*

Based on the school results for 1996, Performance Indicators for each of nine learning areas have been generated. The English indicator is: *'the extent to which children's literacy skills and abilities are developed'*. The areas of Reading, Writing and Spelling are addressed in terms of the assessment in 1996 of Reading and Spelling (standardised tests) and Writing (First Steps Developmental Continuum). Strategic Plans for following years have been drawn up for Reading Comprehension, Spelling and Writing.

In 1996 the school was implementing a *'Strategic Plan for Writing to improve the students' skills in the various Writing Forms'*. This was monitored through First Steps Writing assessments by teachers of all children, which were used to create computer-generated graphs of the writing development of Year groups in the school. See Sample 1 on the next page.

The Classroom Context

Aimee is the Year 1/2 teacher at Southern Primary School. There are 26 children in her class, 10 in Year 2 and 16 in Year 1. The Year 2 children, who are all apparently Anglo-Australian monolingual speakers of English (*'as far as I'm aware none are English as a second language background'*) have been chosen for this split class because of their ability to work independently. The Year 1 children are a more heterogeneous group: there are four Aboriginal children, at least one of whom is of Year 2 age and two ESL children (one child who may be from an ESL background left the class near the beginning of the project). Aimee doesn't think that the Aboriginal children speak either an Aboriginal language or Aboriginal

English. One of them speaks very little and does not tell news to the class. It will be seen that Aimee has in her class a heterogeneous group of children who have very differing educational needs. She is particularly concerned about the needs of the Aboriginal children, some of whom are experiencing problems in meeting the requirements of the Year 1 curriculum.

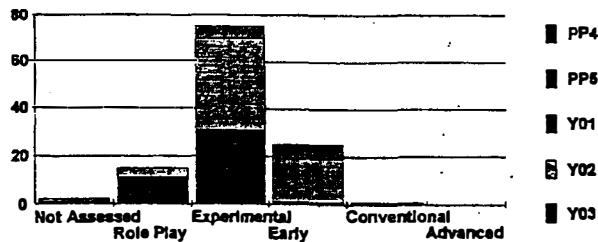
Sample 1: Extract from School Strategic Plan for Writing

SUBJECT PHASE/STUDENT COUNT BY GENDER			
WRITING	Boys	Girls	
Role Play	7	9	
Experimental	49	41	
Early	76	67	
Conventional	37	37	
Advanced	5	8	

STUDENT COUNT BY SUBJ. BY PHASE BY YR/PP4-Y03(SCG5a)

REPORT DATE: 11/12/1988

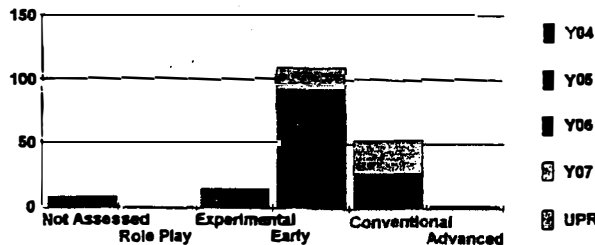
SUBJECT: WRITING



STUDENT COUNT BY SUBJ. BY PHASE BY YR/Y04-Y07(SCG5b)

REPORT DATE: 11/12/1988

SUBJECT: WRITING



The two ESL children are George from Eritrea and Chanthana from Cambodia. At the beginning of the project Aimee is not sure if these children speak a language other than English at home. However, after talking to the families she discovers more about these children's backgrounds. George's father draws her a map of Africa to show his homeland. The family came from Eritrea when George was around two years of age. In their home two African languages as well as English are spoken, but the parents have expressed their distress that George refuses to speak the African languages. It seems that Chanthana was born in Australia and that her parents have little English, but her father nevertheless was able to express his anxiety at the beginning of the year that she should have the correct equipment to bring to school, such as pencils and a scrap book. Aimee explains that Chanthana was the only child not wearing a school uniform on the first day and that 'she wouldn't speak at all. She just would sit there and it was like she was really frightened'. Chanthana has a brother in Year 4 with whom Aimee has tried to communicate, but his English is also limited. Both George and Chanthana attended the Pre-primary Centre at the school for a year before beginning Year 1.

In Aimee's classroom there is a strong emphasis on language. She uses a thematic approach to programming. The desks and chairs are arranged in groups in order to facilitate discussion and cooperation. The walls are covered in environmental print, such as *Letterland* posters, School Rules, children's project work and phonics charts. At my first visit the children are engaged in USSR silent reading. There are books and children all over the floor. There are big books and small books and each child appears to be engaged in the act of reading. For the Year 2 children this is mostly silent, but the Year 1 children either silently mouth the words or say them softly aloud. Reading is an active process. Books are also the catalyst for some of the oral activities which are a feature of this classroom. On one occasion the children have been learning about fossils from a big book on the subject. Sample 2 shows Aimee's Pathway to Learning about the Earth which has been negotiated with the children in class meetings.

Sample 2: Pathway to Learning about the Earth

Theme

The earth

Pathway to learning about the earth -

oceans, water, chromatography, weather, farm animals, dinosaurs, how fossils are made (palaeontology), rocks, minerals (geology), erupting volcanoes, growing crystals, electricity, growing alpha sprouts -

Strand - Viewing

Substrand - Structures and features

Level 1

Outcome - Demonstrates emerging awareness and use of symbols and conventions when making meaning from texts

• graphically distinguishes between a close-up, medium and a long shot.

Substrand - Text

Level 1

Outcome - retells meanings and makes simple interpretations from visual texts

At the mat session when the children are gathered on the floor around Aimee she asks for information from the big book they have been studying, encouraging the children to expand their answers:

What does a palaeontologist do?

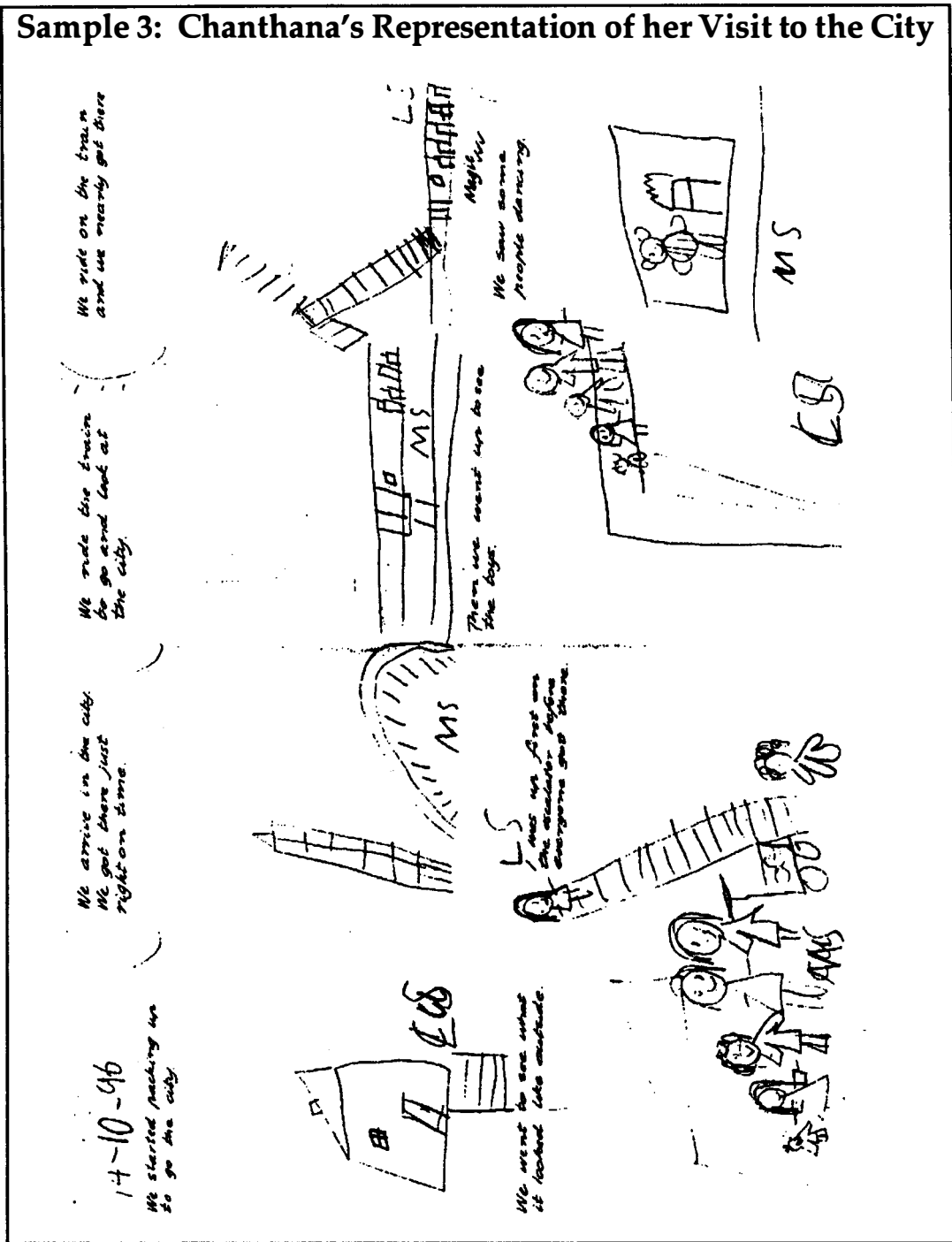
Can a scientist be a lady or a man?

How are fossils made? Tell me a bit more. Remember the book about fossils.

What did the book show?

After the children have discussed the topic they make their own fossils and then represent the method pictorially as a sequence of events. In this way Aimee integrates oral language, reading and viewing. A similar procedure is followed when the topic is Views of the City. After a class discussion and Aimee's reading of a related text the children have visited the City and represented their perceptions of it (See Sample 3).

Sample 3: Chanthana's Representation of her Visit to the City



Sometimes, in addition to the drawing of a sequence of pictures, the children may take photographs of a sequence of events. When they make crystals they take photographs of the process and then write the method underneath each picture, so adding writing to the language experience. Aimee explains this in terms of Student Outcome Statements for Viewing:

They were supposed to take four pictures of growing crystals. So we grew the crystals from last week, so they've got the end result. So they had ingredients, so that was the first one, then they put the salt into the container, then added the water and stirred, and then the final one showed the crystals. Because the objective of that in the Viewing strand is for kids to develop a sequence of photos and to actually take the photos themselves and develop that and then the next step is to either read about it or write about it.

Aimee discusses the importance of expression through visual images at the beginning of school for her class, in particular for the ESL and Aboriginal children whose English language skills may not be very advanced:

What I do is, especially with the children in Year One at this level, [I] base a lot of their work on pictorial work which I believe is good for their ability to be able to think and put things in order before they start writing about it.

She sees oral language as being very important. News telling is done everyday, with children taking turns to talk to the rest of the class. A variation of this is what Aimee calls 'Donut News'. The children sit facing each other in two circles, an inner and an outer, thus making the shape of a doughnut. They then talk to the person facing them about their news and when they have finished move on to the next person. Sometimes Aimee will direct the topic of conversation: 'Let's talk about the book we've just read'. One of the children's favourite topics is joke-telling which causes great hilarity.

For the last hour or so of every afternoon and sometimes in the morning when the children have finished their assigned tasks they are allowed to choose their own activities. These may be playing with construction toys, or in the home corner, making models out of junk materials, cutting and pasting, working at the writing table, using the computer, or taking part in a craft activity directed by either Aimee or a parent helper. During this time there is lots of interaction between the children, although some choose to play independently. Aimee's purposes here are for the children to share equipment, speak to each other, ask each other questions and help each other. On one occasion Chanthana and another Year 1 girl construct a road, concentrating deeply on the task in hand and having very little contact with each other. At the end of this activity time there is an oral sharing session in which the children are encouraged to present their activity to the rest of the class. Chanthana and her friend talk briefly about their construction.

In addition to the activity-based learning of this classroom there are more formal sessions in which basic skills are taught. Aimee makes use of the *Letterland* materials for teaching phonics. There are also tightly structured reading and writing sessions. Nevertheless, the overall impression is of an integrated language program which gives a high priority to oral language and viewing.

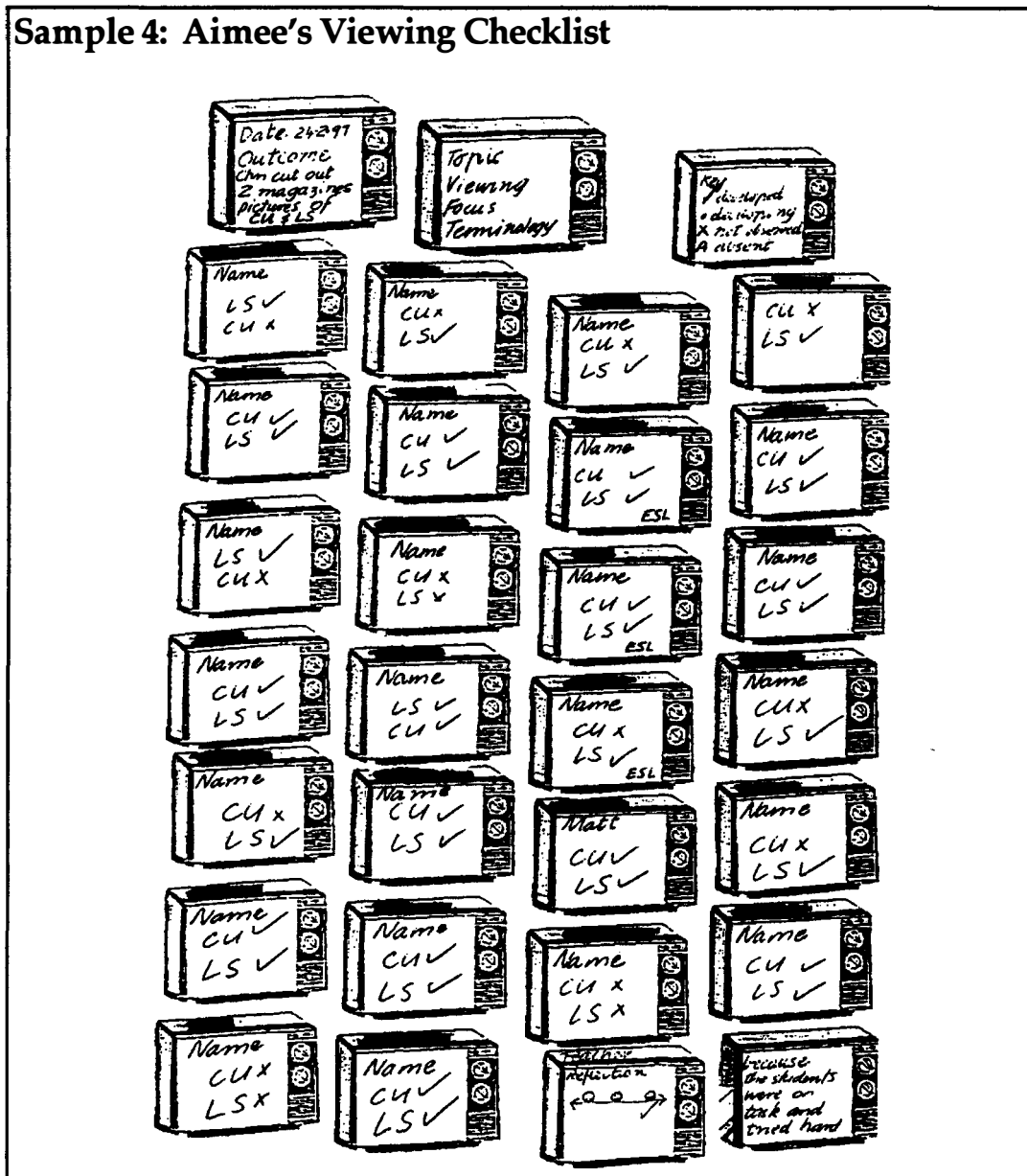
Assessing the Children's Achievements

Aimee was invited to take part in the study in order to give the perspective of a teacher in a mainstream school who is familiar with outcomes-based frameworks and who has only a few students from ESL backgrounds. She is an experienced teacher who has worked in rural and metropolitan schools. This is her first year at Southern. For the previous four years she was in the country at a District High School, which has a high Aboriginal population and which has been trialing the Student Outcome Statements for the past few years. She came to Southern as an Advanced Skills Teacher who has the responsibility of implementing Student Outcome Statements in the school. Aimee is enrolled in a Master's of Education degree and has a particularly detailed knowledge of the Viewing strand of the Student Outcome Statements (SOS). She has taken part in a National Professional Development Project (NPDP) which focussed on teachers' use of the Student Outcome Statements. In this project she concentrated on the Viewing strand and has presented her Viewing program to various professional audiences, including the State Australian Language and Literacy Educators Association. Aimee has also been on a committee which is reviewing the Student Outcome Statements for Speaking and Listening at Levels 1, 2 and 3 and a committee which is rewriting the Processes and Strategies for Viewing at Levels 1, 2 and 3. For this latter committee she is providing work samples to illustrate the

Statements. In addition to her inservicing in Student Outcome Statements Aimee has also had access to a large amount of inservicing in First Steps.

For her language activities Aimee consults either or both First Steps and Student Outcome Statements to decide what the children are going to learn. As the children engage in the activities she assesses the degree to which they achieve the planned outcome in terms of *developed*, *developing*, *not observed*, *absent* or *not observed*. This is noted on a checklist which she carries around with her. On this she also evaluates herself and the criteria used to determine if the outcomes have been met. In the checklist which can be seen in Sample 4 Aimee is focussing on the children's ability to identify and name *long shots* (LS) and *close ups* (CU).

Sample 4: Aimee's Viewing Checklist



This checklist forms an important part of what Aimee calls *kid watching*, which she defines as:

Well, really watching what the kids do. I use my prior knowledge of the child. It's really observing and setting up activities and putting in place structures where you can actually listen to their conversations.

Aimee begins 'kid watching' at the very beginning of the year to help her program for her children:

I look at where the kids are at and mentally put them into groups. I'll select a few kids that I'm really concerned about and I'll focus on them in all their areas and then I might just get out my First Steps Continuum and just look at that and think, 'That kid's not doing that or that kid's doing that'. And just by their behaviours, just by how they'll, especially with Year 1s, how they'll write their name, their ability to sit for 5 seconds or not, you know, just all those sort of things. You just automatically do it. Then I'll be more specific and look at the major teaching emphases and see where to go. Then, I go for the kids who I think are doing really well just to give me a comparison between the kids who I think are really poor and the ones who are doing reasonably or really well. Then the last group I kid watch are the average kids. I want to emphasise the kid watching bit because that's where a lot of my information comes from.

Once she has observed the children in this way for about a term she begins to assess them in terms of First Steps Continua, using a checklist:

At the end of Term, usually week 9, we've got to have work sample books to the office, so then there's that evaluative side of it that I've got to have actual written evidence. So you go from kid watching to look at their Developmental Continuums to then doing the work samples which have to go to Admin.

Aimee's teaching style is somewhat different from that of the other teachers in the school as she focuses on oral language and viewing, which sometimes results in a higher noise level than that accepted by some of the other teachers in the open classroom area. Further, her approach to assessment also differs from that of some of the other teachers and it doesn't appear to be as highly regarded as it was at her previous school, where she says that her feedback from the Deputy Principal was that *my records were the best records that he'd seen ever in all his teaching experience*. In her present school the expected assessment measures are more formal:

It's been suggested very strongly to me that I'm not doing enough formal testing and I've found it really difficult coming to terms with that because I've been used to doing work samples and now they want me to grade it to a given mark out of 10 and all this sort of thing.

She feels that this type of assessment does not do justice to the work that the children have shown they are able to do in her classroom, although she can see the place for instruction in basic skills as long as it is within a meaningful context:

The kids have done heaps. They've done a lot. They're writing descriptions, procedures, recounts and they are working at a very good level. I use the eclectic approach. I don't think you can let kids do activities all day. I still think they need to be taught the basics, but it's a traditional school, it's more the basics. And we were told to liaise with Year 1. And I did and said, 'What are you doing?', and they'd photocopied a yes/no sheet out of the Patterns [formal spelling] book and I thought, I can't use that.

Aimee, as we have seen, is an experienced teacher who has been working at a state level to formulate curriculum documents and has been working in schools where the latest initiatives are being used. Nevertheless, she is prepared to compromise and change her practice to a certain extent, even though she is philosophically opposed to some of the assessment measures used at the school:

Maybe I need to rethink. I guess there's another side to the story. I guess because it's a low socioeconomic area and they want the kids to

achieve or get to the best standard they can. But I think besides giving kids that rigidity, there are other aspects that you need to look at. Like, what's wrong with giving a kid a checklist of saying all the things that they can do? Why does it have to be written. Why do they have to answer in a full sentence, like, name for dinosaurs? Half the Year 2s could write the names off the top of their heads. I did the test orally, but that wasn't good enough. The reason given to me was that the parents couldn't see what the kids actually had done, but the questions that are asked were on the checklist. So, I'm doing a few old fashioned tests this term.

She does already use some standardised measures, such as the Letter Identification, Word Identification, Concepts of Print and Dictation from the Observation Survey of Early Literacy (Clay, 1993), an attitude to reading survey and another survey from a rural school district.

Student Outcome Statements

As we have seen, Aimee puts an emphasis on the Viewing strand of Student Outcome Statements. During the time of the study this strand was named Reading and Viewing, although in 1997 it has become a separate strand. Aimee explains its place in the curriculum, how the children are learning about what's involved in viewing and how they are motivated by viewing to use other language forms. She defines viewing and explains the implications of the Viewing Curriculum for classroom practice:

A living text; viewing is the world we live in. It is everything we do and see: how we interpret and construct the world in which we live...The classroom implications for viewing are that by assessing children in making critical judgements of the living text the transition to making critical judgements in reading and writing will be eased.

During the time of our project Aimee, to her knowledge, is the only teacher in the school who is using Student Outcome Statements. Further, she has taken part in a National Professional Development Project, which involved her in an action research study where she linked Viewing to other modes of language at Levels 1 and 2. At the end of the study she wrote a report on how she used the Student Outcome Statements in her classroom and how this impacted on the children's learning. She explains her enthusiasm for the Viewing program which she implements in her early childhood classroom:

I've found the impact of doing viewing just fantastic. Like they've got their own viewing scrap book. Viewing has really got its place in the junior area. These kids have made their own cameras and even, Dwayne [an Aboriginal child], he'll talk about 'long shot' and 'close up'.

George's representation of perspective in terms of type of camera shot can be seen in Sample 5. He has dictated the captions to Aimee:

Sample 5: George's Representation of Different Types of Camera Shot

<p>Me watching a video. I'm sitting at the back of the couch. You can see me because I'm at the back of the TV.</p>		<p>MS</p>	<p>Fantabulous wv</p>	<p>Then I played with the dog. It is my friend dog. The dog's name is Ruli.</p>		<p>MS</p>
<p>We went back inside.</p>		<p>LS</p>	<p>I was playing on my computer. I was playing Dual Kill.</p>		<p>MS</p>	
<p>Me and my brother having a race.</p>		<p>MS</p>	<p>I was writing something. I'm writing about dinosaurs.</p>		<p>MS</p>	
<p>That's me riding my roller blades.</p>		<p>CU</p>	<p>I took off my roller blades.</p>		<p>MS</p>	

Aimee outlines the ways in which the Student Outcome Statements document has focussed teachers' attention on Viewing in the whole curriculum:

I think as teachers you're doing Viewing all the time but because of the Student Outcome Statements you can really focus in on it now. It's in your social studies, like communication, you know sending and receiving messages and that's not the only part of it. You know,

the way we feel, feelings inside, and it all comes through. I think they're understanding it. Viewing has to be, it really is exciting. I find that you still need to look at word study and things like that, they are so important, but I find that I'm fitting it in naturally all the time and it goes really really well with the kids.

She sees a strong connection between viewing, language and literacy:

It helps language and literacy development because it's descriptive, they are constantly talking about it. I try at a really basic level bringing in ideas of top level structure like the description listing. I will give an example of that one. At the beginning of the year we used travel brochures. They were fantastic, just gorgeous and then the kids had to write a list so I said, 'Well look at it. Write the words that you think would go with the pictures'. So that's description listing. Then there's compare and contrast. We compared colour pictures to black and white pictures.

Aimee explains that she uses the Student Outcome Statements as the basis for her viewing program. She finds the Viewing statements rather limited at the lower levels and has adapted some of the statements for the Upper Primary levels to use with her class:

I am using the Viewing Outcome Statements and I'm using the ideas from Upper Primary to bring them down and the kids down here can do them. They focus more on specifics like stereotyping and things like that and there is something else. They don't suggest for the lower grades to get so much into close up, long shot, medium shot and camera angles but they can do it. If you make a little pretend camera and show them, like they stand on the chairs, they stand on the desk, they lie on the floor, they pick it up and they love that and they don't muck around or anything. They really don't.

Aimee carefully points out that she feels comfortable as a classroom teacher in using the Student Outcome Statements as she finds that they allow her to be creative and flexible. She is now using them in the area of Art as well as in English.

Aimee's Assessment of her ESL Children in Terms of First Steps and Student Outcome Statements

Aimee states that she doesn't usually set up special activities to observe First Steps indicators but rather she uses First Steps strategies which turn out to be appropriate for assessment and she makes a checklist for the activity:

Things that I'll do special are the checklist, for the news plan. I'll do the checklist and tick off if they can sit and listen or they look at the audience when they're speaking, things like that. But basically, to be fair on the kids you look at what they're doing and what you're teaching them rather than bringing in something else.

She also explains that when she assesses the children she usually does this in terms of First Steps indicators and then uses a document from the Education Department of Western Australia which links First Steps and Student Outcome Statements, although the document cannot relate the frameworks in terms of Viewing. An extract from this document can be seen in Sample 6.

Sample 6: First Steps and Student Outcome Statements Linking Document

ENGLISH STUDENT OUTCOME STATEMENTS – FIRST STEPS LANGUAGE



The following information is a broad guide, not an equivalence table. It will assist teachers using the First Steps developmental continua to focus on appropriate levels of achievement when making judgements about student performance in relation to the Student Outcome Statements.

OUT- COMES	Reading and Viewing Strand							
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8

FIRST STEPS	Reading Developmental Continuum				
	Role Play	Experimental	Early	Transitional	Independent

Students in the Role Play phase of First Steps Reading are likely to be demonstrating progress towards Level 1.
 Students in the Experimental phase of First Steps Reading are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 1 and demonstrating progress towards Level 2.
 Students in the Early phase of First Steps Reading are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 2 and demonstrating progress towards Level 3.
 Students in the Transitional phase of First Steps Reading are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 3 and demonstrating progress towards Level 4.
 Students in the Independent phase of First Steps Reading are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 4 and demonstrating progress towards Level 5.
 Students in the Advanced phase of First Steps Reading are likely to be achieving outcomes from Level 5 to Level 8.

OUT- COMES	Writing Strand							
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8

FIRST STEPS	Writing Developmental Continuum				
	Role Play	Experimental	Early	Conventional	Advanced  <small>Primary students would not typically reach this phase</small>
FIRST STEPS	Spelling Developmental Continuum				
	Preliminary	Semi-Phonetic	Phonetic	Transitional	Independent 

WRITING

Students in the Role Play phase of First Steps Writing are likely to be demonstrating progress towards Level 1.
 Students in the Experimental phase of First Steps Writing are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 1 and demonstrating progress towards Level 2.
 Students in the Early phase of First Steps Writing are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 2 or Level 3.
 Students in the Conventional phase of First Steps Writing are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 4 or Level 5.
 Students in the Advanced phase of First Steps Writing are likely to be achieving outcomes from Level 6 to Level 8.

SPELLING

Students in the Preliminary phase of First Steps Spelling are likely to be demonstrating progress towards Level 1.
 Students in the Semi-phonetic phase of First Steps Spelling are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 1.
 Students in the Phonetic phase of First Steps Spelling are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 2.
 Students in the Transitional phase of First Steps Spelling are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 3 or Level 4.
 Students in the Independent phase of First Steps Spelling are likely to be achieving outcomes from Level 5 to Level 8.

OUT- COMES	Speaking and Listening Strand							
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8

FIRST STEPS	Oral Language Developmental Continuum			
	Early Language	Language for Learning	Language for Learning	Language for Learning Stage 4  <small>Primary students would not typically reach this phase</small>

Students in the Early Language phase of First Steps Oral Language are likely to be demonstrating progress towards Level 1.
 Students in the Language for Learning Stage 1 phase of First Steps Oral Language are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 1.
 Students in the Language for Learning Stage 2 phase of First Steps Oral Language are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 2 or Level 3.
 Students in the Language for Learning Stage 3 phase of First Steps Oral Language are likely to be achieving outcomes at Level 4 or Level 5.
 Students in the Language for Learning Stage 4 phase of First Steps Oral Language are likely to be achieving outcomes from Level 6 to Level 8.

Aimee explains how this document allows her to assess the children's progress in terms of the two documents:

A few years ago this came out, a linking document, and it linked Student Outcome Statements with First Steps. Now you don't have to do the double issue. You don't need to put your kids on First Steps and then go back and look at your Student Outcome Statements and then say, 'Well how am I going to plot them?' Because Student Outcome Statements are not a checklist. They are a curriculum framework for teachers to plan and reflect on and use the

strategies from First Steps and strategies from anything else for the kids to be able to achieve the outcomes. So they are not an assessment tool. So that's why you wouldn't go to a checklist and start ticking off the pointers in Student Outcome Statements. What I do then is look at First Steps. There's a really fine line down there. So if you've got kids that are Experimental, well they're Level 1, so Experimental in Reading is a Level 1 student, but then it could be some in Level 2 so that's where the teacher needs to make a decision.

Aimee stresses the need to observe a behaviour at different times and in different contexts in order to ensure that children have in fact achieved a particular indicator:

And when I've got kids on the First Steps Continuum they've got to exhibit that behaviour over a period time, it's not a one-off thing. Because if you just see them do it once and you tick it and say, 'Oh yes, little whoever looks from left to right', and then next time they're really backward, then you're not really properly kid watching or you're not backing up your kid watching. It's not valid.

Sample 7: Aimee's Assessment Sheet

ENGLISH STUDENT OUTCOME STATEMENTS/FIRST STEPS RECORD SHEET

Task *Peter's on Saturday link to text* Nov. 2006 Class *4/2*

	Reading & Viewing				Writing				Speaking & Listening			
	Tests	Continual Understanding	Linguistic Structures & Features	First Steps	Tests	Continual Understanding	Linguistic Structures & Features	First Steps	Tests	Continual Understanding	Linguistic Structures & Features	First Steps
<i>George</i>												
<i>Chanthana</i>												

As we discuss Chanthana's and George's progress she points out the way in which a teacher might be deceived by a child's ability to operate well in one context but not in another:

I've got an assessment tool for problem solving and it's looking at kids in groups. Now, I can look at kids when they do do-nut news, how they interact there. I can look at when they do the sharing circle. I can look at them when they're doing other activities or just partner activities.. So a teacher needs to be aware that behaviour can

change in different activities. George was classic. He's really good at groups but when it comes to one-on-one... According to George, that's just too easy. He doesn't like that partner one-to-one. I've noticed he's better when he's got an audience. Where Chanthana will work really really well with a partner. In fact at the beginning of the year she wouldn't work with anyone, but I've really noticed she prefers either to work with one-to-one or on her own. And she does it perfectly. I watched her the other day put this maths game together....

Aimee has her own assessment sheet for linking First Steps and Student Outcome Statements, which she fills out for each child, in addition to the usual First Steps Continua sheets. This is in spite of the fact that her school is not using Student Outcome Statements. Chanthana's and George's assessments on this record are shown in Sample 7:

Both George and Chanthana are considered to be at Level 1 in Student Outcome Statements and for First Steps they are seen to be in the Experimental Reading and Writing phases and the Stage 1 Oral Language. Some examples of how Aimee arrives at these judgements will be seen as we look at extracts of our discussion of the progress of these two children.

Sample 8: Introductory Letter from George's work Sample Book

WORK SAMPLE BOOK

This book is a collection of some of George's work to show their learning and development. In each work sample you will see their skills and knowledge. By looking at what they can do at the beginning of the year and looking at what they can do now you will be able to see how much they have learnt, that's why work samples show a variety of subjects as well as social development for each term.

Only 2-D activities can be included in this book and you will need to come on a Learning Journey to really see how George is learning to use equipment, read books and charts around the room, play games, work with a friend or a group and explain their own learning.

As you can see the children are involved in assessing their own work. Most work samples have a continuum where children place a mark to show how they feel they have worked. At the end of each term children are given a sticker and they have to select the work sample which deserves the sticker's message. They also give themselves 2 stars and a wish, with the stars being good things about their learning and the wish being something they feel they could get better at. Wishes can then be used to set learning goals. By reflecting on their own learning children become more aware of their own abilities and what they need to do to keep on learning.

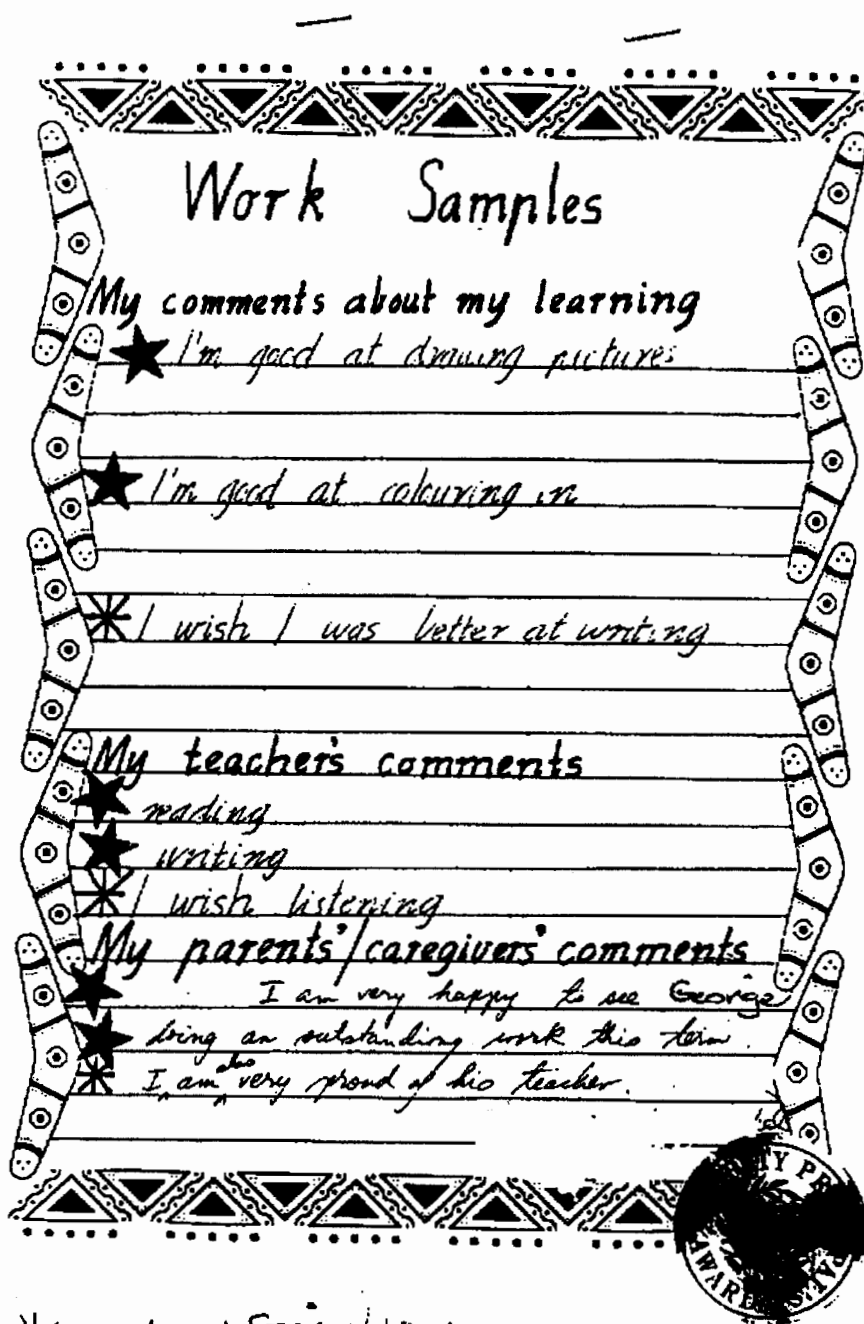
Please enjoy sharing this Work Sample Book with George. As they show you through the book find something positive to say about each page, eg. "I think it was a good idea to use the alphabet chart" or "I like the way you put in the eyes/haas". When they have finished give your 2 stars and a wish about their learning.

Please help your child to look after this special book and return it as soon as they have shown the people they want to show.

She begins by explaining that each child has a scrap book in which she regularly pastes samples of their work. These samples are the same for all children. The samples are evidence for her First Steps and Student Outcome assessments, but are also sent home to parents once each term with a covering letter which explains the purposes of the book. This letter can be seen in Sample 8.

In Sample 9 it can be seen that the parents, the teacher and the children are asked for comments. In Year 1 the children's comments are dictated and scribed by Aimee. George's parents have made comments each term, expressing their happiness at his progress and congratulating his teacher.

Sample 9: Comments about George's Work Samples



Chanthana's parents, possibly because of their limited English, have not made any comments on her work. Aimee points out: *she's written, "I wish I could do good work". She does do good work but mum and dad haven't written anything.* The scrap books contain evidence of a variety of language and literacy tasks and there is often an explanation of the task for parents as can be seen in Sample 10.

Sample 10: Explanation to Parents of Chanthana's Story Writing

The image shows a handwritten checklist and a story on lined paper. The checklist is titled "Writing, Speaking, Listening" and "Name Chanthana". It lists tasks with checkboxes: "write a story", "use my have a go pad", and "give my story a title". Below these, it says "on my own" and "with help" with smiley faces. A drawing of a globe and a pencil is also present. The story below is written in cursive on lined paper and reads: "We did flag racing and gold fraction war. I like the flag race." There are some scribbles and a small drawing of a bear at the bottom of the page.

Writing, Speaking, Listening
Name Chanthana

I can...

- write a story
- use my have a go pad
- give my story a title

✓ on my own
• with help

11/17

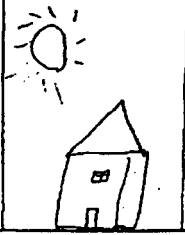


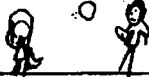

— We
did flag racing
and gold fraction
war. I like the
flag race.

A similar scrap book is made for Viewing which also goes home to the parents, but not to the school administration since Viewing is not seen as part of this school's curriculum. We look through these scrap books as Aimee discusses in detail the children's progress from the beginning to the end of the year.

In the following section I report on how Aimee examines Chanthana's work over the year and explains how this student has become much more competent and

confident in her oral language. An example of Chanthana's news recount can be found in Sample 11.

Sample 11: Chanthana's Recount

When?	Who?	Where?	What?	Why
				

Afer school - I play
 with my bro ther and
 I feel happy.

- I your recount

At the beginning of the school year Aimee was very concerned about Chanthana:

She wouldn't speak at all. She just would sit there and it was like she was really frightened.

Nevertheless, once Aimee set up small group situations to promote oral language interactions Chanthana gradually began to communicate:

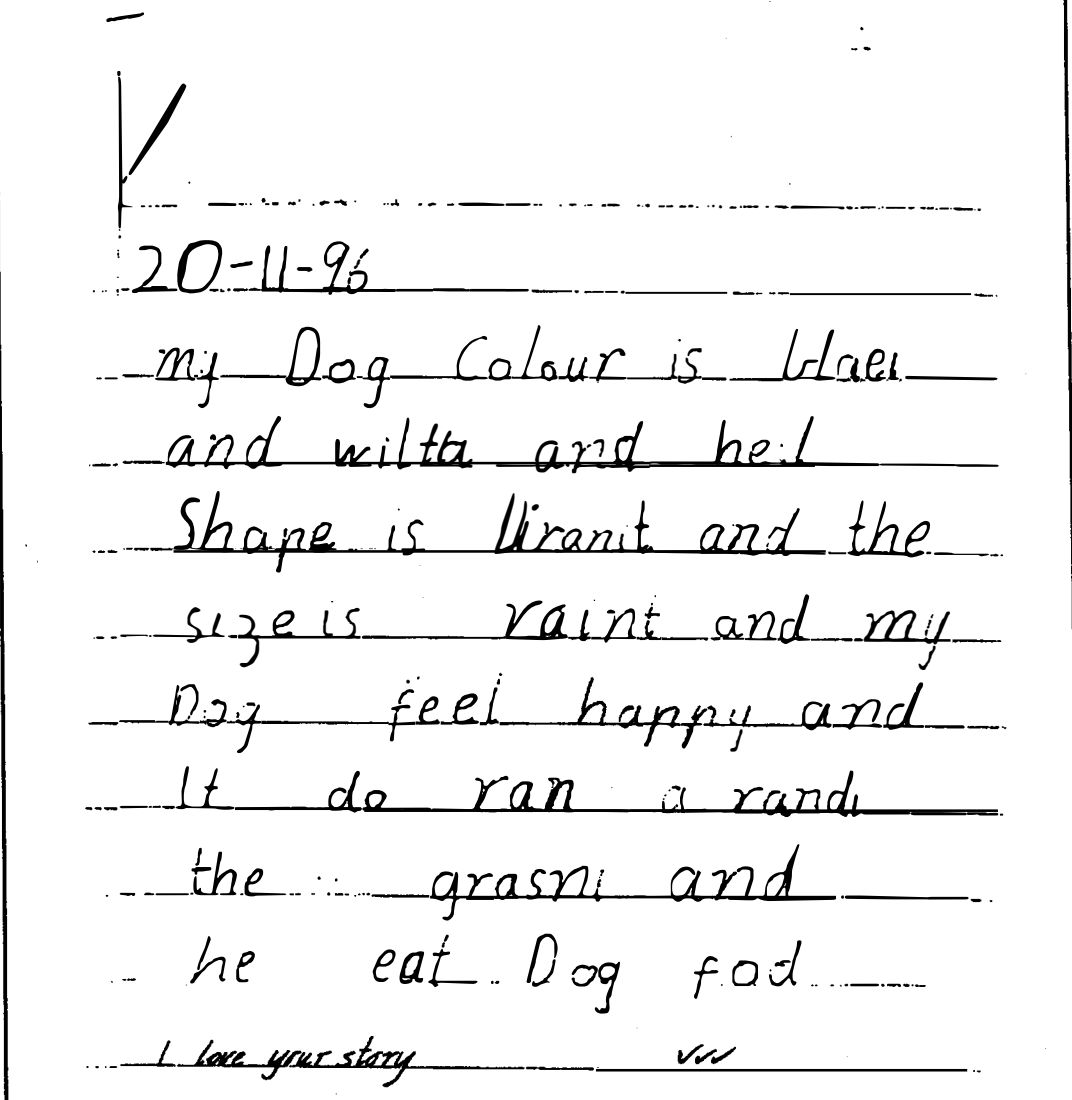
It helped her immensely. And also her ability. I guess she's really motivated herself. She wants to improve. And, you know, giving them the skills to say, if someone's bossing you or hasn't asked you or just takes something from you, 'I don't like that'. It's giving her I feel the opportunity to stand up. She does now, she stands up for herself now.

Aimee says that she has not experienced any difficulty in placing Chanthana on the First Steps Continua as she hasn't found her oral language to be markedly different from that of the other children, although:

it really becomes evident when she's writing, 'cos she'll mix in her writing, she mixes the past and the present ...she does that a lot. But she doesn't say it when she's telling news ... she self-corrects. Not all the time, but most of the time she self-corrects.

When Aimee reflects on Chanthana's writing (see Sample 12) she finds some unconventional syntax.

Sample 12: Chanthana's Description of her Pet Dog



But it's not coming through in the written. See they have to re-read this before they come up to me ...And in this one where she's talking about the dog ...'My dog colour is blaei and ...' See she hasn't got it, grammatically correct. So, I mean, she's done really well compared to what she was doing at the beginning of the year. She's done very well, but that's an area I still need to work on. At least she's audible now.

Aimee then compares the oral language development of her two ESL children during the year:

At the beginning of the year, she wasn't audible...I couldn't hear Chanthana. So, I would say, out of the two, George was the most competent orally at the beginning. He zoomed in and he zoomed around and he let you know he was there, whereas she has come along in leaps and bounds.

By the end of the year Aimee sees Chanthana and George as being in the top few Year 1 students in her class. She has recently given them a Year 1 comprehension exercise from her previous school and Chanthana has scored 95% and George 90%. As a result she won't be giving them some of the screening measures that she will give the children considered to be 'at risk'. She perceives George to be a very capable student, who needs to be constantly challenged in order that he

doesn't become disruptive. She has devised a behaviour modification program for him:

I've put in place an MSB policy so if he keeps getting sent to the thinking spot then he'll be referred through to the office and then you know it goes home to dad.

Aimee assesses George's progress as follows:

I perceive him to be bright, and he is and I think a lot of the time he needs more extension than he's given. He'll do anything to get on a computer, which is good, but I don't want to keep using it as a reward. I want him to mix in with other kids as well rather than just being good so he can go on the computer. What I've noticed about his daily writing is that he has got very good recall, he's got a basic group of sight words that he consistently spells correctly, but then he will only write two or three short sentences. He won't extend it unless I approach him about it. He does not leave spacing between his words, so that's a goal I've set for him as well. But he's spelt words. You see at the beginning he used his 'Have a Go' pad, but the last few have been without. We've been silent writing and that's his, 'Today after school I met Lia to go to my friend's house. I feel happy, I'm going to play chasey'. Compared to the other kids in the class he's doing quite well.

The subject of this case study has been Aimee, a mainstream Year 1/2 teacher in Western Australia. She teaches a class of 26 children, who range in age over two year levels and who have an extremely diverse range of educational needs. She is very familiar with First Steps and Student Outcome Statements and she makes use of observation and detailed portfolio assessment in order to show children's development throughout the school year. Aimee begins the year by observing the children in a range of activities and plans her program on the basis of these observations and on her knowledge of Student Outcome Statements, First Steps and the teaching strategies she has added to her repertoire over a number of years. We have seen some of the ways in which Aimee has assessed two Year 1 ESL students in her class, Chanthana and George. She tries to involve parents and children in the assessment process, although Chanthana's parents have not communicated with her in writing. She has reflected on the fact that the teaching and assessment practices of her school are at times somewhat different from the Education Department initiatives which she is helping to develop.

References

Clay, Marie, M. (1993). *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*, Auckland, N.Z. Heinemann

Rose at Harthill Primary School

Caroline Barratt-Pugh

The School Context

The following three case studies are of the teachers at Harthill Primary School which celebrated its centenary in 1996. It is one of the oldest inner city schools in Perth. The school consists of nine mainstream Year 1 to 7 classes and an Intensive Language Centre, which has six classes and caters for the needs of children aged 6 to 12 years. The school also has three pre-primary centres, one of which is off site. The school principal has overall responsibility for the mainstream school and the Intensive Language Centre. He is supported by three deputy principals one of whom has special responsibility for the Intensive Language Centre.

Approximately 330 children attend Harthill Primary. The majority of children in the main school come from the surrounding area. Children who attend the Intensive Language Centre are either local or arrive by bus. Children who are new arrivals in Western Australia from Non English Speaking Backgrounds, and children who were born in Australia, but whose parents do not speak English attend the Intensive Language Centre. Currently the majority of children at Harthill from Non English Speaking Backgrounds come from Asia, with a high percentage from Vietnam. However, recently several children have arrived from Bosnia and Serbia.

At the beginning of the school year and as new children arrive, the parent / caregiver is interviewed by the prospective classroom teacher. A form about age, nationality, medical complaints, religion, contact numbers, position in family and language spoken at home is completed. The school has several ethnic aides from Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma and Bosnia. In addition, if necessary translators are available to help with interviews. During the year the children take newsletters home written in their home languages.

Assessment and reporting are seen as important issues at Harthill. In 1993 some of the staff were involved in a research project trialing the First Steps Developmental Continua with children who spoke English as a second language. In addition to this the staff have been involved in a number of professional development days investigating the First Steps Developmental Continua. These have been organised and delivered by the school's key teacher. Currently the staff are exploring the West Australian Student Outcome Statements for Mathematics. In addition to this oral language has been made a priority for the next three years.

The Classroom Context

Rose teaches the mainstream Year 1 children. She has been teaching for 4 years. She taught in a rural town approximately 900 kilometres north of Perth on the North West coast, for three years before coming to Perth. Her Year 1 class consists of 9 English speaking children and 13 children who speak English as a second language. There are 13 girls and 9 boys. The children come into Year 1 with different educational experiences. Some children come from straight from home, others from pre-primary centres and a number of the ESL children come from the Intensive Language Centre, attached to the primary school. In addition,

several children who have a temporary home at the near-by women's refuge are in Rose's class. They stay for up to 6 weeks. The children are aged between 5 and 6 years old when they begin Year 1.

Rose would like all the children to be proficient in oral language and reading and writing by the end of Year 1. Thus many of the curriculum areas covered involve some form of oracy and literacy. Language is the main focus of her work. Although the children are at different levels of attainment, she explains that rather than have separate activities for different groups she plans open ended activities. Each child can do the activity at her or his own level. The class is split into three groups for most table top activities and re-arranged for partner work. Reading is the only activity which Rose chooses children of similar ability to work together.

Rose explains that she is new to teaching ESL children and has begun to notice that errors in their writing often reflect their speech. Consequently, Rose plans a number of activities based on oral language. Rose models conventional grammatical patterns and gives the ESL children opportunity to hear and use these in different activities through working alongside their peers in whole class and small group activities. These activities include barrier games, I spy, What am I? and rhymes.

In addition to the activities designed to promote oracy, many of the other activities planned by Rose are based on an integrated approach to literacy. Typically, Rose begins an activity with a whole class discussion based on news, a big book or modelling a particular genre. This is followed by individual work sheets or free-writing, which often involves some form of reading. The children are encouraged to write every day. Their choice of topic often reflects the previous oral activity which ranges from news telling, What am I? games and narratives. Before they begin Rose asks the children to think about all the things they need to remember about writing. These includes using genre frameworks from around the classroom; finding spellings from the environmental print; using their Have-a-Go pads and editing their work.

News writing is carried out in small groups. Rose asks the group to decide who is the scribe and whose news they are going to write. They are asked to discuss the sentences before they write and work cooperatively. Rose reminds them that one person moves the pencil but they are all helping to do the writing. Rose explains the language advantages of working in this way:

That's also a good oral language activity, because there are so many ESL children in the class there is always going to be a mixture of ESL and English speaking children in the same group. Because they are talking about it on their own, at their own level. They'll be explaining 'you need a full stop there', and they'll explain it in their own little way. Also the weaker children are getting a lot of modelling from the more advanced children, so that works out really well, as well.

distinguishes between two types of other writing; interactive writing and independent writing. Rose characterises four of the writing sessions per week as interactive, in which the children discuss their writing with her as a means of consolidating and reflecting upon what they have learnt. In these four sessions the children write in their Daily Writing books. These are kept in an individual Daily Writing folder which contains a Have-a-go pad and a Words I know card. In contrast to this, once a week the children write on their Have-a-go writing sheets which are kept in a Have a go folder. During the Have-a-go sessions the children write independently without any help from Rose.

When they have finished their independent writing, Rose asks each child to read their work back to her. At this point Rose writes on top of illegible words to remind her of what the child intended and double ticks correct features of punctuation. In addition Rose writes comments about any aspects of development that she notices.

Rose involves the children in a variety of reading activities. She uses a Big book for shared reading with the whole class. This is supplemented by a number of follow-up activities based on work sheets. These include character portraits, jumbled up sentences, and innovation on the text. Personal reading is done for 10 minutes each day after lunch when the children choose a book from the class library. In addition each child has a reading folder which contains their reading book, a My Sounds and Words Book and a Reading Record booklet.

Rose explains that every child has a book to take home from the very first day at school. By term 3 the majority of children can choose their own book from Reading 360, Literacy Links or Story Chest and Eureka and write the date and title by themselves on their reading record. The books are placed in 40 shoe boxes. The children choose a book from the box with their name on it. Parents are asked to hear their child read every night and make a comment on the reading record. Occasionally Rose will comment on the reading record as is evident in Sample 1.

Sample 1: Part of a Reading Record

DATE	BOOK TITLE	PAGES	PARENT SIGNATURE	COMMENT
12 FEB 1998	Look		[Signature]	
13 FEB 1998	Li Hutt		[Signature]	
14 FEB 1998	The Last Mouse		[Signature]	
5 FEB	✓		[Signature]	
13 FEB 1998	Help		[Signature]	
19 FEB 1998	Where's My Mum?		[Signature]	
20 FEB 1998	Frog Spell		[Signature]	
21 FEB 1998	The Butterfly		[Signature]	
22 FEB 1998	Is This My House?		[Signature]	
23 FEB 1998	The Last Bird		[Signature]	
25 FEB 1998	The Magician And The Egg		[Signature]	
28 FEB	Rev. and Look		[Signature]	
29 FEB 1998	I'm Bigger Than You!		[Signature]	
5 MAR 1998	" " " "		[Signature]	
6 MAR 1998	Can You?		[Signature]	
7 MAR 1998	Go, Go, Go		[Signature]	
11 MAR 1998	The Ghost		[Signature]	
12 MAR 1998	Feet		[Signature]	
13 MAR 1998	The Party		[Signature]	
14 MAR 1998	Miss Locking the Door		[Signature]	
17 March	" " " "		[Signature]	
18 MAR 1998	Painting		[Signature]	
19/5	In The Mirror		[Signature]	
20/8	The Storm		[Signature]	

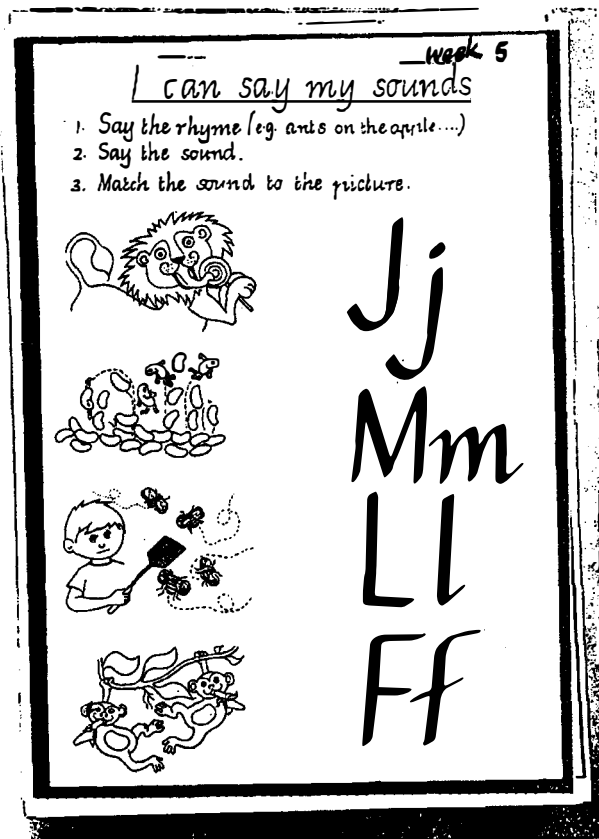
The children are placed in pairs of similar reading ability for partner reading. Rose explains:

I'll choose a partner for them. I'll have handed their reading folders out to them and that will have their book that they have to read the night before. Then they'll go and read that to their partner, and the partner will read their book to them, and then they'll ask questions about the book. So they might say to them 'what was your favourite part of the story' or 'who was your favourite character'. Then they both together go and choose their new book and then they go back into their little partnership and they read their new book to each other. If it's a long book just 3 or 4 pages and the other person is supposed to read along with them and help them with any words they are not sure of. That's why its important to have some even ability. So they will read their new book to each other and then go back to their place, write it into their folder, bring it to me to have a look and write it into my book folder

Rose describes the reading folder that the children take home:

They have a green folder and on it they have date, title of book and parent comment and that's what they show their parents. At the beginning of year, they had a 'My Sounds and Words' book and that had a photocopy of new sounds that we learn each week. They revise those words at home and match them to the picture. Then as we got into term 2, they had the sounds and letters that they were learning in that book and also on the other side it had words like common high frequency words as well. So that all went home together with their reading.

Sample 2: An extract from My Sounds and Words Book



Rose explains that many of the reading activities revolve around 'a sort of language package' which is derived from a 'big book'. The package consists of various worksheets that are completed and then stuck into each child's language scrap book or displayed around the classroom. The activities include cloze passages, character portraits, read and draw, classification, sequence the sentences, answering questions about the big book and extending the theme of the big book.

Rose explains that other curriculum areas include physical education, art, social studies, health, and mathematics. The children work with other teachers for computer studies and music and dance. Social studies topics are introduced through language experiences often in the form of an excursion. This year the class have been to the zoo, the fire station and the local Literature Centre. Rose also thinks it is important to introduce the children to different cultures. Recently, each family sent some food, which was heated up and served at a feast at lunch time, so the children sampled different types of food.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Rose is involved in three types of assessment. These are:

- i) Informal, ongoing assessment which is based on her interactions and observations of the children in her everyday work, and used for planning further activities.
- ii) Formal assessment which takes three different forms. a) Sample packs of each child's work, compiled for parents in terms 1 and 3. b) School reports for each child, completed and taken home in terms 2 and 4. c) First Steps Oral Language, Reading, Writing and Spelling Continua (1994) completed for school records.
- iii) Trialing of the Student Outcome Statements Mathematics number strand for discussion at an in-service course.

All these methods of assessment overlap and are used to inform each other. Rose explains that she makes many informal assessments from observation and interaction with the children on a daily basis. Although the oracy and literacy activities are not designed for assessment purposes, Rose found that 'I suppose I was (assessing) without realising it'. She talks about a barrier game, 'it provided a really good assessment activity because just by listening to them I could hear all sorts of things, improving their oral language, improving their concepts'.

In relation to reading, as well as the record card for parents to sign and comment on the children have a My Words and Sounds Book. Rose uses this in the first term as a means of evaluating the sounds they know. The children are encouraged to practise and revise the sounds at home, as well as repeat various rhymes which are all around the classroom and include, lime licking lollipop, monkeys munching. Rose feels this is particularly important for some ESL children as they seem to have difficulty with 'hearing and pronouncing some sounds'.

She has a metal picture of each child's reading level and has divided the class into 3 levels, 'bottom of the list, middle or average and top'. These levels are used to guide each child to a suitable book to take home. Rose gathers this information in several ways. These include, noting if they are having any trouble reading any of the instructions on the worksheets, or when jointly reading a big book, incidentally throughout the day and when they read to her individually. She reflects:

The knowledge that I have of their reading is in my head. I suppose they're constantly being judged and assessed because they go onto a next stage or group for their reading books. I'll listen to them read and see whether they are ready. It's probably a continual evaluation but nothing down on paper, until they come to the miscue analysis.

Rose explains why she uses miscue analysis. Although it is very time consuming she does it once a term as a means of helping her complete the children's sample packs, report forms and the First Steps Reading Continua. It enables her to focus in on particular aspects of reading, it gives her more detail and enables her to identify the strategies individual children are using.

In term 1 and term 3 Rose prepares a sample pack of work for each child, which forms part of the report to parents. This is made up of samples of work from four curriculum areas, as illustrated in Sample 3.

Sample 3: Sample Work Package Contents

Sample Work Package contents

Language



- ✓. story sequencing
- ✓. cloze activity (reading comprehension)
- ✓. labelling
- ✓. reading test
- ✓. have-a-go writing sample
- ✓. phonics/spelling sample

Maths

- ✓. calculator activity
- ✓. grouping/sharing worksheet
- ✓. money - coin recognition
- ✓. space - 2D, 3D shapes
- ✓. measurement
- ✓. addition / subtraction

Social Sciences

- ✓. pollution

Health

- absent
- ✓. fire safety



Rose selects the samples to go in each pack and tells the children so they can 'make an extra effort'. She talks about how the samples are compiled.

The samples mostly come from every day activities. The only different one would be the reading test. (See sample 4) The miscue analysis is only done once a term if that, maybe once a semester as a formal thing anyway, and all of the other activities would be done weekly. So some of the Maths activities might be set out like a test so that I can gather whether or not they've achieved a certain concept, but it wouldn't be anything that they're not used to.

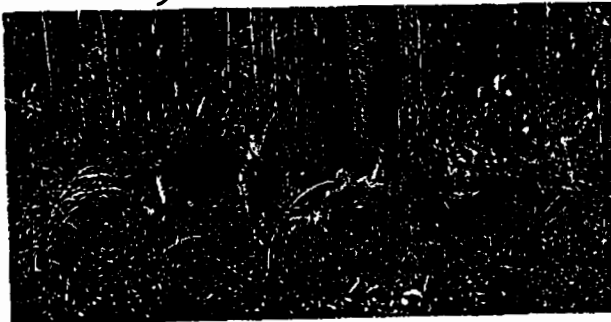
Sample 4: Miscue Analysis from the Sample Pack

Oral Reading Test

Dingo

Name . _____

The dingo is an Australian mammal. It hunts small animals and birds. Dingo pups drink milk from their mother until they are big enough to eat meat.



Key

- miss out word
- ← re read senten
- s substituting a new word.
- ⊙ self correcting
- m → sounding out
- ta teacher assistan

reading is developing very well!




Rose collects samples for the Sample Packs during the last few weeks term 1 and 3. The samples of language work sheets are usually based on a 'big book' or the topic the class are working on. A Have-a-Go sample of writing is included in the pack rather than a sample from the Daily Writing Pad This is because Rose feels

this represents what the children can actually do without help. She describes it as 'a raw sample of their writing, without any intervention'. Sample 5 is an example of Have-a-Go writing, based on the topic of Australian animals selected in term 3. Rose explains, 'it's probably not a test of the whole term's work, just a sample of what they're doing at the moment.'

Sample 5: Have-a-go Writing from the Sample Pack

Name _____ **Have-a-go Writing** Date 6 SEP 1996

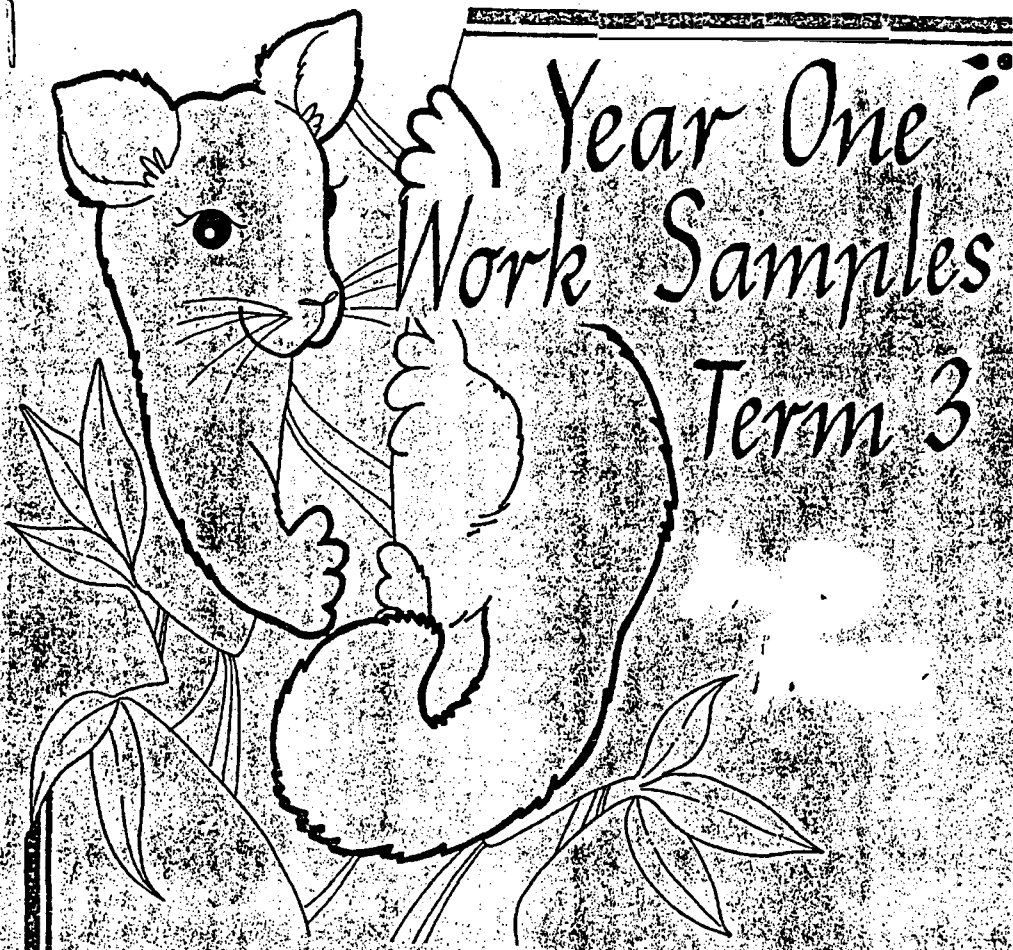
<p>On Saturday my brother was going in to the forest. I went with him. He found a wombat a lingi and a tasmanian</p>	<p>is beginning to write more during writing times. His spelling is continually improving. Keep up the super work.</p>  <p>my brother devil ticked the tasmania devil and</p>
--	---

The sample packs are sent home to the parents. Rose talks about the parent's understanding of the report:

The reading, it's not called a miscue analysis. It's just their reading test, and they might not understand the key. Some parents would but some of our Asian ESL parents wouldn't. 'Miss out a word', they should understand that. 'Pre-read a sentence, substituting a new word, self correcting, sounding out' and 'teacher assistance'. So, yes some of them will, some of them won't, but just visually seeing all the tests, they'll get an idea of how they're going. But they can always bring this to the school and show one of the assistants who can speak their language, if they were interested in getting it.

Rose makes a general comment about the child's progress on the front cover of the Sample pack. There is also a space for the parent's to respond as illustrated in Sample 6. The Sample pack is returned to Rose, then at the end of the year the Sample packs from term 1 and term 3 are sent home. Rose feels this is very useful, 'that's good because the parents can see the improvement, I can show parents how much they've improved, what they started off with and where they are now'.

Sample 6: Teacher's and Parents comments on the cover of the Sample Pack



Teacher's comment ... has made big improvements in all areas this term. language skills are developing very well. ... has understood all major maths concepts taught this term. Keep up the excellent effort next term.

Parents comment

At home ... is very good boy. He always reminds me let him reading the school book and now he learn to write a sentence.

In addition to the work sample packs, in term 2 and 4, Rose writes a report for each child to take home.

Sample 7: An Example of a Report

NAME _____ YEAR one SEMESTER one Term 2

<p>READING SKILLS Use a range of strategies Understand what is read Know to read independently</p> <p>WRITING SKILLS Use original ideas Write for a purpose Edit and proofread Use appropriate vocabulary</p> <p>GRAMMAR SKILLS Apply to language</p> <p>VOCABULARY SKILLS Write <input type="checkbox"/> Advantages <input type="checkbox"/> Limited <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS Speaks clearly Listens respectfully Listens attentively</p> <p>LANGUAGE Writes legibly</p> <p>LISTENING SKILLS Participates in class Understands what is said</p>	<p>SOCIAL STUDIES Apply understanding of concepts Apply skills</p> <p>SCIENCE Use a range of strategies Apply skills</p> <p>RESEARCH Research topic Present ideas</p> <p>LIBRARY Uses a variety of materials Use digital search methods confidently</p> <p>COMPUTER Operates the computer Works safely</p> <p>HEALTH Follows healthy habits Plays participating in games Stays personal environment</p> <p>CIVICAL EDUCATION Participates in class Understands what is said Apply concepts about skills</p>	<p>MATHEMATICS WORKING MATHEMATICALLY Use the language of math</p> <p>PLACE Define measurement, position 100 & 30 Identify Understands open concepts</p> <p>MEASUREMENT Estimate length, area, volume, capacity, mass & time Understands measurement concepts</p> <p>NUMBER (Addition, subtraction & multiplication) Understands number concepts</p> <p>PROBLEM SOLVING Solves well-posed problems</p> <p>ART AND CRAFT Completes a project Uses new ideas & techniques Has a positive approach</p> <p>MUSIC Demonstrates music knowledge Participates with musical skills Participates with enthusiasm</p> <p>WELL DONE</p>	<p>WORK HABITS Strategies used effectively Works independently Participates in class activities Organized to group activities Completes on work Takes pride in work Sets personal goals Completes homework Stays on task Manages time effectively Accepts challenge</p> <p>RESPONSIBILITY Is trusted to other Responsible Initiative in playgroup Respects class rules Shows respect for property Follows directions Organized self & materials Shows initiative</p> <p>COURTESY Respects self-interest Respects the rights of others Listens when others are speaking Behaves well in school In Public</p> <p>ATTENDANCE Appropriate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Of course <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>GENERAL COMMENTS approaches all classroom activities with enthusiasm. He has maintained steady progress in all subject areas. His reading and writing are gradually improving. However, he tends to have difficulty sounding out words during reading.</p> <p>TEACHER SIGNATURE _____ PRINCIPAL _____</p>
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The report format was designed by a committee made up of representatives from different parts of the school and parents. Rose explains that she uses her 'in head' knowledge from everyday activities, Sample packs, reading records and completed First Steps Continua to make judgements about each curriculum area represented on the Report. Rose talks specifically about Writing. Rose explains that she uses the writing samples from the children's independent Have-a-go writing to make judgements about Writing. Rose describing each category under Writing:

'Uses original ideas', well I know that one straight away from what I've got in my head from day to day writing. 'Writes for a purpose' I think back to their daily writing and whether, some of them are writing letters and some of them do 'What am I'. So they are writing for an audience, so they can read it out during circle time and that's another one that I really don't have any techniques or evaluation form because you don't need it.

'Edits and proof reads', I'm encouraging them now, that's one that I really thought was a bit of doozy to put in for year 1's. Because it is quite a skilled thing, but we are doing it at a very basic level. I'll ask them to go back through their writing when they have done Daily writing or Have-a-Go writing and check they have used capital letters and full stops in the right places, and if it makes sense and all of those basic things. I'll probably make notes about editing.

'Uses appropriate vocabulary'. I thought of that more as how extended their vocabulary was, and whether they are using or trying to extend it. Whether they're using more interesting words in their

writing or whether they are sticking to old favourites, that they keep spelling right. Also that's quite a good one for the ESL children because they will use the wrong vocabulary in certain instances. They will not use the proper word for the past tense of things.

'Spelling skills', I would look back through their 'have a go' pads, then I would know if they are having a go or not and then they've got 'have a go' pads so I would check on those.

Rose feels it is important to write a comment about some of the ESL children, especially if she has scored them *'quite low'*. Rose writes what they have achieved in writing and justifies her choice of category, particularly in relation to Uses appropriate vocabulary, as she feels this is a particular weakness of ESL children.

A photocopy of each child's report is kept and passed on to the next teacher. In addition to the sample packs and report form, Rose fills in the First Steps Developmental Continua (1994) for all the children in the class. At a school meeting it was agreed that two Developmental Continua would be completed each term:

- Term 1 - First Steps Writing and Spelling Continua;
- Term 2 - First Steps Oral Language and Reading Continua;
- Term 3 - First Steps Writing and Spelling Continua;
- Term 4 - First Steps Oral Language and Reading Continua.

Rose comments that the First Steps assessment is not directly related to the children's reports, but thinks many teachers use their First Steps records as their main form of record keeping and to inform their reports. Rose explains the process of mapping the children on the First Steps Continua. For each child there is a photocopied sheet of the four Continua - Oral Language, Reading, Spelling and Writing. Each continuum consists of Phases of Development and Key and Minor indicators for each phase. When all the key indicators in one phase have been highlighted, the child is deemed to have achieved that phase of development and is *'working towards the next phase'*. However, Rose highlights the minor indicators as well as the key indicators to create a comprehensive picture of each child. As can be seen from sample 8, Rose uses a different coloured highlighter for each term.

Sample 8: Indicators for Oral Language Developmental Continuum for Chan

INDICATORS FOR ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

Teaches can identify a child's phase of development by observing that the child is exhibiting all key indicators of that phase. It should be noted, however, that most children will also display indicators from other phases.

EARLY LANGUAGE

In this phase children use language to describe many people and activities. They use language to compare and contrast people and activities. They use language to describe and compare many people and activities.

LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING - STAGE 1

In this phase children use a great deal about language. They use language to describe and compare many people and activities. They use language to describe and compare many people and activities.

LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING - STAGE 2

In this phase children use language to describe many people and activities. They use language to compare and contrast people and activities. They use language to describe and compare many people and activities.

Students Name: Chan
 ID: 10123456789
 School: ABC Primary School
 Date: 10/10/95

Page 1

TEACHER: _____ YEAR: _____

TEACHER: _____ YEAR: _____

TEACHER: _____ YEAR: _____

TEACHER: _____ YEAR: _____

Education Department of Western Australia 1994. This page may be copied for classroom use.

Rose is currently filling in the Oral Language Continua. At a staff meeting it was agreed that 'unless you can think of an incident when they did something, then you shouldn't highlight it'. Rose argues 'that makes it difficult when you haven't done it for two terms'. So she has a piece of paper for each child which she uses to jot down her observations of their talk. She finds that often when looking at an indicator it is difficult to remember if it has been achieved. Rose describes her assessment of Chan (see sample 8)

So at the moment Chan is in Stage 1, Language for Learning. I've highlighted a couple of things in Stage 2 that he's doing, like 'takes

conversational turn to speak'. He doesn't do that a lot, but he does have conversations with his friends and he will talk to me in that sort of manner. 'Participates in group discussions' he does do that. 'Uses language to categorise objects, people, places and events' he'll talk about going and seeing things and places he's been to.

Rose feels that the other indicators are quite broad, but she does attempt to assess Chan's level of achievement:

'Participated in group discussion', well that's something I'd say yes. I can think of times when he's participated, so I've highlighted that. But 'shows a knowledge of the story structure by describing, comparing or contrasting a character' that's something that I very rarely would see him do, and not just spontaneously by himself. If I've questioned him, I'm probably not supposed to question to try and get that information, it's supposed to be something that if I just ask one question, he's going to come up with all that of information.

Rose explains that she finds it hard to pin point exactly where the children are in relation to the Oral Language Developmental Continuum. Her difficulties are reflected in the collection of evidence and in the Oral Language Continuum itself. Rose explains that much of the knowledge she has about the children is 'in head knowledge'. This is built up from her everyday observations and interactions. However, in order to complete the First Steps Oral Language Continuum more accurately, Rose thinks it would be useful to have a pad or sheet of paper on each desk, to Jot down what the children actually do and say. This would give her an on going written record of what actually happened. But, Rose feels to do that she would have to be really be up to date with all of these indicators 'to know what's important to be looking for and what's not important to be looking for'. In addition to everyday interactions, she tries to set up a few situations in which she can observe the children talking:

For example, we play oral language games like barrier games, which gives them the opportunity to use descriptive language. But on a day to day basis, Chan, for example, probably doesn't talk to me that much. He's quite a shy person, and he'll talk to his friends. Even then like it's really stilted language, and it's really hard to pin point. Maybe once I've been teaching ESL for longer, and more in tune with their language it will be easier, but I know that the other teachers who have been teaching ESL for ten years say that it's very hard to plot them on this.

Rose goes on to explain how she places Chan on the First Steps Reading Developmental Continuum. As with the Oral Language indicators some Reading indicators are easy to identify, others she is less sure about. Even though Chan has achieved the key indicators in the Experimental phase and is now moving into the Early Reading Phase, Rose highlights some of the minor indicators from the Experimental phase, so that she and the next teacher can see what Chan has achieved during the term 4. She reflects that it may be easier just to highlight the key indicators because what 'they've passed through doesn't really get looked at any more. It's the current stage and what they're going in to next'. She also reflects that Chan would not achieve some of the minor indicators giving 'likes to take risks' and 'asks for assistance' as examples. When assessing the key indicators Rose suggests that:

Some of the key indicators in the Early Reading phase are quite basic, and he's doing those. The first one was 'recognises a word in a variety of contexts', so in a book, on a blackboard, on the chart. Most of them by the end of Term 1, beginning of Term 2 would all be doing that because they'll be doing them in their writing. The way I do my writing, I have a common words chart on the wall, and so they look up at that word, and find the word and read it, so they've

read the word and then transferred it on to the paper. So Chan's doing that during normal writing time, not necessarily during reading, but he's reading the word. 'Recognises some basic sight words', does that. 'May read word by word or line by line' he's reading word by word, and 'relies heavily on beginning letters and sounding out', which he does.

Rose describes the individual activities she uses to help her assess Chan and place him on the First Steps Reading Continuum:

This time it was just by asking him to read to me, while I quickly jotted down some notes. After he'd left I'd highlight the points that I noted. Previously I've used the miscue analysis. Some of the key indicators are in the miscue analysis, I might have them in my key at the bottom. Like 're-reading to gain meaning', and so I've got an arrow to show re-reading. 'Sounding out' there might be one for 'sounding out'.

Rose also uses group activities to help her place Chan on the First Steps Reading Continua:

When I'm doing a big book, or when I'm just reading the story at the end of the day, I'm aware of the children. So he is 'beginning to see himself as a reader', and 'talks about his own reading', well that would be from his own reading from when he chooses a home reading book. They know that they can start to read now, he thinks he's a reader. 'enjoys stories and asks for them to be re-read' he does that, particularly with the book that we read last term. 'joins in stories, so they all did that with the big book that we did, they all acted out the stories', whether or not he wanted to, I don't know, but he did it. 'Eagerly selects books to read for pleasure' well they do that every day for silent reading, and all go and choose a book to read. 'Self selects text on the basis of interesting familiarity' I could probably highlight that one actually because they do all choose their own books now for home reading.

Finally, Rose talks about the Writing and Spelling Continua. By looking through Chan's writing samples, Have-a-Go writing folder and his Have-a-Go spelling pad, Rose places Chan in the Semi-Phonetic Spelling phase and the Experimental Writing phase. She also uses her in-head knowledge of Chan's earlier achievements which are not evident in the samples to highlight minor indicators.

Rose goes on to explain that she never highlights some of the indicators because she does not see them occurring in the classroom, or she is not sure what they mean. She argues that it is better to under assess the children so the next teacher can highlight those when they know the children have actually achieved them:

Even when Chan's achieved all of those indicators, I think there's still quite a way for him to go in this phase, even though he has got the key indicators, there's lots of bits that he isn't achieving yet. So, I think he will stay in this phase for quite awhile.

All the information from each continuum is fed into a computer and Rose receives a print out of each continuum for the whole class. This gives her a 'broad idea of where children are in relation to each other'. In addition a print out for each year is used by the Principal to map the development of the school as a whole.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

The relationship between assessment and pedagogy is fluid. It involves both spontaneous responses to particular features that Rose becomes aware of during her daily teaching, and to a lesser extent planned activities which grow out of

specific assessment. In addition, Rose uses First Steps as a means of thinking about what the children need to achieve next. As Rose is completing the First Steps Continua for each child she considers the next phase:

I would turn over and just see whether they've started to achieve any of the indicators in the next phase. And for my own general planning purposes to see where they're heading. For example, if they were way down in role play phase, I wouldn't be looking at the other indicators, but I would know what I'm aiming for.

Rose explains that she uses many of the First Steps strategies but does not use the Continua as a '*direct way of planning ahead, only generally*'. As she fills in the Continua she sees what the children have achieved and what is still to be achieved and then '*makes sure that I'm concentrating on the right sorts of things*'. Rose knows what the children need to do in order to move into the next phase, but does not consult the Continuum again until the next time she fills it in.

Rose has been involved in Professional Development days for First Steps run by the school's Key teacher. Oral language has been made a priority for the next three years and so they are looking closely at the Oral Language Developmental Continuum. She feels this will give the staff the opportunity to consider how useful this in relation to ESL learners.

The relationship between the Sample packs and assessment and teaching is complex. Rose refers to the samples as worksheets from the children's daily activities. However, she also suggests that some of the worksheets are specially designed for assessment. These include the miscue analysis and a number of maths worksheets. If she finds that certain concepts have not been achieved then '*we keep going for a little bit longer, but when it comes back from home (the sample packs) it just gets put into a filing cabinet*'.

On the basis of her informal and formal assessment, Rose responds to the children in different ways. For example, the way she 'corrects' children's speech and writing varies according to their level of attainment. She has also identified those who need more individual attention, although she does not provide special activities for individuals.

Rose's assessment influences not only some of the activities she plans, but also the class organisation. For example, when choosing news writing groups she tries to make sure there is a mixture of English speaking children and ESL children. She believes this exposes the ESL children to models of English and supports their oracy and literacy.

Views on Assessment Frameworks

Rose began by commenting on the Sample Packs, which are sent home in terms 1 and 3. She feels the Sample packs are more valuable than the Report for parents, '*because parents can actually see what the children are doing and how they are going*'. In addition, Rose feels that by writing a general comment on the front of the Sample pack and comments on each piece of work parents can see '*what standard they are up to and hopefully be able to help them a little bit more at home*'. Rose is pleased that many of the parents also write comments. These range from '*being happy with their work*' to identifying '*what their concerns are*'. Rose feels that the Sample Packs are a good way of keeping in touch with parents, especially with those who do not come into school.

Rose completes a Report form (see sample 7) in terms 2 and 4. On the whole Rose feels that the categories are useful. However she would like more detail in relation to oracy and literacy. Under the Reading Skills category she would like to add decoding and phonic skills. Under the Spelling Skills category she would

like to add '*recognises sounds that are being taught*', because these aspects are such a huge focus in year 1'. Rose adds that '*spells accurately*' is quite an unfortunate indicator, because '*this does not reflect her teaching and children do not consistently spell accurately*'. She would prefer something like '*will have a go*' and '*uses common sounds in their words*'. Rose feels that the Vocabulary Skills is an important category because it enables her to differentiate between children.

She comments that '*Oral Language Skills, particularly interacts confidently, is quite useful, especially with the ESL children*', but again could be more detailed. Rose thinks that because the ESL children are learning so much in a year, in relation to new vocabulary and sounds and other language areas, these need to be acknowledged. In addition, Rose would like the First Steps Phases to be part of the reports. Many parents have attended a First Steps workshop run by the school and would like to know where their child is in relation to each continuum.

Rose finds the First Steps Continua very time consuming. At the moment she has a relief teacher in her classroom while she hears children read in order to place them on the Reading Developmental Continua. She describes the process she is using

I've actually had the children reading at my desk while I've had the First Steps Reading Continuum open, and I've just been jotting down ideas, or things that I've noticed, like 're-reading' or whatever. Then once they've gone away I've quickly highlighted it, whereas before I would have used a miscue analysis or running records sheet, and then go back and do that all over again, but this time I just didn't have enough time.

Rose is also completing the Oral Language Developmental Continuum but finds it very hard to place them in appropriate phases. She feels that the ESL children have improved but these developments are not represented on the Continua. While placing Chan on the Oral Language Continuum she explains

So at the moment Chan is in Stage 1 Language for Learning. But then that doesn't cover how he's telling me. Because when he's telling me that he's going and doing these things, he's probably not using the right tense, so it doesn't cover any of that sort of, the nitty gritty. They just expect that they are telling you about objects and places, but they just presume that they are telling you properly. So, unless that comes under something else like speech development, it's not very clear at all. And that's where most of our children you know really need the assistance.

Rose feels that the Oral language Continuum does identify '*that they may be participating more and their language developing but the quality of their language isn't being assessed*'. She is concerned that ESL children may take a lot longer than an English speaking child to achieve some of the key indicators, and will not be placed in the next phase even though they are developing other aspects of oracy.

Conversely, Rose thinks that the Reading, Writing and Spelling Continua are quite helpful and do reflect what the children have achieved. She feels that it is good to have an overview of where each child has got to and '*where they're heading towards which is always helpful for planning*'. However, she concludes by saying '*I think these (the phases) are probably not the best part of the Continuum, I think the best part is the strategies*'.

Rose concludes by considering the value of the three different assessment frameworks. She feels she has a fairly comprehensive picture of the children in her class through her ongoing interactions with them and her more formal assessment, which she does in order to complete the various reports. However, she feels that there is a need for both 'new' categories and 'finer' categories in the

Report to Parents and the First Steps Continua. Rose argues that additional categories would enable her to more accurately reflect the progress and the specific developmental patterns of the children who are becoming bilingual.

References

Education Department of Western Australia. (1994). *First Steps*. Melbourne: Addison Wesley Longman.

Elizabeth at Harthill

Mary Rohl

The School Context

Elizabeth shares the same school context as Rose at Harthill

The Classroom Context

Elizabeth is a Pre-primary teacher at one of the on-site centres at Harthill Primary School. She is assisted by My, who speaks Vietnamese and several Chinese dialects as well as English. The centre is a lovely old building which has the sign *Pre-Language Centre* prominently displayed on the outside wall. This year Elizabeth's class of 18 children contains 10 whose home language is not English. Of these ESL children, eight were born outside Australia and have been in the country for varying lengths of time. The children speak a variety of languages including Mandarin, Cantonese and other Chinese dialects, Vietnamese, Burmese, Serbian and Thai. The class also includes a child whose dominant home language is English and who has a French father.

The Pre-primary centre itself is an old converted house at the edge of the school grounds. There are various rooms in the house which are used for different activities. A hallway runs through the middle of the building, with two rooms on either side of it. At the front is the main room which is used for group activities, book related activities and puzzles; the other front room contains building and construction toys and is also used for thematic purposes, for example at one visit it was transformed into a 'restaurant'. At the back, through archways from the front rooms, are the art room in which My sometimes works with small groups of children and a room which contains the home-corner and a writing centre.

The entire centre is adorned with brightly coloured, carefully displayed children's art work and environmental print. Most of this is in English, but there are some drawings labelled by My in other languages. The walls are covered in this work and some hangs from the ceiling. Many of the activities of the centre are recorded in some form. There are charts of *Songs We Know*, with pictures to cue the children in to the words: one is *I'm a Little Teapot* with a drawing of a teapot. There is a chart listing some questions to accompany *Surprise Bag* sessions, for example *What is it used for? What's it made of? Is it real or a toy?* There are charts of the weather, birthdays, *Happy Chinese New Year* and so on. The children's art work is labelled with their dictated utterances, such as *Rebecca I go to ballet and school*. Past experiences are recorded not only in children's drawings, paintings and writing attempts but also in photographs of experiences, for example *Our Visit to Hyde Park* and *Bonny the Guide Dog Visits*. It is apparent that language and the children's work are highly valued in this environment.

As the children walk down the pathway into the centre with their parents or older siblings they are greeted by a notice on an easel about the week's theme and the UV rating for the day. Once inside the building they put their bags in the cloakroom, which like the activity rooms is covered in their labelled art work, and they go to the largest front room to begin the morning session. Here they are greeted by Elizabeth and My and are invited to do a jigsaw puzzle as they wait for the other children to arrive. Some of the parents stay for a while as the children choose their puzzles.

Once the group is assembled the puzzles are completed and put away and the morning session begins. The children, Elizabeth and My sit in a circle. Some of the ESL children move closer to My. Elizabeth leads the children in singing rhymes and action songs. Each day a *special helper* is appointed for the session. Elizabeth explains that one of the aims of this procedure is to *develop the children's self-esteem, so that one child's special, and also socially there's not fighting to be the leader*. Today the special helper is Du, who sits on a special chair and holds a long pointer, which she points at the daily chart.

<p><i>The season is Spring.</i> <i>Our helper is Du.</i> <i>Today is Thursday.</i> <i>The weather is cloudy and rainy</i></p>
--

The words written here in bold have been chosen by Du from pockets which contain arrays of related words. The weather word cards contain both pictures and words. Du goes over to the white-board and writes the date 13/11. The children sing a *Good morning* song as Du points to the words. There are two songs written on the song chart. The children sing one song, but Du points to the other.

Elizabeth explains this procedure and how it helps her to assess individual children's progress:

The helper points to the writing as we read it together. It also helps me to know, specially early on, who can find their name, because they get the name from the pocket, the days of the week and the weather. So it's really a good introduction just to their early reading. Then the Good Morning song again, following [the print]. Sometimes it's a bit tricky because they're so used to watching that they just do that left to right automatically and then in another context they might not really have it. But it's just a general guide for me. And when they write the date, you can see how they're holding the pen. I notice the ones that don't know the days of the week and when they're reading the charts I notice the ones that haven't got one-to-one correspondence. I notice that with all the children so that sort of exercise probably is nothing different for ESL and Mainstream. We watch these things all the time, but it's just that special focus on that one child and they get a turn every three weeks.

Whilst the children are still sitting in the circle Elizabeth discusses with them the special activities for the day. On this particular day one of these special activities is writing a letter to thank the owners of a French restaurant, whose daughter is in the group, for providing the children with lunch at their restaurant. Another special activity is making a bar graph of the children's favourite foods at the restaurant. Elizabeth begins, *I'd like you to write some letters to some very special people who let us go to their restaurant*. The children call out their views of what they liked at the restaurant and the names of the owners. Elizabeth explains that they will need to write *Thank you* and to draw a picture of the restaurant. She models the writing of *Thank you, From*, asking the children to guess the sounds of the first letters of the words as she writes. She accepts their contributions and comments upon them, *You, it's a funny word. You gave me U, but we need to put YO in front of it*. In a similar way she introduces the bar graph, discusses favourite foods and explains that children will write their names on a pre-cut piece of card and paste their name in the column of their favourite food, such as *fizzy drink, snails, croissant*. She explains the purposes of the letter writing activity:

The aim was to get them to write for a purpose, but I also wanted them to be thinking with their illustration about the restaurant.

And My, who was going to do that with them, would have been talking to them, 'What do you remember about it?' So it would have been a language exercise as well. So that was the main objective with that. It's getting them to re-tell about the restaurant.

Some of the purposes of the favourite food activity were similar to the literacy purposes of the letter writing, but there were other purposes as well:

And the writing about the favourite food, well again they were just going to write their name, which they all can do now, but it was really just to remember what they liked. And then once the information's on the chart, then it's going to be a maths activity with, 'Which is the most popular food?' 'How many people?' So the aim of that is really more in maths.

Elizabeth then explains how the letter writing activity will be assessed and how she will involve My in this assessment:

I won't be looking at the drawing for what they can reproduce, but what's actually in the drawing, the details and it will be My that will be the one that will be able to say, 'Well so and so says I can't remember anything about it.' Usually what they remember will come out in the detail of the pictures, but for some children, like Kenny and Paul, whose fine motor skills are still not very well developed, that will then be oral recap. But My will do it, and we'll talk about it afterwards, because she's kept the letters and they're not sealed up. The children have put them in the envelopes, so we'll get them out and photocopy them and look at them then. And My and I will talk about what the children said about it and so on.

Elizabeth also describes how she will assess the favourite food activity. She explains that it may be difficult to assess each child individually:

The number activity. That will be a group time so it's going to be hard really to evaluate each child with that, but hopefully once it's displayed then we could talk about it with individual children then and just see who can count, who [has] one-to one-correspondence, who knows more than, less than. Most of those things I pretty well know from other activities I've done, so it's just reinforcing that.

The next activity is the *Surprise Bag* and, like the special helper activity, is also a daily ritual and also involves a child who has been chosen. Today the chosen child is a new arrival from Burma. He sits quietly holding a cloth bag as the children ask him questions about what he's put inside it. Elizabeth feels the bag and checks the plausibility of the questions: in answer to, *Is it a tree?*, she asks, *Can a tree fit in a bag?* She asks My to translate for those who may not understand. Some of the children appear to have remembered the questions written on the chart as they use the exact words. Today the object in the bag is a leaf. Elizabeth explains the purposes of the activity, beginning with the language and mathematical purposes:

The helper takes [the bag] home on the day that they're the helper, and they choose something from home to put in it. The main thing is really getting children to understand the difference between questions and comments. And so that's the main objective, just really for the children to ask questions. And then from that there's the maths, numbers 1 to 10 because they're only allowed to ask 10 questions and if they don't get it by then the person has to show what it is. They're seeing how the numbers are written. I write the number and then the person can choose 10 people.

In addition to language and maths there are also social and conceptual purposes for this activity:

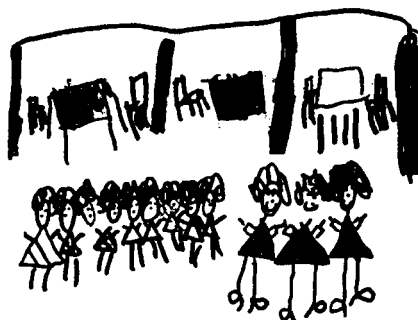
There is also a social thing. I keep [the questions the children ask] on white sheets of paper so that I can look back and you get a pretty good idea of who the people are that they like, because they tend to choose those people. I keep the papers. And it also gives me a very good idea of the children that understand what the questions mean and what the answers are, because somebody like Atcha who's got very little English, she will ask the same question, even though somebody else has already been given the answer. So it shows that she hasn't really understood what the question was, or that she hasn't been listening. It gives me a clue of things like that. It gives me a clue of who does know colour. I also get a good idea of who knows the initial sounds of letters.

After the large group session, Elizabeth praises the children, *You all talked so well* and it's time for fruit, which the children eat, still sitting in a circle. She then helps them move to the various activities which have been set up for the day. This is done in a very orderly fashion as she reinforces sentence patterns and procedures: *How many people in the block room? Take your name. Hands up who would like to go into the restaurant? Six people. Get your name.*

Once all the children are dispersed to the various rooms, Elizabeth works with two children at a time on the *Favourite Foods* chart and My helps the children with their *Thank you* letters. There is a buzz of children talking about their various activities and all appear to be involved in them. In each of the four rooms a low noise level allows for sustained conversations to take place. The noisiest area seems to be the construction room which has been transformed into a restaurant. Two confident monolingual English speaking children don the chef's hats, rush around and try to organise the others. There is a general air of confusion. One Vietnamese boy, Tran, sits at a table looking at a menu. He's still there ten minutes later. Elizabeth leaves her activity and joins in the play at the restaurant by picking up the telephone and role playing a conversation for a 'booking', ending with, *See you at one. Bye.* An air of calm descends. Elizabeth suggests that another child might like to be the chef, asks which table she should sit at, asks Tran, who is still patiently sitting at the table, if he'd like to join her for lunch. She orders snails and a glass of milk from the menu. The children call her to the phone and she discusses with them who the caller might be and what they might ask, once again modelling appropriate language.

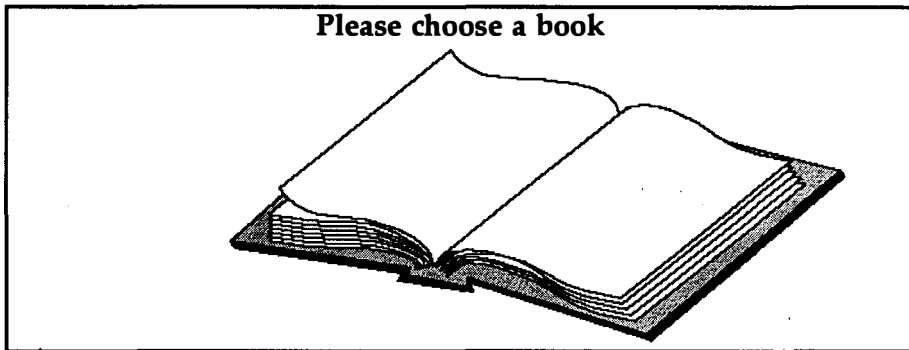
Sample 1: Jessica's Thank You Letter

14-11 Thank you from



The children move calmly to other activities when they are ready. There is much cooperation. As Jessica, one of the ESL learners, copies her *Thank you* letter, another child points to the words on Elizabeth's model version of the letter. Jessica's letter can be found in Sample 1.

The children pack away their activities and as they finish are directed by a notice on the floor of the main room:



The children do as the notice asks: some role play reading aloud; some look at the books silently; others discuss the pictures in small groups.

After a while it is time for outside play. Elizabeth and My have set up the play equipment of sand and water play, swings, a circuit of climbing and sliding equipment and other items of play equipment. Elizabeth sees this outdoor time as a very important part of the program:

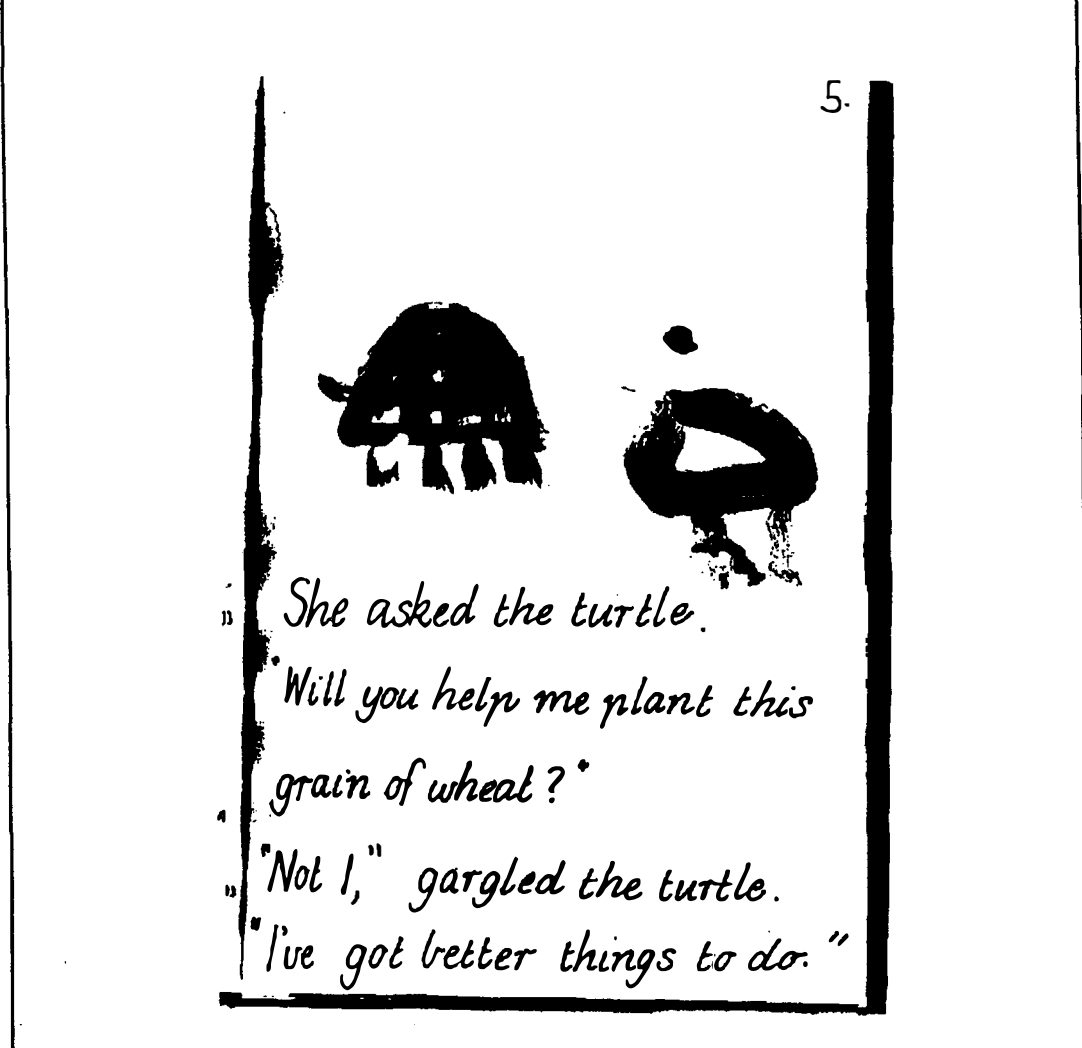
Particularly because they're very relaxed and they're interacting with each other. I'm talking about not [necessarily] when they're talking their own language and being that relaxed, but just with one another. That's when you often get the best language from them. And if they're expressing their needs, the fact that they're not just always tugging at me but they can actually say, 'Excuse me.'

Elizabeth then gives an example of how Tsang, who had very little English at the beginning of the year, has learnt to express his needs in polite language, and is so excited at his achievements that he may use an appropriate language form in an inappropriate situation:

Like Tsang before with his shoes. He couldn't ask for that but would just tug and point and then just by modelling 'Shoelaces please', now he will come up and say, 'Excuse me', even if it's in the middle of a story ... (LAUGHTER), 'Excuse me, shoe laces.' And you think, 'Oh, it's really great that you're asking but ...'

The outdoor session is followed by a large group book reading session indoors which Elizabeth takes, while My takes a small group of six ESL speakers into the art room. Today she reads a large book that the children have illustrated, entitled *The Little Yellow Duck*. The sentences underneath the pictures have been written by My and follow a repetitive pattern so that, as My begins to read in English, the children are able to join in. As she continues she translates and asks questions in a variety of languages. Some children who have been quiet in the large group sessions become very animated and call out in their first languages. My explains that they are asking her to say it in their language. A page from this book can be found in Sample 2.

Sample 2: Melanie's Page from the Big Book Illustrated by the Children



This session is followed by lunch and the afternoon session is a continuation of the morning, mostly with a free choice of activities. The routines are similar from day to day.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Elizabeth's and My's Experience

Elizabeth trained in the UK as an infants' teacher for children aged from 4-8 years. She taught a reception class of 4-and 5-year-olds for three years where the expectation was that the children in her class would learn to read and she had *the parents breathing down your neck...like which reading books they are bringing home tonight, which reading cards they are on.* She arrived in Australia in 1978 and has taught in Pre-primary centres from that time, apart from two years leave for the birth of her two children. After her initial surprise that children in Western Australia did not start school until the year in which they turned six, she began to appreciate the more relaxed atmosphere of the Pre-primary centres compared to the pressure in her English reception class:

I feel that the Pre-primary year's great because you haven't got that sort of pressure. I think the expectation's still there that they'll read, but it's not that all the children are ready to read, which it was in England, that expectation that day one off they went.

Elizabeth taught at several Pre-primary centres in Perth before being transferred to Harthill in 1991. In her first year at the school she was based in the other Pre-primary classroom where Linda is now the teacher, but the next year she moved into her present centre. At first the children attended on a part-time basis so that she and My taught two part-time groups which were composed entirely of ESL children.

The first year was difficult because they were 4-year-olds at the start and just the layout of this building, you had to think of ways of stopping them running around in circles.

However, the next year the program became a full-time five-year-old program and she retained the same children, which made her situation easier. Elizabeth thinks that the centre was originally intended for refugee children whose parents could not afford to send them to kindergarten as, until the late 1970's, kindergarten education was not free in Western Australia. Hence the incongruous sign *Pre-Language Centre* and the previous segregation of ESL children in this centre, in a similar way to the withdrawal Intensive Language Centre (ILC) at the school. Elizabeth admits that there were some difficulties in carrying out a program in which all of the children were ESL speakers, but points out some positive features, such as the fact that children from certain cultures *are easier to manage...the parents put more value on what we're doing and the children expect to listen*. Nevertheless, Elizabeth and Linda decided to divide the ESL and the monolingual English speaking children between the two centres in order to help the language development of the ESL children, particularly as Linda's group contained those ESL children who arrived after Elizabeth's Centre was full.

Like Elizabeth, My the assistant, also trained overseas as a primary school teacher. My was trained in Vietnam and taught for 5 years there in primary and high schools before a traumatic escape from Vietnam in 1978. She and her young children spent 6 months in a Thai refugee camp where she taught English and was given food in return.

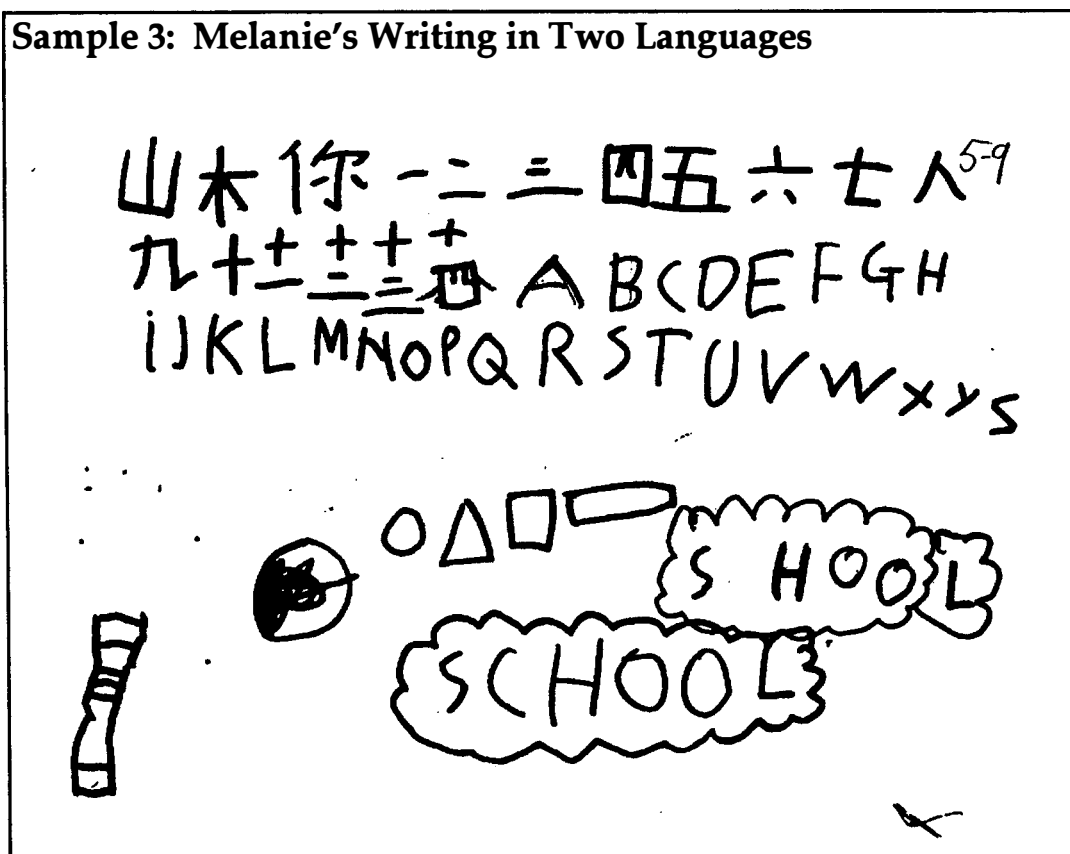
I love to learn, to study English. At that time so lucky. So I always tell my children to learn language, very important. You never know your need to use it one day.

After her arrival in Australia My worked as a house cleaner and then as an assistant at a Pre-primary Centre which was attached to a migrant reception centre. She transferred to the Harthill Pre-Language Centre eight years ago when the reception centre closed. At Harthill she is involved in a number of tasks:

I usually help teachers. I do what the teacher says and get the things done. Tidy up the things, clean up the things and everything. Children who can't speak English, say the Vietnamese or Chinese, because I can speak a few dialects so it's easier for me to make contact with the parents and understand what they want. And the children seem more interested when I tell them the story in my languages first and then they understand. So when they go back to [Elizabeth] they listen to English; they seem very confident to speak up about what's it mean and what's going on.

As we have seen in the classroom descriptions My plays a very important part in the everyday activities of the centre. As well as helping small groups of ESL children to understand the meaning of books that Elizabeth has read to them, she acts as interpreter, guide and evaluator in whole group and individual activities. She is able to interpret the children's writing if they choose to write in their home language. Sample 3 shows Melanie's English and Chinese writing which My was able to translate.

Sample 3: Melanie's Writing in Two Languages



My sees her main role as helping the children's transition from their home language to English. When asked if she uses the written forms of the children's home languages she replies:

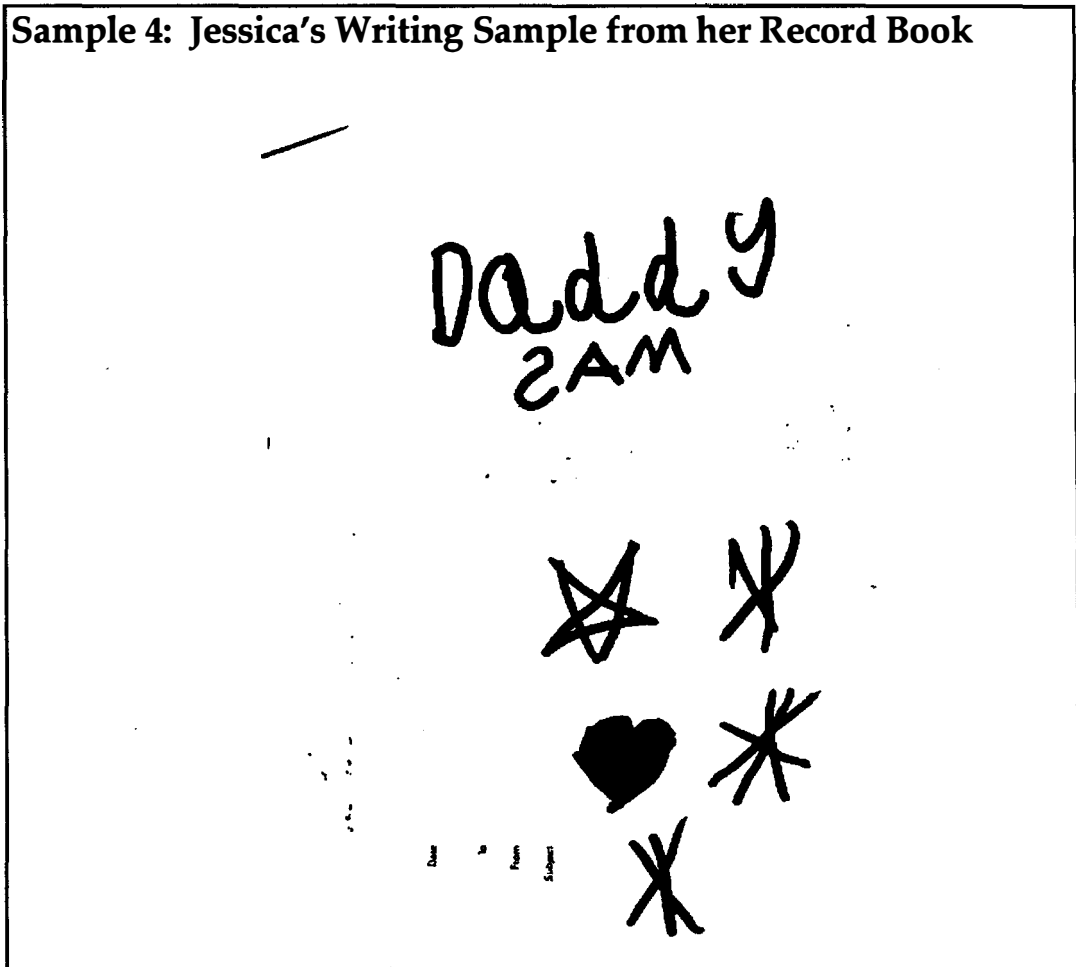
No, because they come here to learn English. So I tend to want them to speak English. So sometimes, the first time when they come in without any English and they tell me [in their own language], 'I want to go toilet', then I tell them 'Toilet' and want them to repeat and then they know. Next time they want the toilet they go [to Elizabeth and] say 'Toilet'.

Elizabeth appreciates My's contributions to the program, particularly the way that she can translate interactions with parents: *It's certainly very good for the parents to have someone that can tell them the important things, what's going on.* She also appreciates My's contributions to the program and the way in which she interacts with the children in group sessions. However, she does feel that *sometimes at news time you can see that if My's there they won't have a go.* So there's pros and cons.

Making observations about the children's progress

As we have seen, Elizabeth is constantly observing and making mental assessments of the children in the day-to-day activities. The staff room in the centre is covered in children's writing and drawing, the products of the activities. It is on tables, chairs and on the floor. Elizabeth keeps portfolios of samples of the children's work. All work is named and dated and particular samples are put in a scrap book which is given to the children at the end of the year to discuss and to take home to show their progress to their parents. My makes photocopies of the children's Thank you letters to put in the scrap books (see Sample 1). She also keeps a small book for each child in which the children draw and sometimes dictate a message which Elizabeth records verbatim. Jessica's self-initiated writing and drawing in this book can be seen in Sample 4.

Sample 4: Jessica's Writing Sample from her Record Book



Elizabeth sees that such records may be useful to back up her mental judgements of the children, but points out some of the problems and limitations:

It's so time consuming. It's just when they were making little books and writing stories and Atcha's taken hers home so I should have kept it for you...but what I'm saying is that I just wrote down and described exactly she'd said. I still knew, but it just gave confirmation that yes, she did have this sort of grammar, 'I swimmied,' and, 'when I grewed up'. I thought that I did know that, but if somebody wanted black and white facts that [dictation] would be an activity that I would do.

Elizabeth sometimes makes anecdotal records for the parents to read. She's unsure whether she will send these home at the end of the year or whether she will give them to the Year One teacher. She also has large A3 sized folders of *First Steps Developmental Continua* which she is required by the school to fill out for each child. A further task for her is to decide which children will go next year to the Intensive Language Centre at the school.

Towards the end of the project Elizabeth is also considering other methods of observing her children. The interviewer video-taped a session in order to discuss with Elizabeth the ways in which she assesses her children by observing them in routine activities. The children have also been video-taped by Rose, the Year 1 teacher at the school who is retraining as a Pre-primary teacher. Elizabeth discusses the usefulness of video-taping for assessment:

The video watching was very good, because when you're watching it you're really standing back aren't you? Even when you're observing and you're not having to take control, there's still that constant

supervision thing. Whereas when you're watching a video you know that everything's happened and it's out of your hands... I think definitely I would use video more just for that reason that you can sit back and see because it's very difficult when you're just focussed on one child. Even with writing the stories, you start to get a bit irritable when other people are coming up. I think if it was on tape that frustration would be gone because they could just carry on talking to the videotape.

Elizabeth has been to a Professional Development session run by the school on the use of Student Outcome Statements in Maths. She has accordingly tried out some of the ideas given to her and the results of this are evident in one particular activity in which the children were required to play with calculators and record the numbers that were showing. She and My made a chart for each child which identified mathematical behaviours and the children were rated on the behaviours as *Not yet*, *Developing* and *Usually*. Elizabeth particularly likes the categories of *Not yet* (it implies that someday you're expecting them to do it) and *Developing* (it means they've got a bit of an idea). The charts were shown to the parents, with My translating for some of them and they seemed to be very impressed with their children's learning. One set of parents from China were considering sending their child to a school without an Intensive Language Centre, but decided on the strength of this assessment of their child's progress, to keep him at the school.

Reflecting on and using the First Steps Developmental Continua

As the research project progressed and Elizabeth talked about and reflected at length on assessment and pedagogy, her assessment practices and views on evaluative frameworks changed somewhat. Whilst an outcomes based assessment framework has proven somewhat useful in the context of Maths education, Elizabeth has experienced some problems in using the *First Steps* language frameworks with her ESL children. All teachers in the school have had *First Steps* inservicing and are required to assess their children each term using this framework. In terms 1 and 3 they use the Writing and Spelling Continua and in Terms 2 and 4 they use the Oral Language and Reading Continua. Elizabeth explains what happens when she has highlighted the key indicators on the class record sheets:

They go up to the office and then somebody puts them into the computer, enters them. We did try doing this a few years ago ourselves and it was very hard to get the time when we could all get access to the computer and it was also very stressful when you're not used to doing it. I think, I'm sure, I didn't do mine correctly.

Once this information has been entered it becomes part of the school's information system and the teachers are given a class profile which shows the phase of development in which the children have been located and the date at which the children showed all of the key indicators of a phase. As Elizabeth points out, her children are mostly in the first phases of development for all four language modes; they are only differentiated by whether they have shown some or all the key indicators of the first phase. For the Oral Language Developmental Continuum, Early Language is the first phase of language development printed on the assessment sheets produced for the school. There is, however, a Beginning Language phase which gives indicators of the earliest language development for native speakers of English, which has not been reproduced for Elizabeth, most likely because it is said to describe *language acquired in the first two years of life* (Education Department of WA, 1994). At the beginning of the project Elizabeth says that she thinks the teachers in the Intensive Language Centre are beginning to use the *Bandscales*, but she points out, *I don't know enough about the Bandscales*.

Elizabeth has some misgivings about the use of *First Steps* with her children and doesn't think that the Continua are appropriate for ESL learners. For instance, some of the ESL children at the Pre-primary stage do not show any of the key indicators from the earliest phases:

[I] highlighted the key indicators but, because I have mainly ESL children, I've highlighted anything, because basically it took them longer to get the key indicators.

In fact, as we look at the children's profiles at the beginning of the project she points out that, in the first school term, many of her ESL children had only one or two minor indicators and no key indicators marked from the Role Play Writing Phase.

As the research project progressed Elizabeth became more at ease with the interview situation and reflected at length on the subject of assessment of ESL Pre-primary children's language and on the problems she has encountered in using the *First Steps* materials. At the beginning of our second interview she begins:

I was thinking about this last night and I was looking through some of the indicators of [First Steps] Oral Language, Early Language and I've put an asterix with the ones, for example begins to use pronouns but may make errors in syntax or may confuse tenses describing an event or uses function words. For example 'Me go park,' becomes, 'I'm going to the park' and that's fine for English speaking children but it doesn't give a true indication of the level obtained even in the first language because the of the distances between English and other languages' conventions. For example, in Chinese there's not tenses or pronouns used anyway, so even an adult would say, 'I go shop,' because 'I' is used for 'he' and 'she'. So I really don't like some of those [indicators].

As we look at the *First Steps* protocols for individual children Elizabeth expands on what she sees as the inappropriate nature of some of the indicators for her ESL children. We examine the protocol for James (see Sample 5) who arrived in February from Hongkong and speaks Cantonese. Elizabeth explains that when he arrived at the centre he spoke very little English apart from a few social phrases such as *Good morning*.

In June Elizabeth had highlighted a few Early Language indicators for him:

Well, besides refines conversational skills, eg learns ways to enter conversations, takes turns during an interaction, there's constantly questions why, who, what, where, when. And that I think was purely just for attention because he couldn't really understand if I gave the explanation, it was just something that he knew would get my attention. He's developed a lot since. Under Speech Development [I've got] Experiments with sounds through rhyme and repetition. But a lot of them at this stage still weren't talking much at all.

When we look at the indicator **shows confusions between pairs of terms, eg, I/you, this/that, here/there**, Elizabeth thinks aloud:

Well I could highlight that but it's not the same sort of confusion as that of an English speaking child.

She explains this as follows:

Well, it's just that they [English speaking children] could say 'this' and 'that' like they're two different words and 'here' and 'there'. I guess maybe that's something that, as they are here longer and

they're immersed in the language, they would be like an English speaking child. But I still think it doesn't really show the stage they're at. In their own language they're really probably beyond that.

Sample 5: James's Oral Language Developmental Continuum

EARLY LANGUAGE

In this phase children's use of language becomes more refined and extended. It is used to satisfy specific social needs and to gain control of objects, people and knowledge in the environment.

Speech Development	Language and Literacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiments with sounds through rhyme and repetition begins to use pronouns but may make errors in syntax, e.g. <i>Look at the doggie. They is big.</i> shows confusion between pairs of terms, e.g. <i>Myou, this/ that, here/there</i> demonstrates an understanding of distinction in personal pronouns, e.g. <i>Give it to him. Give it to me.</i> uses one grammar style which is an approximation of adult grammar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gives simple descriptions of past events shows an interest in listening to and talking about stories asks for and joins in stories 'reads' books aloud, often assigning own meaning to print tells 'stories' about the pictures begins to develop an understanding of story structure, e.g. notices when a page is not read from a favourite book 'pretend reads' to other children, dolls, toys recalls simple stories demonstrates an awareness of rhyme reads familiar print in the environment acts out stories or repeats phrases encountered in books draws symbols and 'reads' the message shows an interest in the meaning of words encountered in books
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overgeneralisations are common, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plumbe - sheep for sheep verbs - good for want auxiliary verbs - <i>I be going to football on Saturday</i> begins to use endings such as ing, ed, s may confuse tenses when describing an event, e.g. <i>I going shopping yesterday.</i> uses function words - is, was, a, the, for, because - to link ideas previously expressed in unconnected ways: <i>We go park - becomes - We going to the park.</i> demonstrates an understanding of most common prepositions, e.g. <i>on, under, front, behind</i> may make sound substitutions, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b for v - @bs for drive l for k - lick for kick s for sh - sip for ship r for r - rabbit for rabbit d for th - bruddie for brother f for th - free for three 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows an interest in exploring/asking of how and why begins to develop concepts of quantity, size, speed, size begins to see relationships between objects, e.g. puts round objects together, blue objects together begins to understand cause and effect begins to verbalise reasons makes simple predictions of future events, e.g. <i>We'll be going in two more sheets.</i> offers solutions and modifications expresses feelings constantly questions - why, who, what, where, when may demonstrate confusion between fantasy and reality, e.g. <i>I didn't break it. Mummy did.</i>
<h4>Language of Social Interaction</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in more nature of future needs and begins to provide feedback information when introducing new topic, e.g. <i>Mama, I want shopping. Look at this.</i> coordinates gesture and tone of voice to convey meaning, e.g. <i>I love you. Mama (loudly)</i> refers conversationally skills, e.g. learns ways to enter conversation, takes turns during an interaction talks about to call engages in imaginary play, often using toys or other props converses with imaginary friends 	

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21.6.71	22.11.71			
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YEAR: _____	TEACHER: _____	YEAR: _____	TEACHER: _____	YEAR: _____	TEACHER: _____
YEAR: _____	TEACHER: _____	YEAR: _____	TEACHER: _____	YEAR: _____	TEACHER: _____

Elizabeth continues her explanation by suggesting that ESL children's errors may be different from the ones that children who are learning English as their first language would make. She also explains that ESL children bring what they know about their home language to the learning of English:

I can see that when you're learning a language you learn maybe the same way, but I think because they have their own language, they're bringing what they know about their own language there. English speaking children, they're immersed in people's modelling the correct thing all the time. So the child that always hears the correct model would start off with that sort of approximation of the language, whereas these children in their first language already can communicate quite effectively, so therefore they are communicating effectively, but they're not using the conventions of the language. So, 'I go toilet', that's fine for them.

Here Elizabeth is expressing her frustration that the *First Steps Continua* in general, and the Oral Language Developmental Continuum, in particular do not take account of the needs and achievements of children who are fluent in a language other than English. She is also concerned that the achievement of the indicators by these children may be confounded by cultural background and the literacy practices of the home. For example, in some cultures, role play reading and writing, the first stages of development in the *First Steps Continua*, are not considered to be appropriate behaviours. (See Melanie's writing Sample 3 which contains memorised number and letter sequences and invented role play writing). She has found it to be the case that some children who *do not pretend to read and write* may be more advanced than those of their classmates who do show these role play behaviours, in that the non-role play readers may know that they are not able to crack the alphabetic code:

Maybe they [children from other cultures who don't display role play reading and writing behaviours] understand more than a child who says, 'This is my shopping list and this is what it says'. Or they may [role play writing a list] but they don't actually assign a message to their own writing.

A further problem that Elizabeth has encountered in using *First Steps Continua* for written modes of language is that in the Pre-primary context the children are only engaged in a limited amount of reading and writing, so that it is often not possible to observe a behaviour on different occasions and in different contexts. Also, because of the layout of the Centre and the fact that she works often with small groups, she is not able to observe all of the children all of the time. Thus, she feels that it may sometimes look as if she has overestimated her children's abilities:

If they're doing that helper chart and they're reading left to right, and yes [I think] they can do that, and then I might look at them in another situation and they're not, and I think, 'Well I've just highlighted that they can'. In Pre-primary there's not that many situations. It's not like Year 1 or Year 2 where you're constantly at your tables reading and writing all day. We're doing other things, so you just tend to have a limited amount of experience that you can focus on.

Alternatively she may also underestimate their achievements:

I can't really highlight things if it's just one little incident. I think, 'I'll just leave it', because then the Year One teacher can think, 'Of course they can do that.

Elizabeth is familiar with the Highgate Project (Education Department of WA, 1994) in which a group of ESL teachers modified some of the *First Steps Continua* in order to make them more suitable for ESL learners:

I thought they [the Highgate Project materials] were good, but I just thought they looked like, to be quite honest, just a bit too much hard work. And then I found that trying to use them didn't really show enough of the children's global development.

Elizabeth's use of a modified version of the First Steps Oral Language Developmental Continuum

By the time of our final interview, at the very end of the year, Elizabeth is developing her own system of recording her assessments of the children. As can be seen from the previous transcripts, she has a detailed knowledge of what her children can do and of the *First Steps* documents, but she has felt that the two were not compatible. Nevertheless, towards the end of November at a school development day, she, along with the teacher of the off-site Pre-primary Centre,

attended a brief session on the assessment of ESL children with the staff of the Intensive Language Centre. Here she finds that they are all facing the same challenges in the area of assessment and that the Intensive Language Centre teachers have been working on more appropriate ways of assessing their ESL children. In particular their assessment system seems to extend the First Steps Beginning Language phase, which describes first language speakers in their first two years of life, and the Early Language phase, from which, as Elizabeth has pointed out, some of her ESL children show very few indicators:

On that day they were discussing draft copies of reports that they were thinking of sending home to parents that were reporting on speaking and listening skills. When I looked at them, because they've been working on this for quite a while, I suddenly thought, 'At last there is something that bridges the Beginning Language and the Early Language [phases], without being as complicated as all the Highgate Project's sheets.' So, anyway, having gone on Monday, I went home and I photocopied the Beginning Language Continua and then added some of the other indicators that are between Beginning Language and Early Language.

Once she has added the additional indicators Elizabeth then notes examples of her children's language which she thinks typify the indicators:

I thought of the sorts of sentences that my children [say]. I don't know if it actually says there about three word sentences, but the more I look and listen to my ESL children, that's completely how they talk, like, 'Me go park'. There's nothing on Beginning Language that says, 'Me go park' and yet for Early Language it's suddenly meant to jump to, 'I'm going to the park'. So for the ESL children there was nothing on [the Oral Language Continuum] that showed their development from just one word.

As a result of her reflection on her experiences Elizabeth has put together on one A3 page the indicators from the *First Steps* Oral Language Beginning Language and Early Language phases and a list of the additional indicators which she has observed in her children and which she feels bridges the two phases for ESL children. Elizabeth's modified sheet can be seen in Sample 6.

Sample 6: Elizabeth's Modified First Steps Oral Language Developmental Continuum for James

BEGINNING LANGUAGE PHASE

In this phase, children are motivated by a basic need to communicate. Language development is influenced by the children's opportunities they are given to hear and use language and the rich environment.

Indicators

The child:

- develops a repertoire of cries to satisfy biological needs
- cries, chuckles, gurgles, coos
- 'babbling' and repeats sound patterns
- constantly plays at making sounds, alone or with others
- recognises human voices
- responds to own name ✓
- uses voice to attract attention
- uses sound to signify emotions, e.g. anger, excitement
- voices many sounds which resemble those of mother tongue, e.g. *ma-ma, da-da*
- uses non-verbal gestures, e.g. waves ✓
- produces first real words ✓
- coordinates gestures and words, e.g. waves and says *Bye* ✓
- uses single words and two-word phrases to convey meaning: ✓
drink - I want a drink
go way - Go away
- uses non-verbal communication to support single and two-word utterances: ✓
drink - points to fridge
- understands more language than can be verbalised ✓
- may over-generalise word meanings to represent many ideas: *bed* may mean bed, pillow, blanket, going to bed
- has favourite words, e.g. *No! Mine!* ✓
- relates messages which are supported by facial expression or intonation:
Mummy car! Mummy car!
- may make mispronunciations: ✓
tu - for cup
free - for tree
ress - for dress
rink - for drink
- mixes words, e.g. *shakemilk* - for milkshake
- has mastered some functional language, e.g. *in, on, out, down* ✓
- may produce parents' speech sounds without meaning, e.g. in attempting to hold a conversation with a visitor
- understands simple questions
- follows simple directions
- begins to question for information
- engages in language games, e.g. *Round and round the garden, Incy wincy spider*

• uses touch to gain attention.

James
Born 23.11.90
Lang: Mandarin

- Echoes words and phrases. ✓
- Is willing to have a go in group ✓
- increases vocab to label everyday objects
- participates in routine social greetings
- joins in repetitive language of stories, songs ✓
- uses sentences consisting of 3 key words ✓
eg "Me go school"
"Sally hit Tom"
"Please, Ngoc mole drink"
- follows directions with 3 key words
eg "Please put the book in the box"
- can name colours shapes bodyparts

Elizabeth is pleased that she can now *actually show people that that's what I've noticed*. However, for some of the more advanced ESL learners she does not feel the need to use the modified framework. Her assessment of Jessica, which can be found in sample 7, is similar to that of many of her monolingual English speakers.

Reporting to others

Whilst Elizabeth makes assessments using *First Steps* documents in order to satisfy the school administration she has not yet used them in communicating with parents, *I wouldn't like parents to go away saying, 'What stage is your child at?'* Nevertheless, as we have seen, at the end of the project she is working with the ESL teachers to draft a document which may go home to parents, based on modified *First Steps* Continua. She already sends home the children's books of writing and drawing samples throughout the year as well as their paintings. Further, she has been sending home the videos that have been taken of the children in the Centre so that the children can discuss the activities of the centre with their parents. The parents are also able to see how their child interacts with others and takes part in the activities.

Elizabeth is also required to assess children at the end of the year for placement in the Intensive Language Centre at the school. She explains that many of her children who come from non-English speaking families are entitled to one year of intensive language instruction. Elizabeth says that she is required to make the decision as to whether the children are placed in an Intensive Language Centre or a mainstream class. When asked how she assesses the children for this she explains that she doesn't really use *First Steps*, but rather uses her own intuition about how the children will cope with the many demands of a mainstream classroom:

There doesn't seem to be any rule for what they want. The teacher that was here for about ten years at the Pre-primary, I asked her and she said, 'You know, well it's like kind of what do you feel?' And I look at the [children's] English and again that's a gut feeling, like, 'Do they understand instructions?'

Elizabeth continues by stating that she does not only assess the children's development in English for placement in the Intensive Language Centre, but that she has additional criteria:

Even though it's just meant to be on English, I also think about their social and emotional maturity. And I think about their motor skills, because I feel that in the Intensive Language [Centre] they're smaller groups of children, and things are going at a slower pace for those little ones. Maybe their English could cope in Year One, but I just think they could do with a little bit of extra help or a little bit more confidence. I'd rather put them there than let them get moved in. So, if you're like James, his English could be mainstream, but no way I would put him into that, because he actually might even need special education. I'm not putting him into Intensive Language because of his language, I'm putting him there because of the other things.

When she has decided which children would benefit from some time in the Intensive Language Centre, Elizabeth has to decide on the most suitable class in the Intensive Language Centre:

I make a list and they've got three classes. They've got the reception class, the intermediate class and then the transition class, which is the transition between intensive language and mainstream. The reception class never gets any of ours, because that's for new arrivals into Australia. So it's either a case of deciding whether they are intermediate or transition. So for instance [the two Vietnamese children] will definitely be intermediate, because they need at least a year.

Elizabeth further explains that she consults My to confirm her decisions. The Intensive Language Centre staff do not ask for language assessments from the

Pre-primary Centre and in any case they have access to the *First Steps* information which is on file in the school.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

During the interviews Elizabeth makes it clear that she is quite confident about making her on-the-spot mental assessments of the children. Nevertheless, in spite of her extensive teaching experience and knowledge of her children and of *First Steps*, she has expressed from time to time her feelings of uncertainty in assessing her ESL children in terms of evaluative frameworks. She has asked about documents other than *First Steps*, such as the *ESL Bandscales*, with which she is unfamiliar. She has also asked about what other teachers are saying about what they do. Elizabeth's initial feelings of insecurity may well be a reflection of the isolation felt by many Pre-primary teachers as they work in their individual centres, the types of program they run and their limited opportunities to observe the language behaviours of individual children in their activity-centred programs. In Elizabeth's case this is exacerbated by the separation of her Centre into individual rooms. Elizabeth's view of early childhood education is summed up in a poem that she gave me early in the project which gives a strong message about developmental programs and the emphasis on process not product (See Sample 8). She draws parallels between the importance of process for the children's activities and the importance of process for teachers' assessment in that it is the moment by moment on the spot decisions about how best to respond to a child's behaviours, including language behaviours, that are of prime importance in her program, not written assessment sheets.

Sample 8: Is There Anything in your Bag Today?

IS THERE ANYTHING IN YOUR BAG TODAY?

Today I did my maths and science,
I toasted bread.
I halved and quartered, counted, measured
Used my eyes and ears and head
I added and subtracted on the way.
I used the magnet, blocks and clay.
So please don't say,
"Anything in your bag today?"

I've learned about a snail and a worm,
Remembered how to take my turn,
Helped a friend when he was stuck,
Shared and played with the blue tip-truck.
Looked at words from left to right,
Agreed to differ, not to fight.
So, please don't say,
"What? Nothing in your bag today?"

You see, I'm learning as I play,
I learn to listen and how to talk.
To run outside, and when inside to walk,
To wash my hands and put my pasting brush away.
So please don't ask,
"Did you only play today?"

Yes, I played the whole day through,
I played to learn the things I do.
I discovered a problem, found a clue,
And worked out for myself just what to do.
But all of this is in my head,
And not in my bag, like you said.
So from now on could you just please say,
"Tell me all about your day today?"

A further factor which may have influenced Elizabeth's views is that she is a mainstream trained teacher who appears to have had little inservice in the teaching of ESL children. She expresses this when she talks about herself and the teacher at the off-site Pre-primary Centre:

She started off the same as me, because I'm not ESL trained and she isn't, but when people say, 'What do you do?', you say, 'Well I don't do anything different.' Because really you don't, apart from having My.

Certainly, Elizabeth's program contains activities which may be found in other highly stimulating early childhood settings. However, in saying that she doesn't do *anything different* for her ESL children Elizabeth appears to be underestimating the ways in which she adapts her language so well to the precise needs of her individual children.

Towards the end of the project Elizabeth explains that she felt her teaching situation was quite different from that of the Intensive Language Centre staff before she made closer links with them at the professional development day. However, having made the links, she feels that her teaching context is more similar to that of the Intensive Language Centre than she originally thought:

I think before, having Pre-primary or even Pre-language children, because I had the 4-year-olds I probably didn't feel confident enough to contribute. Or I used to think that they had older children so they knew more about how they were speaking. And then just looking at [the documents reviewed at the school's professional development day] I thought, 'Oh gosh, even the older ones are still learning just the same way as the little ones'.

We have seen in this case study how Elizabeth, a Pre-primary teacher, whose class contains a majority of ESL children, is trying to come to terms with using the *First Steps* Developmental Continua. These evaluative frameworks, which have been developed for mainstream English speakers, have been imposed by the school administration for all mainstream children K-7 at the school. Elizabeth is a teacher who has a detailed knowledge of her children and is constantly making on the spot mental decisions about their linguistic needs and adjusts her language and strategies accordingly. Elizabeth also has a detailed knowledge of the *First Steps* materials, but feels that they do not capture the abilities of her ESL children. During the course of the project she has reflected in detail on her practice, and after a professional development session with the Intensive Language Centre teachers, has begun to develop her own modified version of *First Steps* which she feels is more appropriate for her ESL learners.

Linda at Harthill

Mary Rohl

The School Context

Linda shares the same school context as Rose at Harthill

The Classroom Context

Linda, like Elizabeth, is a Pre-primary teacher at an on-site centre at Harthill Primary School. Her centre is very different from Elizabeth's in that the building is a small transportable classroom, which can sometimes feel over-crowded when the children are using the play equipment. Linda is assisted by Kaye, the aide. Both Kaye and Linda are mono-lingual speakers of English. They work closely together, with Kaye having responsibility for some activities, such as the daily news-telling session.

Linda's transportable classroom has been placed at the edge of the school grounds. Her outdoor play area adjoins that of Elizabeth so that there is access to her centre through a gate. There are windows all around the room so it is very light and the walls are covered with brightly coloured children's art work and environmental print, such as the Daily Chart, Songs We Know, I Am A Good Listener. The morning session begins with children choosing a puzzle to do after they have put away their bags and said their goodbyes. A few parents stay for a while helping their children. One boy clings to his father. A new child has joined the group today. He's an Aboriginal child who is being temporarily cared for by his grandmother and there seems to be some confusion about his name as he's called one name by his mother and another by his grandmother. The children put away their puzzles and the morning mat session begins.

Linda counts the children, *One, two....eighteen. Who's away today? Put your thinking caps on.* They are reminded to remember the rules as several children call out at the same time. The Daily Chart is completed with the name of the special helper, the day, the weather and the date. Jonathan and Samuel (the new child) are praised for sitting so beautifully. There then follows a discussion of past experiences: today the topic is the Royal Perth Show which is initiated by Yuen with, *I've got a show bag.* Linda leads the discussion: *Put your hand up if you can tell me what you might find in a showbag.* She enunciates show bag very clearly. The children excitedly discuss the contents as being lollies, toys, snakes. This discussion is followed by the movement game Simon Says in which the children put their hands on their shins, elbows, eyebrows, eyelashes and nostrils. Many of the children look expectantly at Linda to see what she's doing.

The activities for the day are explained. The home-corner is available and has become Joe's Cafe; the children can make place-mats for the restaurant; they can cut out shapes to decorate paper plates; play with the computer; or use various different types of construction toys. Kaye moves to the activity table where the mats are being made and Linda cruises the room to make sure that everyone is occupied. There is lots of excited noise and movement as the children in the home-corner experiment with their roles in the restaurant. Linda moves to this area and discusses with the children the ways in which people behave in a restaurant. She explains the place of this activity in her overall program:

Well, we're talking about restaurants because we're going on an excursion to a restaurant next week. The parents of one of the children own the restaurant so they've invited us to go along. So I thought what we'd do, we'd think about restaurants a little bit before we go and set it up in the centre. And so what I've done, I've had several tables put aside that can be used for the tables in the restaurant and this was looking more at around fruit time so that it was more of an activity where everyone was involved. Now today it didn't work out like that because of lack of time but the idea for perhaps the rest of the week is to have that time set aside. We didn't have a lot of time to do it but I think they got a bit of an idea on the whole of being in a restaurant...

Linda explains that she feels this type of extended activity, in which changes to the classroom environment are made and in which there are many opportunities for the children to discuss experiences, is ideal for children whose knowledge of English is limited:

It's particularly good especially for the ESL children to be in a situation where their language is being stimulated. So it just gave them the opportunity to put into practice what they know really about language, 'What's that?' and, 'How many?' and just to be able to deal with the order. What we were wanting to do each day is have something different on the menu for the rest of the week.

In basing her program upon a common theme such as the restaurant Linda is able to use the theme to plan for the children's learning in various curriculum areas. Further, she may extend the theme for as long as the children are interested:

Money's coming into it too, talking about how much it's going to buy, if a piece of fruit's ten cents and you've got twenty cents, well how many pieces can you buy...It's still the beginning of knowing about money so there's the maths comes into it as well as the language. What we might end up doing even is changing it to a takeaway food shop or something like that, so it depends how it goes. If they're all really enjoying doing it, role playing, it may well go into next week so we'll just play it by ear. I'm never very rigid about only having it for a week or planning for two weeks.

There are several literacy activities embedded within the cafe theme as the 'diners' look at the menu and the 'waiters' write down the orders. Linda points out that in her program the most meaningful literacy-based activities grow out of the context:

With the writing, having to take orders there is a real purpose for writing and I've noticed that a lot in any of the activities. If there's a reason for doing the writing, of course they'll have a go and do it because we do have a writing table set up, but they don't use it very much unless they've got a real reason for doing it. Last week Andrew was away sick and so I suggested to them all to write a card for him, draw a card, and lots of them did. And again because there was a purpose in it they all had a go at writing their own messages in it. I left it to them and they came up with the messages and they just wanted to help you know, How do you write this? How do you write that?' So we wrote it down for them. In some cases we said, 'Oh you have a go at writing', which they did and there was lots of really quite good writing that went home to Andrew.

Kaye, the aide, helps the children with the art activity in which they blow paint through a straw to make a pattern for their place mats. Linda's purpose for this is:

To make some placemats that we can perhaps use in the restaurant ... I had that in mind more than the actual activity. It was like how can we make some placemats? And then they can just use them in the restaurant. So again it's an interesting activity for them anyway just to see what happens when they blow the paint.

The paper plate decoration is also tied to the theme of the restaurant, but has additional purposes:

That again was something that they could use in the restaurant because it was food and also again it's always the purpose to give extra cutting practice, looking for pictures of food too, discriminating between food and other types of things, objects in the magazines, but again the main reason to do it was something to use in the restaurant..

Linda explains the purposes of the various construction toys with which some of the boys are engaged for much of the morning and how she organises for them to take part in the activities:

There's a certain group that really are into the construction activities. We had Lego out and we've had the Duplo and also we've just put the Mobilo out this week. And then on the little table that was quite a new construction set that I'd purchased, so I put that one out too because there is a limit. There's only four of them allowed in an area at a time so of course they can't all do it at the same time. I think, well especially for Joe for instance, his fine motor is not very good. It's improved a lot but the more he does it the better...And it's the dramatic play as well. There are a lot of things involved in using construction sets, even technology now too...So I tend to think that if that's the thing that they're interested in at this stage that's great. Let them do more of what they're interested in and then I'll just take them out at different times to come over and to be a part of the restaurant at different times, just so that they know what it's like and let them experience it as well. Obviously you've got to have them in different areas anyway so they might as well be doing something they enjoy doing.

After these activities have been completed, with the children eating their morning fruit in the cafe and they have packed away, they move into the outdoor area. Here there are the usual early childhood activities of climbing, jumping, balancing, sand and water play, large trucks and so on. Today Kaye has made a magnetic fishing game which the children play in a corner of the sand-pit where it is shady. Kaye enunciates her words very clearly as she gives positional instructions to guide the fishing lines and offers encouragement to those whose fish have got away.

The morning session concludes with a large group newstelling session, taken by Kaye and a book session which Linda takes with three ESL children. The book, *The T-Shirt Song*, contains a song about wearing t-shirts. Linda sings the song with the children and discusses the pictures, asking simple questions sometimes directed to the small group, sometimes directed to individual children: What are these called? Paul, your turn. What's he doing? Jeffrey, have you got long sleeves on? Have I got long sleeves or short sleeves? These questions are accompanied by gestures, careful articulation of words and exaggerated intonation which emphasises the words which Linda wants the children to focus on. Linda explains the purpose of the activity:

It was just done really just to let them talk about, just some revision really and that's what I try to do in those little groups, while the main group is having news. I take out a small group and do some extra work with them on something that's familiar or something

that I think will be very motivating to them [so] that I can just build on what they already know...I always find that if it's got something to do with them personally then it's a lot easier for them to start talking about it and I find sometimes I can't shut them up...they certainly get lots of language...I was just doing the T-shirt song with the children. They'd had it quite a number of times so it was something that they were familiar with and we basically just talked about T-shirts and what a T-shirt was and who had a T-shirt on and who didn't and then it got into talking about buttons and who had buttons on and who didn't. And Jeffrey saw I had a V-necked blouse on and he said it was a triangle which it was. I thought that was quite a good observation. And also I asked him, I pointed to his pocket and said, 'Do you know what that is?' and he said, 'Yes, it's a pocket,' and I was quite happy that he'd said that. I didn't think he would know what it was called. And then I just started reading the story but singing it because it is a song and I find with songs they're always good for any children because it helps them to remember the language, but especially for the ESL children as they might not remember if it's just words.

After this small group activity and Kaye's news telling activity, the children go outside for lunch. The afternoon session follows a similar pattern after the children have had a quiet time and a music session.

Assessing the Children's Achievements

Linda originally trained as a child-care worker, gained an Associate Diploma and worked as an assistant in a Pre-school for a few years before she decided to become a teacher. She then returned to study, completing a Diploma of Teaching and a Bachelor of Education, specialising in Art Education 'so it wasn't actually on Early Childhood and that was back in the 80s so I haven't done anything else since then'. Even though she hasn't done any more formal study during her 14 years of teaching Linda has taken part in various inservice courses, notably First Steps.

Linda talks about the children

This year is Linda's sixth at Harthill. In her first year she taught two groups of sessional 4-year-olds and in her second year kept this same group as sessional 5-year-olds. For the past four years she has taught one group of full-time (four days a week) 5-year-old children. She has always had some ESL children in her group because I always had the overflow, or sometimes people would come straight to me and enrol anyway. This year she has twenty children in her group of whom:

eleven come from a background where another language is spoken at home. Six who came at the beginning of the year didn't speak English, maybe one or two words but really nothing, just a few words basically.

As Linda checks the school entry information cards we find that the ESL children come from a range of linguistic backgrounds: four are said to speak Vietnamese; one Cantonese; one Bosnian; one Serbian; two Burmese one of whom has a father from Pakistan so may be exposed to a third language; one Thai; and one child is from Singapore and Linda thinks his mother speaks a language other than English. Also in this group is the twin sister of the child in Elizabeth's group who has a French father. The children come from a range of socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Linda describes one of the children:

He didn't have English at the beginning of the year; he's from Bosnia. His parents both speak English, the father better than the mother. The mother is having English lessons, but she was a doctor

in her own country so she's well educated and trying to get back into doing all the study to do that again here. Her English is coming on; it's not perfect because she is finding that the hardest part... So his is really coming on quite well. Now he can speak sentences and a couple of terms ago he didn't have any English at all.

Other children are from single parent families and some have been born in refugee camps. Yet others have been born in Australia, but if English is not spoken at home of course they are not learning it until they come to school anyway.

As we talk about each child in turn, it becomes clear that Linda has a detailed knowledge of the children's English language development from her observations of them in the activities of the centre:

[This child] is Serbian and he's got more than he lets us know about. He's quite shy and when I've had him on a one-to-one, talking to him I'll get more out of him, he'll speak more...In the general class he doesn't put up his hand and give answers generally. He'll say a few words in English, but not a lot. But again, he came in second term, so his English hasn't come on perhaps as much. I think the understanding is there.

Linda likes to have contact with the parents of the children, and whilst she sometimes has problems in communicating with the ESL parents she feels it important that they know about the aims of her program:

It's often ESL children that will get picked up by someone else, because often the parents are out to English classes or they are working, but probably this year, a majority of them get picked up by parents. If I see them I have a chat to them and tell them what their child's been doing. I try to find something that they've done and say, 'Tell mum what you've done today.'... Just something to show the range of things that we do at pre-primary too, that it's just not sitting down doing ABC. Because that seemed to be the feeling or the impression that a lot of people, especially Asian parents tend to have, that's what pre-primary is about. At the beginning of the year we do a talk, we've been doing it for a few years, on what we do in the program and what our expectations are... When we do that we have My who works with Elizabeth who speaks Vietnamese and Chinese to interpret.

Linda's approach to assessment

As she goes about the everyday activities of the Centre Linda is constantly making informal observations of the children's language development:

This little one... really quite surprises me with some of his knowledge. We were making Father's Day cards today and he quite easily copied 'Happy Father's Day' and then he was saying 'Policeman'. He drew a picture and I couldn't quite work out what he said and then he said, 'It's Policeman'.

Further, as she observes the children in the day-to-day activities she is continually confirming her assessments of the children, I thought that was quite a good observation; or modifying them, I was quite happy that he'd said that. I didn't think he would know what it was called. Any child about whom she has particular concerns she will refer to outside agencies, although with ESL children it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether a problem is related to the learning of a second language or whether the problem is of a more global nature:

Jeffrey I'm a bit concerned about at the moment. Actually I'm going to have him referred because he's speaking more English but he's stammering a little bit too. So I don't know whether it is just

because he's learning English and he hasn't quite got the words or whether there's something that needs looking at.

It will also be seen from Linda's discussion about the various activities which she has set up in her centre that planning and assessment are inextricably interwoven in her program. She often begins by discussing the purpose of the activity, but naturally digresses into talking about her observations of the children as they engage in the activity, as she did when discussing the purpose of the small group book activity: And Jeffrey saw I had a V-necked blouse on and he said it was a triangle which it was. I thought that was quite a good observation.

Sample 1: An extract from Linda's Observations of Noel

2/4 Noel retold the story "What do I put on?" which I read yesterday.

9/5 told news about his computer. He has Encyclopedia 96 + Dangerous Creatures CD Rom info for putting in the Computer. He has 3 discs.
~~FEDERICK DLEY MUC EC MI~~
^{fourth of the day is Mon}
 I go to bird park in Singapore
 I have a CD ABOUT SINGAPORE
 I have a CD. I have bear hunt game. My dad goes to the computer shop, and he brought one new computer

4/9 Noel said he had Spot Goes to School at home + his Dad reads it to him. He was able to read it almost word for word. It was obvious that he was looking at each word. Some he knew + I helped him with others. He knew DOG spells dog he esp. knew what was written under the flaps

3/10 What have you learned since you came to school?
 "Songs: of all you learn here, remember this the best". Hide + seek (game)

"The T-shirt song! Kangaroo Skippy Roo
 No!s there anything outside that you learned about?"

Noel: "The teddy bears picnic": "we went through the dolphins mouth, + out the bum (+ then the door closed")

Q What would you like to learn about?
 "Balloons for Sale"

Linda does make some hard copies of the children's progress, particularly to send home to the parents. She and Kaye have made scrap books in which, from time to time Linda places observations of the children. An excerpt from Noel's record can be found in Sample 1.

Linda also relies a great deal on her memory of the children's achievements. She refers to her intuition on several occasions:

I just made some notes there. Basically it's using some work samples, of just really seeing how they go. It's fairly broad over a period of time...Photos I use quite a bit and check lists and comments and also intuition is used quite a bit too, just, thinking how an individual child has gone or he's not having a very good day. You just pick up certain things there too. I tend to use that.

As she points out, in the Pre-primary centre there is an emphasis on social and emotional development and there are not always many opportunities to observe language and literacy behaviours:

I find if they're reading, and with writing for instance, unless we're actually doing an activity that really lends itself to writing, then they don't necessarily write. They don't just decide, 'I'm going to go and write'.

Further, the changes in development in ESL children at the Pre-primary stage may occur over either a short or long period of time and so may be difficult to track:

It's very hard to record a lot of the types of things that they are learning, and a lot of it's subtle what they learn, but sometimes they learn quite a lot in a short time; other times it's a little bit over a long period of time.

Linda finds that written assessment is very time consuming but she does have some help from Kaye: *We'll often talk about it, but sometimes she'll be taking down notes if it's anything specific that I want her to note down.* Nevertheless, most of the assessments that Linda makes are mental:

Well I do remember quite a bit.

Overall, Linda's main concern about written assessment is its usefulness. She questions its importance in the Pre-primary setting, seeing it as something imposed from outside. She expresses her frustration at this imposition, which she sees as being associated with the recent move in Western Australia from part-time to full-time Pre-primary schooling:

And that's I think where this big push has come with Pre-primary, especially once it became all day and then there were all these requirements and the accountability...I tend to think, 'What more can you write down? How important is it to really write it down'. Maybe it is for the Principal or somebody to look at, but a lot of the things as we're saying, they're really difficult to write down anyway, to write down absolutely everything that you know about that particular child. And so much of it you just know it.

Using and reflecting on the First Steps assessment framework

Like the other teachers in her school, Linda is required by her Principal to provide First Steps assessments of her children four times a year in order to satisfy whole school accountability criteria:

It's set out so you've got the Role Play and then the whatever area you're in and so you indicate where they are. So they might be partly in Role Play and then partly in the next phase as well, so that's all indicated, that's all highlighted and then you date it and

then that all goes into the computer. It's all fed into the computer so we get an overall idea where everyone in the school is...We use the Speaking (Oral), Reading, Writing and Spelling. It's mainly just used, I suppose for overall evaluation of the schools; how we've gone in the different areas.

Nevertheless, she is concerned that since the assessments are used for accountability there needs to be consensus about exactly what is meant by a particular indicator and what it means for a child to display the indicator:

People seem to interpret the indicators in different ways. Even though sometimes when you read the actual example [it] doesn't seem to always fit in my mind anyway with the actual indicator. I know it's important to have an example, but sometimes I think that they aren't always really appropriate, certainly from the early Pre-primary point of view anyway. We found here at the school, I think the first year it was done that some people were really right out. Some in Year 1 were further ahead than in another class and it all came down to the interpretation rather than the fact that those children were really miles ahead or the other group were more behind. It was just that it was the way it was being interpreted and so I'm sure that's happening everywhere. If it's happened here I'm sure it's happening in other places too.

Linda expresses her dissatisfaction with this framework for Pre-primary children, but feels that it may be better for assessing older children:

Of course, children are very much at the beginning on most of the indicators. Some of them tend to move on, but I haven't really found it to be at this [Pre-primary] level, terribly useful. I think it probably is as you go along further because, I think the idea is very good, because its all developmental. I think that's a great idea and especially going right through into the Primary because I think that's needed. But I think at the beginning sometimes, because you've been told you have to observe behaviours several times, and you just don't see it once and mark it down, so sometimes in Pre-primary, especially when it comes to Writing or the so-called Spelling you might only observe something once in a year because they aren't doing it all the time. They'll do a certain amount of writing but it's not something they are doing continually, as they would be as they get into Year One.

In particular she finds that the frameworks, in particular the Oral Language Developmental Continuum, are not always easy to use:

They're probably very low down on that [Oral Language] and sometimes you really don't feel that you can mark off anything at this stage. And I know that's been an issue right through the ILC [Intensive Language Centre]. Oral language has been difficult to evaluate.

It is mostly the key indicators that Linda concentrates on, but this is not appropriate for all her ESL children as some may not display any of the key indicators:

Then I'll mark off the others as well, if they haven't reached any of the key because at least then I can see, oh well, he can write own name, which isn't the key indicator, but I think that's quite a big step really to be able to write their name.

Sample 2 shows Linda's *First Steps* assessment of Jeffrey's writing development which has one key indicator and one minor indicator highlighted.

Sample 2: Jeffrey's First Steps Writing Assessment

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

First Steps

PHASES

ROLE PLAY WRITING PHASE

Children are beginning to come to terms with a new aspect of language, that of written symbols. They experiment with marks on paper with the intention of communicating a message or emulating adult writing.

Content and Organisation	
• assigns a message to own symbols	
• gives an oral account of direct experiences	
• knows some favourite parts of stories, rhymes, jingles or songs	
• reads text from memory or invents meaning (the meaning may change each time)	
• writes and asks others to assign meaning to what has been written	
• talks about own drawing and writing	
• dictates for adult to write	
Concepts and Conventions	
• uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language	*
• draws symbols consisting of straight, curved or intersecting lines that simulate letters	
• makes random marks on paper	
• produces aimless or circular scribble	
• makes horizontal or linear scribble with some breaks	✓
• places letters randomly on page	
• writes random strings of letters	
• uses letters, numerals and inverted letter shapes	
• experiments by 'flipping' or reversing letters	
• experiments with upper and lower case letters. May show a preference for 'upper' case	
• repeats a few known alphabet symbols frequently using letters from own name	
• copies print from environment	
• shows beginning awareness of directionality, i.e. points to where print begins	
• makes organisational decisions about writing, e.g. 'I'll start here so it will fit'	
• copies layout of some text forms, e.g. letters, lists	
• is aware that print carries a message	
• role plays writing message for purpose, e.g. telephone messages	
• states purpose for own 'writing', e.g. 'This is my shopping list'	
• recognises own name (or part of it) in print, e.g. 'My name starts with that'	
• attempts to write own name	
• thinks own 'writing' can be read by others	
Affective	
• enjoys stories and asks for them to be retold or reread	
• listens attentively to the telling or reading of stories and other texts	
• 'writes' spontaneously for self rather than for an audience	
Process	
• understands that writing and drawing are different, e.g. points to text while 'reading'	

ENTERED INTO COMPUTER

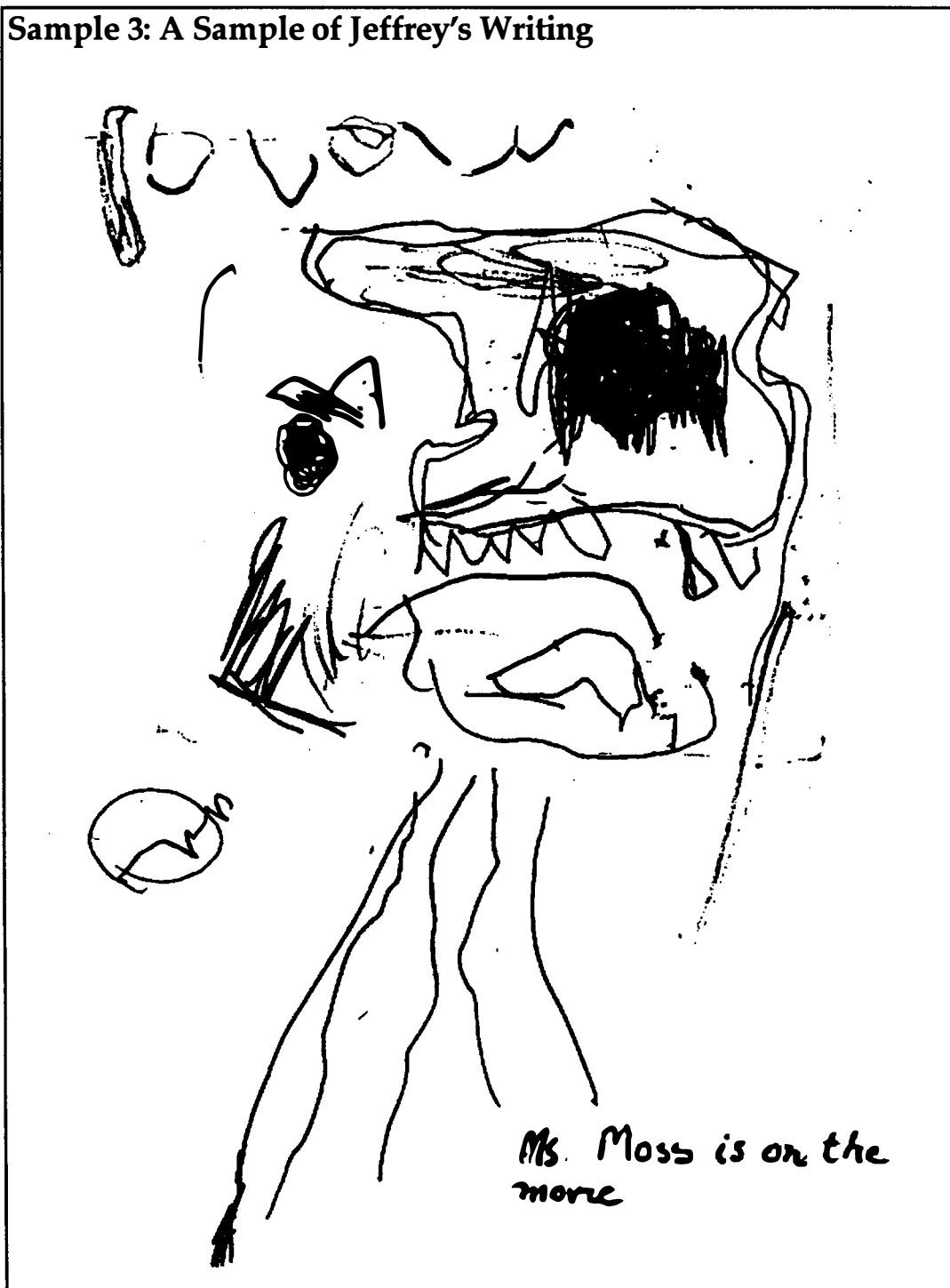
(date/highlighter colour)

12.4.96	12/9/96		
✓	*		

YEAR _____ TEACHER _____ YEAR _____ TEACHER _____
 YEAR _____ TEACHER _____ YEAR _____ TEACHER _____

In Sample 3 we can see a drawing which Jeffrey has made. He has dictated a sentence and attempted to write his name.

Sample 3: A Sample of Jeffrey's Writing



Linda explains that for the very first phases of literacy development (Role Play Reading and Writing and Preliminary Spelling) children are said to be operating in the phase whether they have shown all the key indicators or not. As many of her children are in these phases it is difficult to show the children's progress in terms of *First Steps*:

Most are still in the beginning phase and I think that's why it hasn't been so useful because they're not really moving on very much. Some of them that can read, I've had a few that are able to read, obviously they're moving up into Experimental or whatever,

but apart from that they are very much in the first or second, just into the second phase.

Sample 4 : Noel's First Steps reading Continuum

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
First Steps

INDICATORS FOR READING DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM
Teachers can identify a child's phase of development by observing that the child is exhibiting all key indicators of that phase. It should be noted, however, that most children will also display indicators from other phases.

PHASES

ROLE PLAY READING PHASE
In all phases students display reading-like behaviour at any opportunity during the lesson. They follow a natural interest in books and the language of print.

Knowledge and Understanding	Strategies for making meaning	Affective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to write simple words writing words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them

PHASES

EXPERIMENTAL READING PHASE
In this phase the child reads many of the words in the text and is able to identify words in the text. They are able to read simple words and are beginning to read simple words.

Knowledge and Understanding	Strategies for making meaning	Affective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them

PHASES

EARLY READING PHASE
In all phases students display reading-like behaviour at any opportunity during the lesson. They follow a natural interest in books and the language of print.

Knowledge and Understanding	Strategies for making meaning	Affective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them beginning to write words that are meaningful to them

ENTERED INTO COMPUTER (date/highlight colour)

11/11/91
11/11/91
11/11/91

TEACHER: _____ YEAR: _____ TEACHER: _____ YEAR: _____
 TEACHER: _____ YEAR: _____ TEACHER: _____ YEAR: _____

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As we continue to look at Linda's assessments of her children on the *First Steps Continua*, she explains that often she has to make decisions about whether the children have demonstrated the various indicators on the basis of little hard evidence.

A lot of it's just general observation. A lot of it's a bit intuitive too. Oh yes I feel that he has moved on and he has been able to do that, so

I haven't got real evidence, so called evidence for every single indicator that I've marked off. It's difficult.

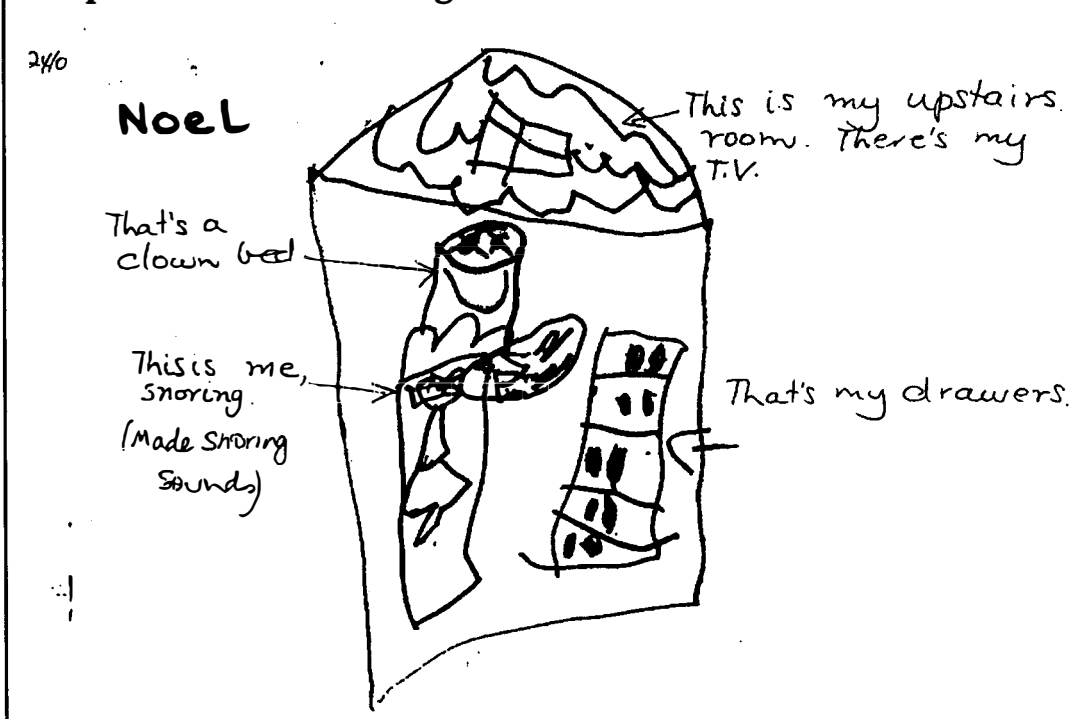
In the above section we look at Linda's *First Steps* Reading and Writing assessment of Noel, an ESL child from Singapore, whose level of development is more advanced than that of most of her children. The *First Steps* assessment sheet to which she refers is in Sample 4.

Let's look at Noel. See he's right up here. In June he was still in Role Play, yes, so it was around that time from then on I guess that he was getting into Experimental Reading and now really, I feel he's moving into Early Reading. Yes he's got those, he's got those [indicators from Experimental Reading]. So he's past the Experimental Reading but he hasn't got to the Early Reading phase completely as yet, although he's just about there.

Linda has observed Noel interacting with books and a computer reading game in the classroom, but she has also used her knowledge of his home-background to make assessment decisions:

Yes, well with Noel more, it's been mainly seeing, watching him read. He'll sit down with a book when we have reading after rest time he'll just read the whole. He'll read it and he'll come up with quite difficult words, which I think are quite difficult words. But it's probably because he's had a lot of reading at home he is interested in books. I haven't really taught him anything; it's just that he's been ready and he's picked it up. And...it's really quite big words that he can sit and read. But again because I think he said his Dad reads to him every night, and so much is the home reading, the parent reading to them that that's how most of them start to read. So I think that's how it's worked for him and him being ready, and again having the computer at home.

Sample 5: Noel's Drawing and Dictated Comments



It will be seen that Linda has found it much easier to evaluate this ESL child's reading because he has progressed rapidly along the continuum of development.

For the area of Oral Language development, which was proving very difficult to evaluate in her ESL children she has kept examples of their writing/drawing and dictated stories to help her recall their accomplishments. An example of Noel's dictated annotations can be seen in Sample 5.

For some children, such as Yuen, it is not until the end of the year that Linda has been able to identify any key Oral Language indicators in the Early Language Phase. Linda's *First Steps* assessment of Yuen's oral language can be seen in Sample 6.

Sample 6: Yuen's First Steps Oral Language Assessment

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

First Steps

PHASES

BEGINNING LANGUAGE

In this phase children are motivated by a basic need to communicate; to understand and be understood. Language development is influenced by the children's interaction with other language users, by the opportunities they are given to hear and use language and by their immersion in a stimulating, language-rich environment.

**The BEGINNING LANGUAGE phase describes language acquired in the first two years of life*

EARLY LANGUAGE

In this phase children's use of language becomes more refined and extended. It is used to satisfy simple social needs and to gain control of objects, people and knowledge in the environment.

Yuen

Speech Development	Language and Literacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experiments with sounds through rhyme and repetition • begins to use pronouns but may make errors in syntax, e.g. <i>Look at the ducks. They is big.</i> • shows confusion between pairs of terms, e.g. <i>You, their/ that, here/there</i> • demonstrates an understanding of direction in personal pronouns, e.g. <i>Give it to him. Give it to me.</i> • uses one grammar style which is an approximation of adult grammar. * <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Overgeneralisations are common, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> phrases - always for sleep verbs - good for work <li style="padding-left: 20px;">auxiliary verbs - I be going to football on Saturday • begins to use endings such as <i>ing, ed, s</i> • may confuse tenses when describing an event, e.g. <i>I going shopping yesterday.</i> • uses function words - <i>it, was, a, the, for, because</i> - to link ideas previously expressed in unconnected ways: <i>We go park - because - the park is the park.</i> • demonstrates an understanding of most common prepositions, e.g. <i>on, under, from, behind</i> • may make sound substitutions, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b for v - drive for drive t for h - tick for tick s for sh - sis for shis w for r - rabbit for rabbit d for th - brother for brother f for th - time for time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives simple descriptions of past events • shows an interest in listening to and talking about stories • asks for and asks for stories • 'reads' books aloud, often assigning own meaning to text • tells 'stories' about the pictures • begins to develop an understanding of story structure, e.g. notices when a page is not read from a favourite book • 'pretend reads' to other children, dolls, toys • retells simple stories • demonstrates an awareness of rhyme • reads familiar print in the environment • tells out stories of repeated phrases encountered in books • draws symbols and 'reads' the messages • shows an interest in the meaning of words encountered in books
Language of Social Interaction	Language and Thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is more aware of listener needs and begins to provide relevant information when introducing new topic, e.g. <i>Mama, I want chocolate. Look at this.</i> * • controls posture and tone of voice to convey meaning, e.g. <i>I love you. Mum (sadly).</i> • refers conversational skills, e.g. <i>turns ways to enter conversation, takes turns during an interaction</i> • talks aloud to self • engages in imaginary play, often using toys or other props • converses with imaginary friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows an interest in explanations of how and why • begins to develop concepts of quantity, size, speed, time • begins to see relationships between objects, e.g. puts round objects together, blue objects together • begins to understand cause and effect • begins to verbalise reasons • makes simple predictions of future events, e.g. <i>We'll be going to the more school.</i> • offers solutions and explanations • expresses feelings • constantly questions - why, who, what, where, when • may demonstrate confusion between fantasy and reality, e.g. <i>I didn't break it. My brother did.</i>

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Linda explains that even half way through the year Yuen was only displaying one minor indicator and that this indicator was not necessarily a language feature:

In June, with Oral Language, only marked one indicator off and it didn't really have anything to do with oral language because it's begins to see relationships between objects, so its not really oral language. You don't have to have the language to be able to do that one.

However, by the end of the year Yuen is showing some key indicators in the Early Language Phase and Linda has used her scrap book records (see Sample 1 for an example) to help in her assessment:

Now I've been able to mark off several key indicators: gives simple descriptions of past events, is more aware of listener needs and begins to provide feedback information when introducing new topic and uses own grammar style, which is an approximation of adult grammar, which I mean they do that very early on anyway. Tells 'stories' about pictures and draws symbols and 'reads' the message. So obviously I've seen him doing this but when, I don't know. The way I got some of these is when I've worked with them on a one to one basis with these little books. [The books] started off being writing things about their news and then I used them for retell, getting them on a one to one basis to retell stories from a story that they'd already heard and then I just really documented what they were able to do. So with the story, what one did I do? Oh, I did The T-Shirt Song, which is very repetitive and I found that they're good for non-English speaking children.

Linda thinks that Yuen would benefit from some time in the Intensive Language Centre at the school:

I still wouldn't put him into a mainstream class, because he's still very much lower than the children speaking English as their first language.

The Relationship between Assessment and Teaching

As we have seen, the relationship between the activities that Linda sets up in her Pre-primary centre and her ongoing informal assessment of the children is close. Usually she plans an activity on the basis of the children's interests and mentally monitors the children as they engage in it. Further, language and literacy development are only a part of her overarching aims and objectives. Social and emotional development are seen to be vitally important as is the development of motor skills. Added to this is the organisation of the centre into small play/working spaces so that there are limited opportunities to observe children taking part in specific language and literacy activities. It seems that it is the activity itself, not its assessment that is central to Linda's program. When asked whether her small group book activity, on the basis of which Linda has made decisions about *First Steps* indicators was planned as a teaching or evaluative activity she replies:

I suppose I am keeping track of them, but it is more just a continual extending type activity. Because I'm taking a small group I am aware more of where they're at because I've only got a few of them at the same time and I can really focus in on what they know and what they don't know, but I'm not always writing down all that sort of thing. It's more what I'm really observing and remembering about them.

Linda does occasionally plan some specific activities for assessment, even if it is for the benefit of the researcher:

I thought of this mainly because of the things that you wanted from last time. I was thinking, I haven't got any of these things that fit in with First Steps as well. So what I ended up doing, I thought well, just out of interest, I'll get them to do this. It was mainly the ESL children, but I don't know how I'd evaluate it. Basically what I got them to do, with the computer there's a farm programme and what they have to do is type in the letters, like cat C A T. But what I got them to do, I just had the cards that we used to help them at the computer, and I got them to look at them and just to have a go at writing some of the words cat and turkey etcetera. What I was looking at I suppose is whether they went from left to right, so that was really the main thing, and I guess too, whether they went down the page or whether they went all over the place.

Whilst Linda sees some value in setting up such an activity in order to evaluate children's language development, she does not see it as being very important in the whole program:

I don't think [setting up such an activity to evaluate language] hurts. It was quite good to do it, and it just made me think of something I can use to fit the criteria. But I probably wouldn't be doing it all that often.

Linda also plans some strategies on the basis of her observations of the children's social and emotional needs. She describes how she observed the behaviour of some of the ESL children towards the beginning of the year, how she reflected on her observations, ascribed the behaviour to the children's frustration at not being able to communicate and accordingly set up a behavioural program:

This year the behaviour problems were with the ESL children, not the English speaking ones and I really feel that a lot of it was that their lack of language. But we've introduced a reward system. They get a marble in the jar every time they're displaying helpful behaviour, or cooperating. I try to look at those sort of aspects rather than that they've necessarily achieved anything wonderful. It's more their behaviour and the behaviour they show to other children, so I've been really trying to foster that cooperation being helpful. You know how important that is, and then at the end of the week if we have a certain number of marbles they all get a treat, a lolly or whatever. It seems to work really well.

Nevertheless, most of the time, Linda will plan activities that fit a particular theme of interest to the children, such as the restaurant theme. She likes her program to be flexible so that she captures the children's interests at the moment:

And you go off on tangents... I suppose flexibility is so important to be able to go off on another tangent. Perhaps too if something happens which is obviously important to the children, or you feel is going to be a good learning experience for them you don't just say, 'Well, that's going on, but we won't worry about it'. You often hone into things, don't you?

As we have seen throughout this case-study, Linda sees her role as providing an integrated, interesting program which motivates the children to take part. From time to time she expresses her concern that the current emphasis on whole school accountability, in particular the assessment of early literacy in terms of the *First Steps Developmental Continua* which has been imposed by the school administration, could have a detrimental effect upon her program and divert attention from the development of the whole child:

Because there's been an emphasis on the writing etcetera, they are doing more of that now than they used to do...but a lot of the content stuff that is suggested that you do at Pre-primary,

sometimes you think well, that's not anywhere near as important as the social side. If they can't even sit quietly for five minutes while you're having a discussion or whatever, that is the things that you really need to hone in on. I had a child that came in that had no skills whatsoever, so you're back to square one, and that impacts on all the other children as well. So much for a lot of the great ideas of doing all these wonderful things that you get told that are good Pre-primary ideas to do. You don't get a chance often to get through them because you're concentrating a lot more on the social and emotional areas.

Linda sums up her feelings on the ways in which system initiatives, including the implementation of *First Steps* assessments enforced from above, are having an effect upon the Pre-primary program:

*And now you're part of the school, you're not just down in your own little building down the back. We're getting messages that you're part of the school now so you do the same sorts of **proper** work. And then there are certain expectations and there's accountability now. There was always accountability, but now there's this big focus on it.*